



Fair Oaks launches cohousing neighborhood

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National expert to speak at Fair Oaks Library

Date Published: February 28, 2014

When: Saturday, March 29th at 7 pm

Where: Fair Oaks Library, 11601 Fair Oaks Blvd

Admission: Free

Info: www.FairOaksEcoHousing and www.cohousingco.com

Local residents have secured a property for a cohousing neighborhood in Fair Oaks, and the community will be working with international cohousing expert and architect, Charles Durrett. As part of the kick off for the new community, Durrett—who will be the architect for the new community—will be giving a public presentation about these socially and environmentally sustainable neighborhoods. Cohousing combines private homes with extensive community facilities to create neighborhoods that address the needs of working parents, seniors, people working remotely and at home. The presentation will provide an overview of the cohousing movement with examples of communities that have been built around the country over the last two decades including Southside Park in Sacramento, Nevada City Cohousing, and Wolf Creek Lodge in Grass Valley, a recently completed community designed for pro-active adults.

What are cohousing neighborhoods?

Cohousing neighborhoods are composed of privately-owned homes clustered around shared open space and common facilities. A “common house” typically includes a dining room, kitchen, lounge, workshop space, kid’s playroom, and guest rooms; it is the heart of the neighborhood for a variety of other activities. Cars are kept to the edge of the site making the neighborhood pedestrian-friendly and safe for children. Future residents are involved in the design and development so that it reflects their needs and priorities, creating a truly custom neighborhood. Environmental sustainability is a core value in these neighborhoods with smaller homes, green building attributes and renewable energy systems made possible by combined efforts and shared resources. On-site activities and companionship enable residents to socialize close to home and reduce their need to drive as much for day-to-day activities. The Fair Oaks property is 5 minutes from the American River Parkway and its miles of bike paths, as well as Fair Oaks Village, Bannister Park, Sacramento Waldorf School, and Rudolph Steiner College. Cohousing provides social, environmental and economic benefits for a more sustainable lifestyle.

Architects and authors Charles Durrett and Kathryn McCamant introduced cohousing to North America in the 1980s with their seminal book, *Cohousing: A Contemporary Approach to Housing Ourselves*, after studying the movement in Denmark. There are now more than 130 cohousing communities in the U.S. and Canada, and McCamant and Durrett have also published: *Creating Cohousing: Building Sustainable Communities* and *The Senior Cohousing Handbook: A Community Approach to Independent Living*. Together McCamant and Durrett have worked on over 50 cohousing projects with their firms McCamant & Durrett Architects and Cohousing Partners. They now live in Nevada City Cohousing. Durrett grew up in Sacramento.

The public presentation will be held on Saturday, March 29th at 7 pm at the Fair Oaks Library, 11601 Fair Oaks Blvd: Free Admission. For more information on cohousing see:

www.FairOaksEcoHousing and www.cohousingco.com

“We are excited to have secured such a great property for our community, with its easy access to the American River Parkway and the Fair Oaks Village Center. We look forward to designing a beautiful neighborhood that will fit in well with the surroundings.” –Marty Maskall, founder of Fair Oaks EcoHousing

Books Published

Creating Cohousing: Building Sustainable Communities. Kathryn McCamant and Charles Durrett. 2011.

Cohousing: A Contemporary Approach To Housing Ourselves, Kathryn McCamant, Charles Durrett, and Ellen Hertzman (2004, Ten Speed Press).

Senior Cohousing: A Community Approach to Living Independently - The Handbook, Charles Durrett (2010, New Society Publishers).

Recent awards

2011- Governor’s Award for Environmental and Economic Leadership for Wolf Creek Lodge, a 30-unit senior cohousing community located in Grass Valley, CA. www.wolfcreeklodge.org

2010 – Gold Nugget Award for Best Affordable Housing under 30 dwelling units per acre for Petaluma Avenue Homes in Sebastopol, California and designed by McCamant & Durrett Architects.

2009 - Green Architect Award of The Sierra Nevada Deep Ecology Institute was awarded to McCamant & Durrett Architects. According to the Institute, “M & D’s dedication to sustainable building practices and cohousing has been an inspiration worldwide, and the local community has benefited greatly from their commitment to providing this service locally.”

2009 - “Top 10 in Fresno” for the Unitarian Universalist Church, Fresno, California, chosen as one of the ten best architectural projects of the decade in Fresno. The reviewer notes that a commitment to sustainability and community is “masterfully combined in a building that pays equal attention to interior and exterior spaces. The roof lines, materials choices and color palette give the building a contemporary and earthy feel that sets it apart from other churches . . . This was Fresno County’s first LEED-certified building”, and indeed the first LEED-certified building in all of central California. For the complete review visit Top 10 in Fresno.

2009 - Award of Merit for affordable senior housing for Silver Sage Cohousing in Boulder, Colorado. The competition was sponsored by the American Institute of Architects (AIA) and American Association of Homes and Services for the Aging (AAHSA) to highlight innovative solutions for affordable housing for seniors. The project was completed for Wonderland Hill Development in collaboration with Bryan Bowen Architects. It will be published in the AIA’s Design for Aging Review.

2008 - “Silver Energy Value Housing Award” from the National Association of Homebuilders (NAHB) for the design of the most energy-efficient multi-family housing project completed in 2007, for Nevada City Cohousing, International Builder’s Show, Orlando, FL

2005 - “National Green Building Award” from the National Association of Home Builders (NAHB), in conjunction with the U.S. Department of Energy, for contribution in the Multi-Family Category: Hot Climate, for Cotati Cohousing, Cotati, CA

2004 - “Best In American Living Award – Best Smart Growth Community” from the National Association of Home Builders, for Cotati (FrogSong) Cohousing, Cotati, CA

More information at www.cohousingco.com and www.cohousingpartners.com