

1. Definitions

Pioneers-Founding members, those who financed the initial property or properties. Their perks are defined by this group.

Settlers-Those members who invest in the property or properties after the initial purchase by the Pioneers.

Neighbors-Families or people who share the vision and participate in the activities of the community, who do not live there or invest in.

The Chamber-Businesses or commercial activities that choose to support the Community and/or locate some of their activities on the property or properties or use the Community network to enhance their community and their businesses.

Homesteaders-People or families who are assisted in purchasing in the property or properties to be worked out and agreed to by the Pioneers and Settlers.

2. Fees and Categories

Everyone pays an initial joining fee (perhaps \$100) and a yearly fee of (to be defined-maybe \$100 or \$500 lifetime) to help pay for communications, meetings and other expenses. In essence, this is for Neighbors, everyone is a Neighbor and some can choose to be Settlers or Pioneers.

The Chamber members would also join for the same fees or others agreed to. If a Neighbor also wants to be part of the Chamber, they would pay this fee also. The Chamber would function much like any local Chamber of Commerce operates. They would be an independent group, but also could serve on committees of the community. The community would have to determine what kinds of decision making rights this group would have.

3. Legal Structures and Categories

Following the example of the Sowing Circle Community/OAEC model there would be two and possibly three or four legal entities.

- (a) A 501(c)3 or non-exempt non-profit that would sponsor and run the educational, service and other activities of the group. People would join as “neighbors” and the fees associated here would be paid to this. This organization would now own any property, but would rent space from the Community, when it is formed. For example, EPIC, Inc. a 501(c)3.
- (b) A Homeowners Association, LLC or Housing Co-Op would be owned and run by the people who choose to be Pioneers or Settlers. They would do so by their investment. Whether they would own a deed to their property or own shares in the community would need to be determined by this group. For example, EPIC Property Association, Inc.
- (c) The Chamber could be its own independent business association or just be a committee of the non-profit. For example, EPIC Chamber, Inc., a LLC.
- (d) We have talked about creating a “common building” of some kind. This could be owned by the non-profit, the Chamber or just be another entity. This could be a way to begin by a small group purchasing a small property with an existing building(s). The community land and development

ideally would be adjacent to it, but could be located nearby. This could serve the activities of the non-profit. Provide an office for the Homeowners Association, possibly be an interim residence and possibly house businesses that are part of our Chamber.

For example, [Twin Ponds](#) the Healing Arts Center we visited. It was purchased and renovated by the woman who now owns and runs this business. It has a residence for her and provides her with an income.

4. Starting-My Thoughts

How to start anything is always hard, which comes first and how is this determined. There are no easy answers, nor exact models. We certainly learned a lot for Diana Leafe Christian. Personally, I think starting with “what we do” together is how and where to start. Part of this is our Shehaqua Community, but this requires a location, ownership and an investment of personal financial resources. There are so many people involved in Shehaqua now from so many locations, that this institution is not ideal. We could leverage the name and community and connections, however.

What might this look like? An existing building on 1-3 acres that could be renovated over time that could be owned by some initial Pioneers. It could house the offices of our 501©3, Shehaqua Educational Activities for lack of a better name, which could begin to carry out the activities of the group, hold meetings, seminars and be a place center point from which to look for and invest in the land where a community and houses could be located. It could be a residence for one or two families or be an investment in something like Twin Ponds. Living in an area, attending public meetings and getting to know people will be very valuable in terms of understanding development possibilities and opportunities.

In a rural or semi-rural area, something could probably found for \$250,000-\$400,000. Just north of us I saw a listing for a farmhouse and barn on 100 acres for \$550,000. It all depends and the risk the initial pioneers are willing to take. Having some broader vision would help, I would think and having a paying tenant in the 501©3 would help.

Two or three families might be able to come up with a plan to buy and invest in a property that could be a business location, similar to Twin Ponds and serve as a location for future activities. If people sell their houses, they would need a place to live and a way to make a living. This might be a way to do this. O this might be able to be financed for an initial investment/downpayment and financing secured by the houses of the initial pioneers, prior to their moving in.