

July 3, 2018

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Re: Petition – Update Existing By-laws to Allow Back Yard Hens in Greater Sudbury

At the City Council meeting of June 26, 2018 Councillor Kirwan submitted a petition to the City Clerk requesting an update of existing by-law in order to allow back yard hens in Greater Sudbury.

Please be advised that this petition has been forwarded to the General Manager of Corporate Services for review. It is the department that receives the petition who is responsible for communicating which of the following five paths they may choose:

1. The Senior Management Member may direct administrative action be taken to resolve or respond to the matter in question;
2. The Senior Management Member may seek further information from the originators of the petition, which might include a meeting etc.;
3. The Senior Management Member may report back to Council with a report for information or action;
4. The Senior Management Member may bring back a report recommending a new policy or new financial resources; or
5. May advise that no further action will be taken at this time.

For further information please contact Kathryn O'Leary at 705-674-4455, ext. 4328, or via email at: Kathryn.OLeary@greatersudbury.ca.

Yours truly,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'Brigitte Sobush'.

Brigitte Sobush
Manager of Clerk's Services/Deputy City Clerk

cc: Council Members
Kevin Fowke, General Manager of Corporate Services
Brendan Adair, Manager of Security and By-law

ROBERT KIRWAN

City Councillor for Ward 5

Robert Kirwan, M.A.(Ed), OCT
(705) 929-2778
robert.kirwan@greatersudbury.ca

Date: June 26, 2018

From: Robert Kirwan
City Councillor for Ward 5

To: City Clerk

Re: Petition submitted at City Council meeting of June 26, 2018
Back yard hens for the City of Greater Sudbury

Please submit this letter of support for the petition that I am submitting on behalf of Meaghan Delange.

Below I have inserted the content of an email that Ms. Delange sent me on June 17, 2018. It contains detailed information in support of her request and the end of her email contains some suggestions for consideration.

Email sent by Meaghan Delange to Councillor Robert Kirwan on June 17, 2018:

You may have already been contacted by a member of the community to speak about the allowance of back yard hens in Greater Sudbury. I am sending out this information to gain Ward support for said change. I hope that at your convenience we can further discuss the action of allowing backyard hens in Greater Sudbury.

Six years ago my husband and I moved to Greater Sudbury from Southern Ontario, we fell in love with the Valley and purchased our first Northern Ontario home just outside of ValCaron. We were hooked as were our children. Always within arms reach of sledding and atv'ing canoeing and camping. After two years of planting roots and enjoying what the north had to offer including a now established large veggie garden, we decided we wanted to add some hens to the family.

Our Children have learned so much by having chickens, we have always gotten them involved in gardening and this was just another aspect of learning where their food came from.

They have learned responsibility as part of their chores were to collect the eggs daily, (some of which were cracked fresh for breakfast), to let the chickens out of the coop each morning, make sure that they had food and water for the day and to put them to bed and securely lock up the coop at night. The children have also learned to keep the hens healthy by learning their behavior.

Keeping backyard chickens has become a very heated topic in many cities yet is something most people know a little about. Never would we have thought that the choice of getting back yard hens on a fenced in acre would have been out of the question in a city that lives mostly outdoors and at camps.

Those that are opposed to back yard hens often have misconceptions based on lack of correct information some of which I would like to clear up today.

Myth 1: Chickens make too much noise:

once a hen lays an egg she gets excited and talks about her accomplishments this goes on for up to 5 minutes once a day. Her clucks measure 63 decibels which is about the same as a normal adult conversation.

Crows calling to greet the day have been measured at 73 decibels. A running lawn mower has been measured at 90, a dog barking has been measured between 95 and 102.

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Myth 2: Chickens stink:

All animals have a distinct odor including people, any animal that is not properly cared for, or is living in cramped unclean conditions will start to smell and the longer they are neglected the more they will smell. If you have cats and don't clean the litter box it won't be long before it smells. If you have dogs (which now is unlimited), and you don't clean the lawn it won't be long until the smell affects neighbors. that's where standards and responsible pet ownership comes in.

Scrubbing the chicken coop weekly, a full bedding change monthly or sooner, straw and wood shaving are inexpensive and easy to come by. If water gets in the coop products like stall dry can be put down and in the summer the lawn can be raked down. A properly cared for small flocks will have no bad odor.

Myth 3: Chicken poop... what about the waste..... 6 backyard chickens produce less waste in one week then a medium sized dog and chicken waste can be mixed with grass clippings and leaves to create fertilizer for your garden. Dog and cat waste goes into plastic bags and then with the household garbage into the landfill you can't compost cat and dog waste.

Myth 4.... Chickens attract wildlife.... Chicken predators are the same as those of squirrels, rabbits and small birds, by themselves chickens do not attract predators if anything yards are more secure because owners have taken extra measures to keep the birds in, thus keeping predators out. If owners keep feed locked away and ensure that their hens are in secure well-built coops predators are simply not an issue.

Myth 5.... it'll cost the town too much..... some argue that changing and enforcing the law will cost to much really it will cost no more than enforcing the law for other animals. Some municipalities use a permit system and charge a small yearly fee. The kind of people who want to raise chickens in their backyards for eggs are doing so out of a sense of responsibility and self-sustainability they are not the kind that will be requiring animal control to come bust them for too many animals or making too much noise.

Myth 6...Chickens carry disease the most often use opposition that is allowing backyard chickens opens up the community to an outbreak of avian flu. The truth is that their small flock low-stress conditions reduce the spread of avian flu. The Canadian Center for Disease Control has stated that there is no need a present time to remove a family flock of chickens because of concerns regarding avian flu furthermore in 2006 green report states "when it comes to bird flu diverse small-scale poultry is the solution not the problem." Banning backyard chickens out of fear potential spread of avian flu is like banning home vegetable gardens because of fear of encouraging potato beetles wireworms are cutworms. Salmonella has also been brought up as a concern and as Brief reports states "In Ontario out of 1025 tested birds .3% of those birds tested positive for salmonella small flocks were significantly lower than federally inspected commercial flocks" and remember as reported by the CDC salmonella is an estimated to cause 1 million food-borne illnesses in the United States, but we don't stop eating we follow proper infection control techniques.

1/3 of all dogs carry salmonella and we can now have an unlimited number of dogs per property in the city so the salmonella argument is a moot point.

Myth 7...Property values may be affected. There is simply no documentation that shows correlation between backyard chickens and depreciating property values. In 2011 Forbes Magazine wrote about the most desirable places to live in America, 7 out of the top 10 places to live, allowed backyard hens some of these cities with the highest property values in America allow backyard hens places like New York City, Los Angeles, Denver, San Diego and San Francisco. More than that the suggestion that owning chickens would be dependent on permission from your neighbors, many would consider that, an infringement on the civil liberties that should be predicted in a democratic society we don't require neighbor permission for owning firearms, having dogs, riding motorcycles or have a house full of kids, we have rules and regulations to guide us on those points.

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Now that we have covered the typical why nots, let's turn it around and look at the reasons why we need to keep backyard hens.

Well cared for backyard hens have longer life spans than commercially grown hens. Backyard hens can live 8 to 10 years but some may or may not stop laying in about 3 to 5 years although they usually keep laying an egg a few times a month commercial hens are culled or killed at one to three years to make way for more productive layers it would be a backyard chicken owners decision to keep the ladies as pets after they stop laying or selling them

Chickens are natural no cost exterminators they eat Lyme disease causing ticks, fleas, West Nile causing mosquitoes, stink bugs grubs slugs as well as mice, baby rats and even small snakes all of this without putting down any nasty chemicals that could get into the soil.

The most economically and politically compelling reason to keep hens is to recycle food and yard waste which keeps it out of costly waste facilities as it composts into an organic soil builder for gardens. Its as easy as feeding your chickens kitchen scraps they, poop out nitrogen-rich fertilizer that you can compost with leaves and other untreated yard waste to fertilize your gardens. A single chicken can bio- recycle about seven pounds of food waste in a month if just 2000 households raised 3 hens it could divert it approximately 252 tons of waste from landfills and composting facilities annually. Imagines the potential savings to the town and taxpayers.

Backyard chickens are not livestock they are pets they have names they are part of the family, they provide entertainment and each have their own personalities.

The local food movement is flourishing, by keeping backyard chickens there is a sense of pride in being not just a consumer but a producer where you know what the animal ate, how it lived and how it was treated.

Backyard chickens produce high-quality cost-effective source of protein in the eggs they produce. Test done in 2007 by Mother Earth News showed free range eggs have the following advantages:

1/3 less cholesterol

1/4 less saturated fat

2/3 more vitamin A

2 x more omega-3 fatty acids

3 x more vitamin E

7 x more beta carotene

Science Daily reports that findings of a new study show that growing up in a farm surrounding or keeping animals directly affects the regulation of the immune system and causes a reduction in the immunological response to food protein thus having such animals can reduce foodborne allergies substantially.

Fresh food is simply taste better and eggs are no exception keeping chickens and gardening go hand-in-hand the garden provides for the chicken and in turn the chicken provides for the garden. People that garden and keep chickens are responsible landowners and therefore likely to be responsible pet owners as a parent these are things I want for my children I want them for your children I want them to know where their food comes from how hard and time-consuming it is to produce, that we should be respectful of our resources and I want them to experience the feeling of hard work paying and have a sense of accomplishment that goes along with it.

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We have a 500 + strong petition supporting back yard hens. In speaking with the various feed stores there are already 250+ chicken families living in Greater Sudbury problem free. We would like to have a permit system put in place for hen ownership with in Greater Sudbury a yearly or bi yearly fee would apply. Many other communities use this system and it works well ie: Kitchener, Kingston, Caledon, Toronto, Meaford, Mississauga and Hanover to name a few. Some of the rules that we would like to see apply to hen ownership are as follows:

- A maximum of 6 hens are permitted on any residential property.
- All hens must be at least 4 months old. (you can not determine weather a chick is a hen or a rooster unless it is vent sexed. This will also reduce the risk of people abandoning chick when they are no longer cute and fuzzy.)
- 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 run or fully fenced and secure yard when not in the coop.
- Hen coops and runs shall be a distance of at least 1.2m from the rear lot line and at least 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 located at least 15 m from any school.
- Hen coops and hen runs shall be located at least 7.5 metres from any church or business.
- Hen coops and hen runs shall be a minimum distance of 3 m from all windows and doors of dwellings that are located on an abutting property.
- Hen coops are not permitted in any front or side yard.
- Sales of eggs, manure and other products associated with the keeping of hens are prohibited.
- Hen coops and hen runs shall be maintained in a clean condition and the coop shall be kept free of obnoxious odours, substances and vermin.
- Stored manure shall be kept in an enclosed structure such as a compost bin in accordance with compost regulations, and no more than three cubic feet shall be stored at any one time.
- Home slaughter of hens is prohibited
- The coop must include a perch for each hen that is at least 8 inches long
- Nesting boxes appropriate for the number of hens
- The coop must be draft free with good ventilation and appropriate insulation for winter including appropriate roofing and flooring

We hope that the above information will secure the change needed to allow back yard hens in Greater Sudbury. The City website states that the City of Greater Sudbury is committed to creating an environmentally healthy and sustainable community, this is something we would like to see too.

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PETITION

BACK YARD HENS FOR THE GREATER CITY OF SUDBURY

We the residents of the City of Greater Sudbury support updating the domestic fowl ordinance to allow back yard hens.

We believe that backyard hens provide education, nutrition, companionship, natural pest control, and support a greener sustainable lifestyle.

We support a permitting process which will ensure responsible hen ownership.

By signing below, I show my support in having council update the existing by-laws and allow back yard hens in the City of Greater Sudbury.

NAME (please print first and last)	Addresses (your residential address in the City of Greater Sudbury)	Signatures (Only original signatures are permitted. If signing on behalf of a business or
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Please be advised the original petition is available for viewing at the Clerk's Services Department at 200 Brady Street, 2nd Floor, Sudbury

Notice of Collection and Consent Personal information on this form is collected under the authority of section 28(2) of the Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act for the purpose of informing City Council as to your views of a matter over which Council has the power to act. This information will not be used by the City for any purpose other than to ensure it meets Council's requirements for a valid petition and to ensure contact with the spokesperson or principal petitioner. Once submitted to Council, this petition becomes a public document and is available for viewing. Questions relating to the collection and use of this information may be directed to the Deputy City Clerk at clerks@greatersudbury.ca