LONGHOUSE · THURSDAY 1 OCTOBER 2026

# Power and Responsibility

The colossi are visible and remote. The levers you can reach are invisible and near. Tonight we start closing that gap — and we start an arc rather than having another good evening.

Tonight opens a three-meeting-cycle study: The Land. That is about three months. Separate from our seven-year missions, which are the long work.

BEFORE ANYTHING ELSE

# Three boxes, never mixed

IN MOTION

**What we assert**

Observable now, measurable against an issuing body. Every figure tonight is checked and the check is recorded.

CONTESTED

**The room's work**

What it means, who it benefits, what should follow. That stays with you — we do not resolve it from the front.

PREDICTION

**We don't**

What WILL happen. Not because the future is unknowable, but because once you start predicting you can no longer be corrected — and being correctable is the whole job.

America is evolving, and that holds without a single prediction — the forces are visible in the present tense. What is owed is attention, and checking the facts.

We chart our own course. We do not forecast — we We do not predict what is coming — we decide what we do. A room that meets, keeps a record and decides in public *is* a government, at the size it actually is.

Four things we refuse, so that is not just a nice sentence: **no goal without an owner · no compensation promises · no private plan · no unfalsifiable goals.** “Raise awareness” cannot be checked in year seven. “Publish 50 case studies with primary sources” can.

IF THIS IS YOUR FIRST ONE

# What LongHouse is

WHAT IT IS

**A civic research body**

We read the primary source and check figures against the issuing body before saying them out loud.

WHAT IT IS NOT

**Not a party, not advocacy**

No endorsements, no campaigns. A register records what exists; it takes no position.

HOW IT RUNS

**Two meetings a lunar cycle**

One opens a question, the next returns to it with the fact checked. Tonight opens one.

WHAT IT COSTS

**Nothing, ever**

Volunteer-only. Nothing is sold at a LongHouse meeting.

ABOUT THE NAME

**A form many peoples arrived at**

Neolithic central Europe from c.6000 BC, Norse northern Europe, and the Haudenosaunee — independently. In northern Europe the hall it became was explicitly a POLITICAL building. We claim no one tradition and do not speak for any.

You are welcome to just listen. If you say something that turns out to be wrong, we correct it out loud — there is a slide later where we do that to ourselves.

THE FRAMEWORK

# Four questions, always in this order

1

**What is its actual scale?**

Measured, not felt. The number before the argument.

2

**Through what instrument?**

Power moves through a statute, an appropriation or a deed — never through "the system".

3

**At which layer is it governed?**

Federal · state · county · district · household.

4

**Where is the nearest contact?**

The lever within arm's reach of someone in this room.

Contact is the purpose; the other three are how you earn the right to answer it. But these are **questions we ask, not an order we follow** — some institutions give up their instrument first and their scale last, and insisting on the sequence would be ceremony rather than method.

Scale · Instrument · Layer · Contact finds the lever. Underneath sits a second frame — Force · Aggregate · Term: what is the pattern with momentum, what ordinary repeated behaviour aggregates into it, and what is *my* term — set deliberately, or by default?

And a question we ask of every *source*, not just every institution: **is it AI-written or naturally written, what authenticates it, and what do those sources themselves cite?** That check is a standing part of the method — asking well and validating the answer are one practice, not two.

**$21,309**
Arizona state + local debt, per family of four — ADOA

**1 : 3,760**
Americans per government — derived from Census

**674**
local governments in Arizona — Census of Governments

## THE REST OF THE PICTURE

| | |
|---|---|
| Population Census, Jul 2025 | 341.8M |
| Growth on the year Census | +1.8M · +0.5% |
| Net international migration Census, yr to Jun 2025 | 2.7M → 1.3M |
| Unemployment BLS, Aug 2026 | 4.1% |
| Federal debt Treasury, 29 Sep 2026 | $40.10T |
| **Arizona state + local debt** ADOA / openbooks.az.gov, 30 Jun 2022 | $38.8B |
| **Per Arizona family of four** ADOA | $21,309 |
| Interest Arizonans have paid on it ADOA | $11.6B · $1,589/person |
| Local governments in Arizona Census of Governments 2022 | 674 |

Checked against Treasury, Census, BLS and Arizona's own Report of Outstanding Indebtedness on 2026-10-01. Anything we could not pin to an issuer is not on this slide.

**The line that matters for this room:** Arizona's own report counts that $38.8 billion as owed by state agencies, universities, **special districts** and other political subdivisions. The layer almost nobody attends is one of the layers carrying the debt.

**Derived — our arithmetic, not anyone's statistic:** federal debt is about **$117,300 per**

THE ARCHING IDEAS · ALL SIX ARE PRESENT TENSE

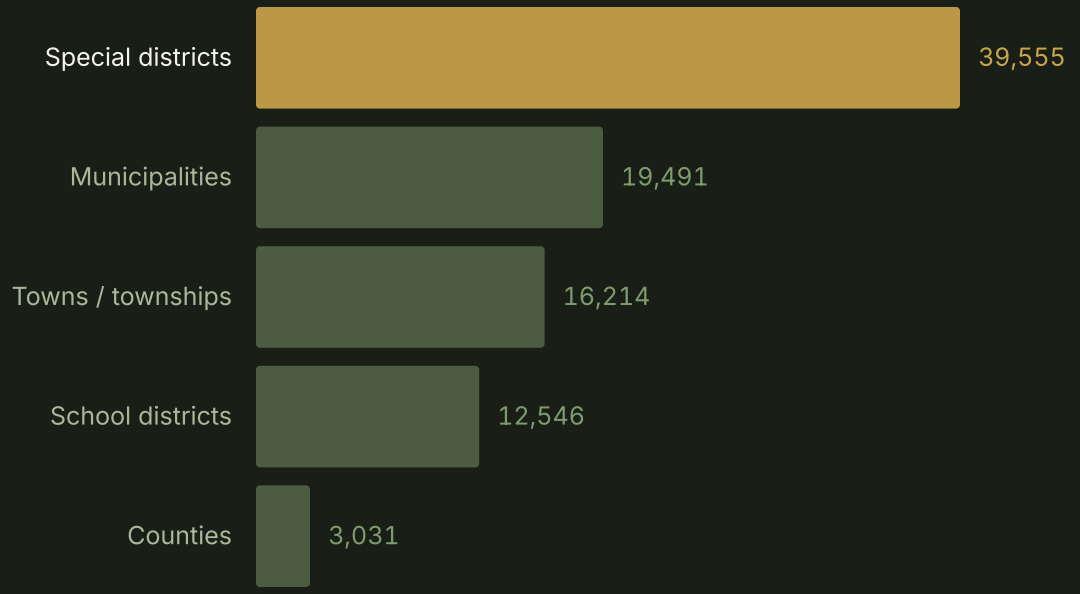
# America is already evolving

| | |
|---|---|
| institutions built for **abundance** | **administer scarcity** |
| institutions built for **distance** | **operate at no distance** |
| capacity built for **emergency** | **has become permanent** |
| a polity sized for **one composition** | **is inhabited by another** |
| **scale** | **keeps converting into weight** |
| **attention** | **keeps deciding which layer feels real** |

None of these is a prediction. Every one is happening now and can be checked. That is why we are willing to say them.

And the part that matters: every one is an **aggregate of ordinary behaviour**. None of it is weather. That matters, because it means there is somewhere to stand. The useful question is not whether the system is centralising — it is which layer you brought your last problem to.

# 90,887 governments




Special districts out-number every general-purpose subcounty government COMBINED — 39,555 against 35,705. Water, fire, irrigation, drainage, hospital. Not peripheral functions.

## 6,930

local governments in **Illinois alone** — the most of any state

## mosquito abatement

is, per the Census Bureau, among the things special districts do

**Two things that surprise most people. Illinois alone has 6,930 local governments** — the most of any state, and it leads on local governments, special districts *and* municipalities at once. And the Census Bureau's own description of what special districts do runs from hospitals and fire protection to **mosquito abatement and the upkeep of cemeteries**. The range is the point: a special district is not one kind of thing. It is a legal container, and it

WHAT ALREADY HAPPENED

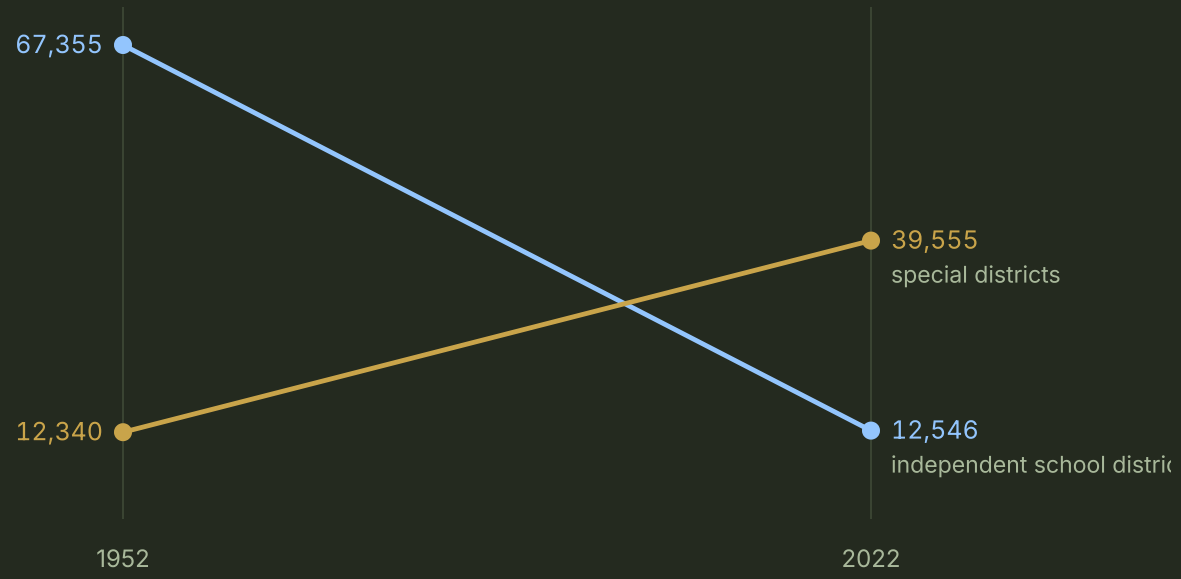
# One collapsed. Its twin tripled.

**−81%**

independent school districts, 1952–2022

**+220%**

special districts, same seventy years




About 55,000 school districts retired inside seventy years, largely by LOCAL consolidation, decision by decision — the largest institutional retirement in modern American governance. “Institutions never die” is simply false, and we have the number.

WHY A CYCLE, AND WHAT A YEAR LOOKS LIKE

# The calendar is the method

EVERY CYCLE · ~2 WEEKS

**Propose, then decide**

A proposal is heard before the full moon and decided after it. Two weeks is deliberate: long enough for enthusiasm to cool and objections to surface, short enough that momentum survives.

EVERY FOUR CYCLES · QUARTERLY

**Read the long goals aloud**

Anything that has not moved in four cycles is re-owned or declined. No silent carrying.

EVERY YEAR

**One meeting on the horizon**

What changed in the world, what we got wrong, what we now know. The plan is amended in public and the amendment recorded.

YEAR SEVEN

**Judged and published**

The plan is measured against what actually happened, published, and the next seven years are written by whoever is in the room then.

Seven years is **2,557 days, 87 full moons, about 173 meetings**. That is the unit we plan in — not quarters.

# Three questions, four answers

**Two different clocks, and they are not in competition.** A *study* runs three meeting-cycles — about three months — and is how we work through one subject, like the land. A *mission* runs **seven years** and is how we carry something long. Tonight starts a study. Missions are what we are building the structure for.

**2,557**
days

**87**
full moons

**~173**
meetings

That is the unit we plan in — not quarters. (Derived: 7 × 365.25 days; 7 × 12.37 lunations; two meetings per cycle.)

---

1

### What does this look like in seven years if it works?

If the honest answer is ‘finished in six weeks’, it is a task, not a goal. Goals compound; tasks complete.

2

### What is the smallest version we can start this cycle?

If nothing can begin before the next full moon, we have a wish, not a plan.

3

### What does it cost to CARRY it for seven years?

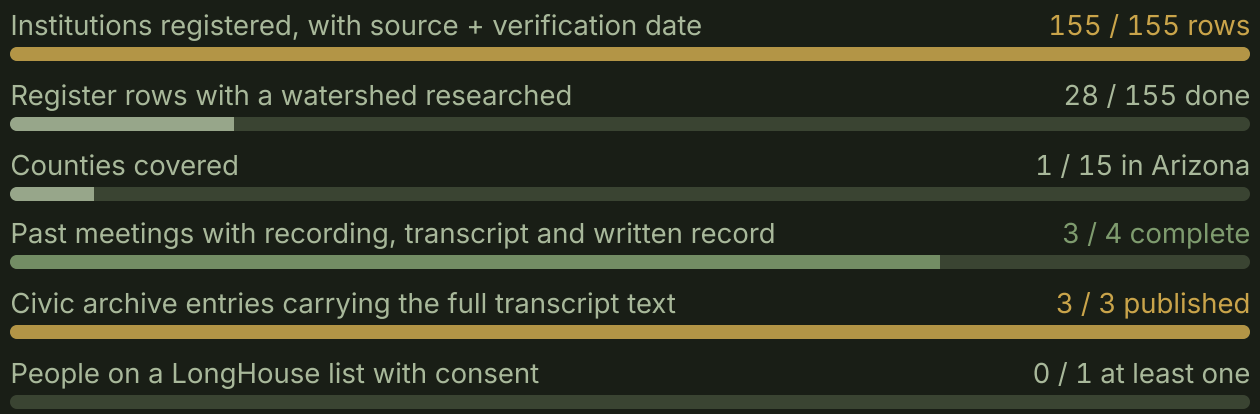
Not to launch — to carry. A goal nobody will carry in year four should be declined in year one, and declining it is a success of the method.

Four outcomes, named plainly: **Adopt** · **Shrink** · **Hold** · **Decline** — and a decline goes on the record *with its reason*, so it is not proposed again in ignorance next year.

Candidate long projects, categories not commitments: the institution register beyond one county · the civic library and its authentication standard · the public dashboard · the meeting record. Each gets question three before it gets a yes.

WHAT WE WILL PUBLISH

# Where we are, and what we will publish




Today's actuals, not targets — including the last row, which is the binding constraint: there is no list, so every meeting has been invited by hand and no cycle compounds on the last. The register and the meeting record are already public and free; that IS the low-cost option and it is the whole access policy.

**Planned, not built:** a standing public dashboard carrying these counts, the civic library's sources and their authentication state, and — under the publish-everything-by-default standard already at /governance/ — LongHouse's own finances. Volunteer-only today; any future paid role requires public ratification first, in public, before any payment.

A civic body that asks others for transparency publishes its own numbers first, including the unflattering ones. Every figure above is a count we can be held to.

DO THIS NOW · THREE MINUTES, ON YOUR PHONE

# Find the government you did not know you lived in

1

**Maricopa County Treasurer**

Open the Treasurer's site and search your parcel by address or APN.

2

**Parcel Details → Tax Year Details**

Scroll to the section headed **Special Tax Districts**.

3

**Read the list**

Every one of those is a political subdivision with an ELECTED board. Most people find between three and six.

Then say one of them out loud. Could you name it an hour ago? Do you know when it meets, or who sits on its board, or when its seats were last contested?

That gap is the point of tonight, and it is not your fault — nobody is told. These bodies tax, govern and borrow with almost nobody watching. That is also why their elections get decided by a handful of votes.

ROLES · NOBODY IS ASKED FOR MORE THAN FOUR HOURS A MONTH

# Nine roles, three groups

| | |
|---|---|
| **Open-Book Treasurer** · Shiny Pennies | **≤4 hrs/month** |
| **Meeting Facilitator** · Shiny Pennies | **≤4 hrs/month** |
| **Public Representative** · Shiny Pennies | **≤4 hrs/month, variable** |
| **Constitutional Rights Educator** · Rusty Pennies | **≤4 hrs/month** |
| **Safety + De-escalation Trainer** · Rusty Pennies | **≤4 hrs/month, variable** |
| **Security Best-Practices Trainer** · Rusty Pennies | **≤4 hrs/month** |
| **Long-Mission Lead** · PennyWells | **≤4 hrs/month, across years** |
| **Sensitive-Topic Researcher** · PennyWells | **≤4 hrs/month, remote-friendly — 2–3 people** |
| **Civic Archivist / Story-Keeper** · PennyWells | **≤4 hrs/month** |

Where the work needs more than four hours we split it across more people rather than ask more of one. Full descriptions and the first ask for each are at longhouse.institute/get-involved.

**Shiny Pennies** run the organisation in public — representation, open finance, meetings.

**Rusty Pennies** teach rights, safety and security. **PennyWells** hold the long-term work:

long missions, sensitive research, and remembrance.

HOW TO TAKE PART

# Three ways in, smallest first

1 · ONE FIELD

**Join the list**

longhouse.institute/get-involved — meeting dates, decks, recordings and transcripts. Nothing else.

2 · ONE CONVERSATION

**Take a role**

Nine roles across the three groups, each with hours written down. Apply at the same page and we talk before anything is assigned.

3 · ONE EVENING

**Come in person**

The civic-library meetings are where the contested questions get worked. Bring one.

**Part-time, civilian, revolving.** Nobody is expected to make a career of this. Hours are small and flexible, roles rotate, and everything is volunteer — LongHouse has no budget for paid positions, and if that changes the policy and any compensation get published in the quarterly governance record.

You can also do none of these and still come to every meeting. The recordings and transcripts are public either way.

WHY WE START WITH HISTORY

# Understanding the past is what makes peaceable change possible

THE PROOF

**It has already been done peaceably**

About 55,000 school districts retired in seventy years — by local consolidation, decision by decision, with no constitutional crisis. The largest institutional retirement in modern American governance, and almost nobody cites it.

THE GRAIN

**Demolition is not the native mode**

America layers: new law built over old law left running. A programme that demands demolition fights the grain. One that works by occupancy and amendment works with it.

THE PRECEDENT

**The Great Law of Peace**

September's subject: a peace constitution that long predates the United States, carried by voice across generations. How much it shaped the U.S. Constitution is genuinely CONTESTED and we present it that way — the famous version of that story is the part most likely to be wrong.

So this is not nostalgia and it is not a forecast. A body that knows how change actually happened here can aim at **repair instead of rupture** — and a body that does not know will keep reaching for the one layer where its exchange rate is worst.

The patient version is the one that has actually worked. We are saying that from the record, not from hope.

THE CIVIC STRUCTURE

# Four layers, and a gate on the way in

1

**The Civic Library**

The public collection — and literally the venues: local civic libraries are where the in-person meetings happen.

2

**Our own database**

The register. 155 institutions in one county so far, each with a source and a verification date.

3

**Primers**

Short sourced explainers a newcomer can read BEFORE a meeting instead of after it. Early days.

4

**Glossary and sourcing**

Shared words and a citation standard, so two people disagreeing are at least disagreeing about the same thing.

And a gate on the way in: an **authentication process** for documents entering the ecosystem — what is AI-written and what is not, which sources authenticate a claim, and what those sources themselves cite. That is the difference between a library and a pile.

BEFORE THE NEXT MOON

# One commitment, narrow on purpose

The responsibility is not to steer the aggregate — nobody can. It is to **set your term deliberately rather than by default**, and to know which force you are a term in.

Tonight's decision is procedural, not political: **adopt the three-cycle study** on the land — about three months — and make a verified register of local governing institutions this body's first standing asset.

WHY A REGISTER

**It is the only asset that works with no audience**

It is useful on day one, to one person. Most things we could build need an audience first; this one does not.

THE RULE

**No row without a source and a date**

A register that goes stale is worse than no register. People trust it, and it is wrong.

THE FIRST REAL TEST

**Can one person look up their own district and go?**

Not how many rows it has. If one person cannot do that, the row count does not mean anything.

Thursday, October 29.

END OF THE MAIN ARC

# Everything after this is appendix

The slides that follow are the cycle-1 research in full — the land statutes, the Arizona trust-land detail, the Census figures, the other two colossi, and the register. They are here for anyone reading this page afterwards, and for a room that wants to keep going.

If you are presenting: stop here. Tonight is about meeting each other and laying the foundation — not getting through the deck.

CYCLE 1 · THE LAND

# Read these in the original

1785
**Land Ordinance**
The survey grid. Why the West looks like graph paper from the air.

1787
**Northwest Ordinance**
How a territory becomes a state. Passed under the Articles of Confederation.

1862
**Homestead Act**
Disposal as policy.

1872
**General Mining Act**
Still live law. Hardrock claims on federal land still run on it.

1934
**Taylor Grazing Act**
The open range closes.

1976
**FLPMA**
The hinge — disposal stops being the default.

THE MEASURED FACT · VERIFIED 2026-10-01

# Arizona State Trust Land

| | |
|---|---|
| Granted, after all congressional action | **~10.9M acres** |
| Surface acres today | **~9.2M** |
| Designated for K-12 public education | **~8M** |
| Beneficiaries | **13** |

Arizona State Land Department · Arizona Senate Research Staff. Two sections per township at territorial organisation (1863), two more at statehood (1912).

INSTRUMENT

# This is not public land the way a park is public

All sales, exchanges and leases of state trust land must be conducted **at public auction to the highest bidder** — Arizona Constitution Article 10 and A.R.S. § 37-101 et seq.

The trustee is obliged to the beneficiaries. That obligation is why trust land is auctioned rather than simply zoned — and the obligation, not the acreage, is the civic point.

THE HOUSE HABIT

# We got this wrong, and fixed it before anyone read it aloud

FIRST DRAFT SAID

**FLPMA “stopped disposing of the public domain”**

Too strong. Anyone in the room who knew the statute would have corrected it — the worst way for a research body to be wrong.

THE ISSUING BODY SAYS

**Retained “unless disposal is in the national interest”**

FLPMA REVERSED the default: disposal went from policy to exception requiring justification. Still the hinge, and defensible.

Standing rule: no figure is spoken here until it is checked against the issuing body’s own publication, and the check is recorded.

THE FORCE BENEATH IT

# Institutions outlive the conditions that produced them

FLPMA (1976) **did not amend** the 1872 Mining Law. It changed recordation. So the two coexist: a 2026 hardrock claim runs on Grant-era law inside a Ford-era management regime.

That is the actual pattern of American institutional change — not replacement but **layering**. New law built over old law left running. Expect sediment, not demolition.

CONTACT · QUESTION FOUR

# The nearest lever is one most people cannot name

Arizona special taxing districts exist under **A.R.S. Title 48**, are political subdivisions of the state, and are governed by an **elected board**. Not agencies — governments with elections.

**Maricopa County alone has more than 115 active special taxing districts.** Per-parcel: Treasurer → parcel search by APN → Parcel Details → Tax Year Details → Special Tax Districts.

Turnout and attention fall as you descend the layers, while the per-person weight of a single participant rises. A district election can be decided by a number of votes you could assemble from one street. That is arithmetic, not a slogan.

COLOSSUS II · CYCLE 2 · THE INSTRUMENT OF FORCE

# Control over force is deliberately divided

1787

**Art. I §8**

Congress declares war, raises armies, provides a navy. Army appropriations are capped at TWO YEARS; the navy clause carries no time limit at all.

1787

**Art. II §2**

The President is Commander in Chief. Two clauses, two branches, on purpose.

1878

**Posse Comitatus Act**

Constrains the federal military in domestic law enforcement.

1973

**War Powers Resolution**

Congress trying to reclaim its own first clause. Read the reporting and termination provisions, then read what every administration since has said about them.

ANNUAL

**The NDAA**

Where the decisions actually live — and authorisation and appropriation are two different bills.

LIVE LAW

**10 U.S.C. §12406 · 32 U.S.C. §325**

The Guard. Three enumerated grounds for federal call-up, orders issued THROUGH THE GOVERNORS, and dual status for officers requires the governor's consent.

COLOSSUS III · CYCLE 3 · THE DEMOS

# Where a vote converts into an outcome

1868

**Amendment XIV §1**

Citizenship, due process, equal protection. The floor everything else stands on.

MEASUREMENT

**Census of Governments**

Not a statute — a count. It is how we know there are 90,887 of these things.

YOUR COUNTY

**Charter or statutory structure**

In Arizona: the Board of Supervisors. Zoning, water, roads, assessment.

LOWEST RUNG

**Precinct party structure**

The bottom of the formal political ladder, and frequently VACANT.

The asymmetry worth sitting with: turnout and attention FALL as you descend the layers, while the weight of one participant RISES. That is arithmetic, not encouragement — and it is checkable for any district anyone here lives in.

CURRENT INSTITUTIONS · WHAT WE HAVE ACTUALLY MAPPED

# 155 governments, one county




Maricopa County special taxing districts under A.R.S. Title 48, assembled into the LongHouse register. Each is a political subdivision with an ELECTED board. 101 of them deliver irrigation water. Counted live from the register at build time, not copied.

HOW THE MEETINGS WORK

# Two a cycle, and we design them together

BEFORE THE FULL MOON

**Inquiry**

Open a question. Read the primary source. Establish one measured fact. Leave without resolving it.

AFTER THE FULL MOON

**Return**

Come back to the same question with the fact checked, name the nearest lever, commit to one thing.

IN PERSON

**At a civic library**

The hard questions belong across a table. This framework's open questions are deliberately held for those rooms rather than asked over a call.

BETWEEN

**Sub-meetings, Thursdays**

Backup nights and smaller groups for anyone who needs to meet outside the cycle.

Inquiry and Return are the same question asked twice. That is how a room changes its mind in public, and has the record to show it.

**Tonight is the foundation, not the finished thing.** What these meetings become gets decided with the people who turn up to them.

STEPS FORWARD

# What happens next, in order

CYCLE 1 · NOW

**Finish the land**

Return meeting on 22 Oct: come back to tonight's question with the fact checked and name one parcel decision made at a layer we do not attend.

CYCLE 2 · NOV

**The instrument of force**

Where control over force divides, and what the Guard's state-level handle actually reaches.

CYCLE 3 · DEC

**The demos**

Name your district. Attend one meeting. Report back. That is the whole assignment.

STANDING · CC

**Grow the register**

155 rows in one county of fifteen. 36 of 155 carry a watershed. Next: finish Maricopa's watersheds, then one adjacent county.

STANDING · EVERYONE

**Publish the record**

Every meeting gets a recording, a verified transcript and a written record. Three of four past meetings now do; the fourth is tonight.

THE CONSTRAINT

**Build the list**

Zero consented contacts today. Until that moves, every cycle restarts from nothing.

The test for the register is not row count. It is whether one person can look up the district they live inside, find when it meets, and go. If it cannot do that for one person, the number of rows does not mean anything.