



REQUEST FOR LEGISLATION
June 6, 2006

FROM: Edward B. Koryzno Jr., City Manager

SUBJECT: Amendment to the Animal Control Ordinance to allow Chickens

Background:

During the April 4, 2006 City Council meeting, Mr. Peter Thomason made a presentation to council asking to amend the animal control ordinance. His desired amendment is to allow the keeping of approved livestock in the City by permit. Specifically, he wants to raise chickens. Mr. Thomason cited a list of cities in other states that allow this including the City of South Haven, Michigan. He said the City of Ypsilanti allowed "yard birds" until the 1950's. Mr. Thomason's rationale for amending the ordinance is his concerns regarding the quality, cost, and supplements given to birds in the commercial chicken industry. Additionally, he believes a vital component of healthy urban communities is sustainable urban agriculture, people's desire to have more control of the food they eat, people who grow their own food tend to be invested in their communities, improve soil quality and reduce solid waster by composting.

Mr. Thomason is requesting council amend Sec. 14-7. "Restrictions on keeping certain animals. (a) *Pets*. No owners shall keep or house any animals or domestic fowl within the City except dogs, cats, non-poisonous insects, and captive-bred species of rodents, common cage birds, non-poisonous aquarium reptiles, aquarium amphibians, and aquarium fish commonly classified as pets and which are customarily kept or housed inside dwellings as household pets." He suggests simply adding "except by permit" to the ordinance. A permit application would contain the requirements, would be reviewed by ordinance officer/building official and possible establishing a citizens committee to oversee this activity.

Recommendation:

That City Council considers directing the City Manager to prepare an ordinance which allows the keeping of chickens in the City and present it to City Council for their approval. Staff has preliminarily discussed the idea of the keeping of poultry on residential property within the City. Significant concerns have been expressed regarding allowing chickens as household pets. In an urban environment, pets have customarily been limited to those primarily cared for within the household itself, thereby reducing the potential for neighborhood conflicts and nuisances. Current and future code enforcement staffing

levels are also a concern regarding the potential need for additional enforcement. It is recommended that City Council consider these factors.

Attachments: Resolution 2006 –135

Council Agenda Date: June 6, 2006

Council Agenda Item No. 2006-135

City Manager Approval: _____

City Manager Comments:

Finance Director Approval: _____