

Importance of the House of Players

As Read by Dr. Baskerville

28th House of Players Meeting - July 24, 2014

Good evening, Villoux House of Players. As I mentioned in the Opening Ceremony, this will not be a typical House of Players meeting. If this is the first House of Players meeting that you have attended, allow me to give you a brief synopsis of how the meetings generally work. The meetings always open with what is referred to as the "Opening Ceremony". In this time, I call the House meeting to order, I rap my gavel, and I reveal the topics that we will be discussing during the meeting. After the Opening Ceremony, we start "Department Updates". The Department Updates consist of each respective Department Chairman presenting a brief summary of all the activity that has transpired in their department over the past month. The Department Updates start with the largest department, the League of Legends Department, and work their way down to the smallest department, the Team Fortress 2 Department. It is common practice for the League of Legends Department Chairman to announce the winner of that month's League of Legends tournaments, encourage members of the House to register for next month's tournament, and give a brief update on how they are advertising their department to bring in new users. The Realm of the Mad God Department Chairman usually provides insight into the activities of each of the system's guilds, discuss problems facing the Realm Department and seek user solutions, and discuss new ways to make the Realm Department interesting to people outside of Villoux. The Minecraft Department Chairman, which has been me since the very first House of Players meeting, always gives brief updates on each individual Minecraft server, and asks for feedback from the House about how the servers could be doing better. Finally, the Team Fortress 2 Department Chairman generally discusses the results of last month's Team Fortress 2 tournament, whines about how no one pays attention to the TF2 Department, and begs for staff members. That then concludes the Department Updates portion of the meeting, and we move to a TeamSpeak Announcement. The TeamSpeak Announcement is an article read by the Executive TeamSpeak Operator, presently Mr. Nexemonsta, in which they discuss the flow of activity on Villoux's TeamSpeak server, inform the House of any changes to the

TeamSpeak regulations, and highlight anything else the Operation Department feels necessary to bring to the userbase's attention. Once the TeamSpeak Announcement is completed, we move to the Closing Ceremonies. In the Closing Ceremonies, I recognize an individual that has gone above and beyond in their line of duty, publicly thank that individual and present them with some form of gift certificate usually equating \$25 USD. I then proceed to thank all other members of the system's staff, and end on some heart-touching quote about coming together and doing something grand. If you have never attended a House of Players meeting before now, I hope that you now have a much better understanding of how our meetings work.

For over two years, the House of Players has served as a means of communication between the Chairman Committee and the Grand Council to the junior staff. Originally, when the Grand Council established the House of Players in February of 2012, it was said that the House would act as a way for users in Villoux to express their comments, questions, and concerns about the system's administration and any of our properties. Additionally, the House was to strive to serve as a community-building type program in which users would give recommendations and criticisms to the System Officials directly, and would then be able to proceed to debate and discuss the idea. Unfortunately, it seems that since the House's establishment, it has not served as a grounds of debate or constructive conversation. Whereas I will not argue that many great things in the system came as a result of House of Players meetings, the majority of the meetings only consist of the System Officials providing updates. Instead of serving as a public forum, the House has instead served as a type of media outlet to provide general updates and announcements to the userbase.

In December of 2011, when deliberating on whether or not to create the House of Players, one of our former and most well respected Grand Council Members, the honorable Mr. ZdPanthr posed the question "Is it really necessary?" The question stumped me for a moment, but after a brief moment to consider, I responded with "Yes. I feel that by establishing the House of Players, we make Villoux even more unique and different than other online communities. In founding the House of Players, we create a direct link between the smallest people in the system and the biggest people in the system. It is rare that I find such a link in many other large gaming organizations. Furthermore, if we give authority and power to this body of people, it makes Villoux even more unique because it makes the system a

player-run community.” Since the system’s establishment, Villoux has been different from other communities because, unlike the majority of other communities, Villoux is neither a dictatorship nor an autocracy. Meaning that there is no one “Owner” or “Leader” of Villoux, instead the system’s power and authority lies with a group of individuals, the Grand Council. This makes Villoux’s government an oligarchy, meaning that a group of people hold all of the ultimate authority. In most cases, this “group” is the Villoux Grand Council, consistent of six Grand Council Members, five Executives, and the one Villoux Chief of Staff, all of whom have exactly one vote on the Council. However, often times that group that holds the authority will instead be the Villoux Chairman Committee, the second tier of our government, which consists of each of the four respective Department Chairmen. The House of Players’ role in the oligarchy is to decide what the Chairman Committee and the Grand Council have a right to vote on. Before any department or server can join the system, they must first receive approval from the House of Players. This gives Villoux’s community an opportunity to voice support or opposition to potential new additions to the system. The power to strike a department or server’s right to apply to the system lies with the House of Players, meaning that it lies with the community. In my five years as serving as Villoux’s Chief of Staff, I have not once come across another online community in which the members of said community have the ability to override actions done by the owner or owners of the community. Yet despite the power that anyone is granted by attending a House of Players meeting, these last few months the attendance to House meetings has never been lower.

When the House was first established, it was common practice for nearly all but five members of the entire system’s staff to be in attendance; this included everyone from the Press Department to the Minecraft Department to the Grand Council. Most members looked forward to attending the meetings. However, in recent months only a quarter, if not fewer, members of the system’s staff have attended the meetings. That then makes the House of Players redundant, for with less than 50% of members in attendance, nothing can be voted on. Furthermore, it wastes the valuable time of myself and my fellow Department Chairman. Most of us spend hours on end each month writing our Department Update speech for no one to hear except for people that are already aware of what is taking place in our departments. Personally speaking, I feel degraded and embarrassed to stand before a group of individuals to present something that is meant to be a serious and helpful speech, only to have users turn up their music over my

voice, mute their sound, walk away from their desk, or simply tune me out. That is not even the beginning of the grief that I feel associated with the House of Players. Nowadays, it is a struggle to get users to attend the meeting. My Cabinet must spend time every day the week of the meeting informing users that the meeting is mandatory for all staff members, and that they are to contact me if they are unable to attend the meeting. Within moments of the announcements being delivered, I am bombarded with users informing me that they cannot attend the meeting. Whereas some of the users do have very valid reasons as to why they must be absent, most of them are either purely ridiculous or unbelievable. Comments such as “why do you like to waste an hour of my time every month?”, “you know no one really listens to any of you when you talk”, and “I don’t even sit at my desk during the meetings, I just walk away and pretend like I was there” do not only embarrass and degrade me, it soils the purpose of the House of Players meetings.

With that being said, at this time I would like to hold a vote in the House on a new idea. I am proposing that opposed to having House of Players meetings on a monthly basis, we instead have them during the work months of the system – January, May, and September. These months are referred to as the “work months” because it is at those points that we hold the System Census, which decides in what order the channels will be listed on TeamSpeak, and we hold Grand Council nominations. Should the House of Players continue its present function, but only three times a year opposed to eleven, I feel that we could bring back to former respect and attendance that the House once boasted. However, before making such a drastic decision, I wish to consult you, the House of Players. How do you feel? Are there too many House of Players meetings? Can the system do without holding them every month? Will Villoux still be able to boast our reputation of being a player-influenced community? I pose these questions to you.