



URBAN HENS

Public Information Centre

Pilot Project – Ward 2

Public Information Centre

Provide your input on a one year pilot project to regulate:

Up to 20 Residential Properties in Ward 2 to allow 3 hens per Residential Property



Regulations

- Application must be submitted to the Town for approval
- A maximum of 3 hens per lot are permitted on a residential property(excludes Multi-Residential)
- All hens must be at least 4 months old
- The keeping of roosters is prohibited
- A tenant must obtain permission from the property owner to keep hens on the owner's property
- The owner of the hens must reside on the property where the hens are kept
- Hens must be kept in their coops from 9:00 p.m. to 6:00 a.m.
- Hens must be kept in an enclosed hen run when not in their coop
- Hen coops and runs shall be a distance of 1.2m from the rear lot line and 1.2m from any side lot line of the dwelling lot on which the hen coop is located
- Hen coops and hen runs shall be a minimum distance of 3m from all windows and doors of dwellings that are located on an abutting property
- Hen coops shall be less than 2.4m in height
- Hen coops are not permitted in any front or side yard
- Hen coops and hen runs shall be maintained in a clean condition and the coop shall be kept free of obnoxious odors, substances and vermin
- Home slaughter of hens is prohibited and any deceased hens shall be disposed of at a livestock disposal facility or through the services of a veterinarian





Potential Benefits

- Fresher eggs
- Alternative to store bought eggs
- Greater control over egg source
- Supports local food diet
- Educational opportunities
- Companionship

Concerns: Public Health

Care & Handling

- Improper disposal of dead birds (especially if a bird has a contagious disease)
- Improper management of bird feces, litter disposal & backyard upkeep
- Improper food safety, egg handling, or home slaughtering techniques

Pathogen Transmission

- Common zoonotic diseases from bacteria easily transmitted from commercial poultry are Salmonella, Campylobacter, Yersinia and Listeria
- The risk of infections from exposure to these bacteria, particularly Salmonella, is especially high for young children, the elderly, pregnant women and people with weakened immune systems.
- Backyard chickens can be infected through contact with livestock, waterfowl, and wild/domestic animals & may not show symptoms of disease.

Concerns: Public Health

Analysis of Risks

- Risk for pathogen transmission is present, but can be mitigated with proper housing & hygiene when handling chickens & eggs.
- Adherence to proper hygiene (e.g., hand washing, maintaining and regularly cleaning chicken coops) will significantly mitigate the risk of disease acquisition which are commonly found in chickens including Salmonella

Mitigating Risks

- Mandatory chicken enclosures and construction standards
- Limit number of birds per household
- Prohibit mixing of commercial poultry & urban hens
- Establish minimum feed control practices & enclosures cleaning practices
- Outline safe disposal of waste (feed, feces & chicken carcass)
- Include rules/guidelines to inform the appropriate keeping of chickens
- Limit egg distribution to personal use
- Prohibit home-based slaughter of chickens
- Prohibit sale of chicken meat

Nuisances: Concerns

<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Noise</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Chickens will be a noisy nuisance	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Analysis of Risks</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Laying hens produce a variety of vocalizations, none of which are very loud.• The decibel reading for hens is between 50 and 70 dBs, depending on one's distance from the hens and any vegetation or barriers lying in between.
	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Mitigating Noise</u></p> <p>Prohibit roosters Roosters can reach decibels levels of 85 – 90 dba</p> <p>No chickens under the age of four months</p>

Nuisances: Concerns

Odour

- Unpleasant odours, from accumulation of manure and/or food scraps, can result if chicken enclosures are infrequently cleaned and food is left in the pens.
- Chickens only produce only a few tablespoons of manure per day.
- However, accumulation of manure can produce ammonia, which is harmful for chickens and unpleasant for neighbours.

Mitigating Odour

- Require enclosures to be maintained in a sanitary condition, free of obnoxious smells and substances
- Allowing the storage of up to 1m cubed of manure only if it is stored in a fully enclosed structure (such as compost bin).
- A group of ten chickens produces 2/3 lb of manure, less than a medium-sized 40-pound dog, which produces 3/4 of a pound.



Pests

- Hen enclosures can attract unwanted animals, including rodents seeking food scraps, and larger animals, such as raccoons, foxes, skunks, and coyotes, seeking eggs or a chicken.

Mitigating the Risk of Attracting Pests

- The risk of attracting pests can be addressed by taking necessary precautions.
- Rodents are not attracted to the chickens; they are attracted to chicken feed & other food scraps.
- Ensuring that all chicken feed is stored in a closed container inaccessible other animals is an effective means to address the potential problem of rodents.

Mitigating the Risk of Attracting Pests

- Hen enclosures should be constructed to prevent access to the enclosure by any other bird or animal.
- Owners are required to keep hens, as well as their food and water, in the coop between sunset and sunrise, and that the coops remain locked during that time.





Concerns: Animal Welfare

- Hens need shelter, food, water, adequate space, environmental conditions conducive to good health and the opportunity to socialize & engage in fundamental behaviors.
- A minimum enclosure size of 10 square feet per hen.
- Enclosure has netting or wire on top
- Hens have access to the ground
- Shade within the enclosure
- Hens have access to food & water

Concerns: Animal Welfare



Euthanize

- Prohibiting slaughtering or attempts at euthanasia by those who keep hens, as slaughtering by untrained individuals can result in unnecessary suffering.
- Hens at the end of their lives can be euthanized by a veterinarian, or taken to a farm or abattoir for slaughtering.

Abandonment

- Restriction on hens younger than four months. This is intended to reduce impulse buying of cute-and-fuzzy chicks, & the mistaken purchase of roosters.

Next Steps

- Public feedback to be received by November 6, 2015 by email to fdipassio@newmarket.ca
- Staff report to Committee of the Whole on November 30, 2015
- Council decision