

"To Become A Part of A Society That Is Meaningful"

A Zine History of the Ella Jo Baker Intentional Community Cooperative

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Abstract

In the early 2000s, during a period of rapid gentrification in the nation's capital, a small group of primarily African American working-class women activists and organizers incorporated a limited equity housing cooperative and intentional community. Located in the Columbia Heights neighborhood of the city, developed from vacant District of Columbia Housing and Community Development (DHCD) owned parcels, and named after Ms. Ella Josephine Baker, the legendary and skilled grassroots organizer, EJBICC was established to provide safe, decent, and affordable housing free from private property ownership.

A quarter of a century later, despite the on-going massive displacement and forced relocation of working-class Washingtonians, EJBICC continues to fulfill its mission; EJBICC stewards 15-units of affordable cooperative housing for a multi-racial polyglot group of working-class activists and organizers oriented toward feminist, socialist, and internationalist politics. And it is the *only* limited equity housing cooperative and intentional community created by activists and organizers, for activists and organizers, that is cooperatively owned by its members.

To date, there is no formal, written or oral history of EJBICC. Therefore, "To Become A Part of A Society That Is Meaningful": A Zine History of the Ella Jo Baker Intentional Community Cooperative tells the story of how EJBICC came to be in a way that is accessible and available to each of its members and residents, as well as anyone interested in housing, irrespective of age, or formal knowledge of limited equity cooperatives and intentional communities. The zine purposefully spotlights the labor of two of its five co-founders. Both are still current members and one's written history is featured in the zine.

Formatting and Printing

The version that appears in Academizines! is not the original format. The version here is a full page PDF. If you are interested in reading the zine in booklet format please contact the author.

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