

Spokescouncil Documentation

- [What is the Spokescouncil?](#)
- [Active Proposals](#)
 - [How meetings are scheduled](#)
 - [1st Spokescouncil Agenda](#)
- [Decisions](#)
 - [How to add someone to the chat](#)
 - [2024 Dec 13: Who is a Spoke?](#)
 - [2024 Dec 13: How to format a Proposal](#)
 - [2025 Feb 06: Style of Consensus](#)
 - [2025 Feb 06: How to post agenda items](#)
 - [2025 Feb 06: How to prioritize submitted proposals](#)
 - [2025 Feb 06: Quorum](#)
 - [2025 Feb 06: Deciding Meeting Roles](#)
 - [2025 Feb 06: Meeting Length](#)
 - [2025 Feb 06: Communicating outside of meetings](#)
 - [2025 Feb 06: First Spokescouncil Agenda](#)
- [Meetings](#)

What is the Spokescouncil?

[Versión en español](#)

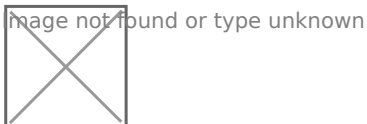
Spokes Council Explainer

The spokes council model is a structured, democratic process used within various organizations, workers' co-ops, and movement groups.

Basic Structure

The spokes council structure resembles that of a spoked wheel. It is designed to allow for decision making to be distributed across large groups of people, by allowing smaller groups to be represented by a spokesperson. Each committee/group selects a representative or 'spoke' who shares the perspectives of their group in a council meeting

A graphic showing an imaginary Woodbine spokescouncil meeting:



Spokes

Different organizations may have meetings composed of differing spokes to suit their organizational needs and goals.

There may also be different types of spokes, such as a caucus or affinity group (group seeking to represent a specific interest or issue).

Variations

There can be many recipes for a council. For example there could be an "open caucus" to allow people not associated with any specific group to have voice (though perhaps not vote) within

spokes structure.

A "fish bowl" format convenes a central meeting, while allowing group members who are not spokes to observe the meeting, and perhaps pass notes and/or other materials to their representative.

Consensus Models and "Meeting Tools"

Consensus Models

Beyond the structure of the meeting, there needs to be a definition of what a successful proposal is. While you're most likely familiar with the idea of "majority rule," spokes councils often adopt a higher standard of agreement.

This may be:

- unanimity, where a successful vote relies on everyone agreeing
- unanimity -1, where a successful vote relies on everyone minus one. In a group of 15 people 14 voting "yes" would be a successful vote.
- A %, such as 75% agreement.

Meeting Roles & Tools

Roles: Formal meetings typically rely on a set of roles:

- [facilitator explainer #1](#) - - - [facilitator explainer #2](#)
- [stack taker](#)
- timer
- note taker(s).

See [Culivate.coop](#) for more detailed explanations.

Tools: Meetings may also use tools such as:

- Red/yellow/green cards to indicate attendees opinions nonverbally.
- Indicators showing that clarification is wanted.
- Whiteboards
- Handouts

- Telepresence tools like conference speakerphones to better integrate remote participants

Reference

- <https://www.seedsforchange.org.uk/spokescouncil>
- https://cultivate.coop/wiki/Holding_effective_meetings

Spokes Council Explainer Documents Proposals

1. Spokes Explainer: Imagine we may want to send something like this to WG's when we announce the Spokes, and it may help us clarify our vision too. Asks questions like What is Spokes? Why a Spokes? What will we do at the first Spokes? How can your working group plug in?

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1UT2j64euen_c_ytllsUSBuXqD8wh4lJO0hQciWljMPc/edit?usp=sharing

2. Questions to ask other spaces/projects (please add!):

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/15II7M65f4fjH5Z9aj1MZjlfqb2o8EMfh6t3cYMNP6sY/edit?usp=sharing>

3. Running list of WB's working groups/projects:

Spreadsheet of 22 (from Ella?):

https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1lSYM1QNbiYMHkjW5fiwWCaDvSaXqdZ-ItEI3pwL_HSM/edit?usp=sharing

Merged here into list of 44:

https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1iDIC4P64guqa1a_cZ7ljnngqzZLOWledbCKIF4eXzZA/edit?gid=365292739#gid=365292739

Active Proposals

Active Proposals

How meetings are scheduled

<https://basement.woodbine.nyc/2AyW758BRd2zkP5kx4#>

1st Spokescouncil Agenda

Person or group submitting

Frankie

Proposal History

- Submission Date: 2/6/25
- Vote date: 2/6/25
- Vote result: pass

Friendly ammendments:

- Needs reworking for cleaning project explanation of current cleaning situation
- Directorship intro included with time for them to speak, need to coordinate how much time they need with consideration for what spokes planning had already prioritized
- Adjust time allotted for items

Motivation

I believe that an effective Spokescouncil meeting must have an agenda that creates a container for great conversations to happen.

Proposal overview ~~slightly less tiny~~
~~summary here~~

Details

Background info

- [Information on a "fishbowl" style spokescouncil](#) --> Use this link just for "fishbowl" definition and diagram. Other sections aren't specifically needed.
- See Ash's [previous agenda draft proposal](#), which is inspiration for this one

Groups this affects

All Spokescouncil attendees, WGs.

Work required

1. This agenda assumes that Facilitator(s) exist who are **not** functioning as spokes. They will help keep time and steer the conversation
2. Some agenda items assume that Greeter(s) exist who help people get settled in the meeting and ask/answer questions.
3. The agenda also presumes that some materials exist and are distributed. We'll need to get these:
 - paper for exit slips
 - name tags
 - printed versions of the agenda (ideally, translated)

Individual or group doing labor

Frankie + seeking volunteers

Money required

Does it cost anything? TODO: come back once costs are established

Proposals

The following is a proposed agenda. Each item functions somewhat independently. We can discuss re-ordering or adding/dropping chunks. I propose that the whole thing last no more than 1.5 hours, including breaks. So the group can discuss how to form an agenda from these building blocks.

Agenda (~90 mins)

Greeting

When folks arrive, they should be received by greeters who will:

- Ask each attendee whether the WG(s) they represent have upcoming events
- Ask whether attendee is a speaking or notetaking delegate.
- Provide an (optional) nametag for each attendee, with a little marking on nametags for speaking or notetaking delegates
- Give each attendee a paper copy of the exit ticket (see section below for exit ticket details)

Small group activity: Why are you here? (10 mins)

All attendees form small groups of N (maybe 4?), ideally with people they don't know. In small groups, attendees:

- Introduce themselves (name, pronouns, where-ish they live)
- Share what brings them to Woodbine as a space/community
- Share what brought them to the Spokescouncil meeting

There is no "report out" after the small groups chat.

This agenda item provides the opportunity for everyone at the meeting to speak, not just Spokespeople. This gives non-Spokespeople a way to make themselves heard as individuals. Builds relationships across individuals in different Spokes, and hopefully reveals some common values/motivations across Spokes.

I'd expect that the small group discussion would take about 6 minutes, and that directing people into and out of small groups would take about 4 minutes.

I think this would be a good way to start the meeting, since it creates a "soft start" if people show up late. They can arrive and find a small group, rather than disrupting a meaty topic.

Working Groups Assemble (10 mins)

Attendees gather with their working groups to say hi to each other, review the proposals that will be discussed at the spokescouncil meeting, make sure that speaking delegate and notetaking

delegate are selected and up to speed.

Gathering Paradise (2 mins)

During check in, Greeters ask attendees whether the WG(s) they represent have upcoming events, requests for help, or offers of resources to shout out (e.g. "On Wednesday Feb 5 at 3pm, Food Pantry is giving away bonbons.") Greeters collate these into a list.

During the meeting, of the Facilitators reads off these shout-outs in chronological order, pointing out the relevant Spoke/WG with whom people can follow up if interested. To keep it tight, Facilitators limit this to 2 minutes at most. Events that come later chronologically may not be mentioned aloud. The list of gathered items can be posted after the meeting for folks to peruse asynchronously.

While this arguably isn't the most "efficient" way to disseminate information about upcoming events, the goal is to create a felt sense of all of the cool things that happen at Woodbine, and help people see that Woodbine is many things / groups have lots of orthogonal stuff going on.

Having events gathered by Greeters and all read off by one Facilitator helps limit excessive yapping by eager WG participants. Everybody wants to talk for 5 minutes about their own event. The goal is instead to quickly summarize a bunch of events.

Introducing the Spokespeople/Coming Together (5 mins)

Spokespeople from the various Spokes simply go around and state their name, pronouns, and which Spoke/Working Group they represent.

Explanation: How will this meeting work? (10 mins)

Facilitators explain what a Spokescouncil is in concept.

Facilitators explain the agenda of the meeting, and who will play what roles in the meeting:

- Agenda wrangler / Facilitator: guides the group through the sections of the agenda, transitions from one topic to the next
- Timekeeper -- tracks how long is spent on agenda items
- Stacktaker -- tracks who's up next to speak
- Spokespeople -- relay opinions/conclusions of their Spoke, take notes for Spoke members who can't attend

Facilitators explain useful hand signals:

- jazz hands, for agreement without interrupting
- raised hand + eye contact for stacktaker, for getting on stack
- other ones?

Facilitators take questions from all attendees about how the meeting will work.

Directorship Speaks! (10mins)

Directors introduce themselves, talk about how they relate to Woodbine.

Explanation: How did this meeting come to be? (10 mins)

The Spokesperson of the Spokescouncil Planning Spoke shares information about how and why the Spokescouncil has formed, addressing the questions:

- Who set this agenda + set up the spokescouncil structure (aka us), and how'd we end up with that role?
- How did we decide who counts as a "Spoke"?
- What motivated the creation of the Spokescouncil Planning group?
- What problems do we hope that the Spokescouncil can solve?
- How does the Spokescouncil relate to the MOUs and the Woodbine "Board of Directors"?

Break (5 mins)

Discussion: Cleaning Project Proposal (30 mins)

TODO --> FILL IN DETAILS FOR CLEANING PROPOSAL HERE

Explanation: How to make a proposal (10 mins)

Someone explains how to make proposals. The most important thing to communicate is:

- who can help people understand + do the process
- where can people find + review proposals
- when proposals will be discussed (i.e. at the next Spokescouncil meeting!)
- Deadline for proposals before the next Spokescouncil meeting

The goal is not to clear up everyone's questions about how to write proposals, but rather introduce the idea that people can write proposals, and provoke questions that can be answered outside the Spokescouncil meeting itself.

Closing: Summary + Next Steps (10 mins)

Facilitators summarize decision(s) or action items from the Cleaning Proposal. They shout out what attendees can expect to happen next, for instance:

- getting added to a signal chat
- writing/reading proposals (+ where to find them)
- writing feedback about the meeting on exit slips (blank paper given to all at check in)
- when the next Spokes meeting will be
- how to get involved with making the next Spokes meeting happen
- get volunteers for various roles

Exit tickets

Facilitators encourage attendees to fill in their exit ticket (given to them by greeters on entry) and put them in a box by the door as they leave.

Exit ticket questions

On a scale 1-5 where 1 = Strongly Disagree, 5 = Strongly Agree:

- I am glad I came to this meeting.
- I understood how the Spokescouncil meeting worked and how to participate.
- I understand how to make proposals.
- I understand how to read and give feedback on proposals.

What did you like about this Spokescouncil meeting?

What can be improved for the next Spokescouncil meeting?

Anything else you want the Spokescouncil Planning WG to know?

Comments

Decisions

How to add someone to the chat

2024 Dec 13: Who is a Spoke?

A Spoke is a group of >5 people who self-identify as having a stake in Woodbine (the space) or Woodbine (the concept) and a common goal/reason to collaborate amongst themselves

Person or group submitting

Frankie

Proposal History

- Drafted date: dec/8/24
- Submission Date: dec/13/24
- Vote date: dec/13/24
- Vote result: Yeah

Motivation

We need to figure out what the spokes are.

Proposal overview ~~slightly less tiny~~ ~~summary here~~

This describes and defines a spoke based on member participation.

Details

Background info

We need to determine what a spoke is.

Groups this affects

All

Work required

Documentation

Individual or group doing labor

LP?

Money required

No

Proposals

- A Spoke is: - a group of >5 people WHO - self-identify as having a stake in Woodbine (the space) or Woodbine (the concept) AND - a common goal/reason to collaborate amongst themselves
- What if your group is <5 people? - Identify a larger working group that you can caucus with. Perhaps one that uses the space at similar times or in similar ways. - Still come to the Spokes council meeting to observe and recruit members!
- The proposal contains no opinion on how Spokes decide on a Spokesperson
- This proposal is a *descriptive* heuristic for (a way of approximating) the groups of people that operate in Woodbine + who care about it. Spokes are not approved or decided by any body. Spokes self-associate in advance of each spokes council meeting.
- The proposal allows that in the future, the Spokes council itself may decide to change the method for determining spokes.

Decisions

2024 Dec 13: How to format a Proposal

<https://basement.woodbine.nyc/spokes-proposal-proposal-template>

Decisions

2025 Feb 06: Style of Consensus

Consensus - 2, with the exception of liability concerns, voluntasking individuals or groups, and telling groups how to perform their roles which have the power to block proposals

<https://basement.woodbine.nyc/2AyW758BRd2zkP5kx2#>

2025 Feb 06: How to post agenda items

A wall of woodbine will be dedicated to posting proposals. Any member of woodbine may post a proposal following the proposal template. (Printers are available on site.) The proposal remains on the wall for up to three months, at which point it is taken down. If it is elevated to being an agenda item, it is also taken down after the meeting.

<https://basement.woodbine.nyc/2AyW758BRd2zkP5ky2#>

2025 Feb 06: How to prioritize submitted proposals

Proposals are submitted by some deadline before a given Spokes council meeting. Between that deadline and the Spokes council meeting, Spokes review proposals and indicate which ones they think are the most important to discuss.

https://basement.woodbine.nyc/wikb5SR1RIG2mrsVZfVr_w?view#

Decisions

2025 Feb 06: Quorum

<https://basement.woodbine.nyc/2AyW758BRd2zkP5kx1#>

2025 Feb 06: Deciding Meeting Roles

At the beginning of the meeting, spokes representatives can volunteer to fill a meeting role. Any other spokes representative has the power to veto someone taking a role, though that can be overturned with consensus - 2.

<https://basement.woodbine.nyc/2AyW758BRd2zkP5kx3#>

2025 Feb 06: Meeting Length

Meetings are capped at 2.5 hours, with the option to extend them through full consensus. Even with consensus, if reps leave and the council falls below quorum, further proposals cannot be voted on. The first half hour is non-mandatory social time, but the main part of the meeting starts promptly afterwards regardless of if attendees are late.

<https://basement.woodbine.nyc/2AyW758BRd2zkP5kx5>

2025 Feb 06:

Communicating outside of meetings

Two Signal chats will be created: 1) Woodbine Spokes Council Announcements, 2) Woodbine Spokes Council Chat. The first is purely for announcements (such as which proposals passed) and meant to be consumed by the entirety of the Woodbine membership. The latter is a chat for freeform discussion about upcoming proposals.

<https://basement.woodbine.nyc/2AyW758BRd2zkP5kx6>

Decisions

2025 Feb 06: First Spokescouncil Agenda

<https://basement.woodbine.nyc/2AyW758BRd2zkP5kx6>

Meetings