



City of Norman, OK

Municipal Building Council
Chambers
201 West Gray Street
Norman, OK 73069

Text File

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Title

ORDINANCE NO. O-1213-18 UPON SECOND AND FINAL READING: AN ORDINANCE OF THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF NORMAN, OKLAHOMA, AMENDING SECTION 3-501 OF THE CODE OF THE CITY OF NORMAN TO ESTABLISH REQUIREMENTS TO KEEP AND MAINTAIN CHICKENS OR LAYING HENS IN R-1, SINGLE FAMILY RESIDENTIAL ZONING DISTRICT, AND ADDING SECTIONS 3-115 AND 3-116 TO INCLUDE DEFINITIONS FOR REQUIRED STRUCTURES; AND PROVIDING FOR THE SEVERABILITY THEREOF.

Body

BACKGROUND: On September 12, 2012, staff presented the City Council Oversight Committee with a proposed ordinance related to the keeping of chickens in urban settings. The ordinance packet also included research the committee requested on the subject of keeping pygmy goats in the City limits, along with articles on diseases sometimes associated with poultry-keeping submitted by a concerned citizen.

In addition to staff and council members, discussion participants included several members of the public who have experience keeping chickens in the city and two citizens who oppose the idea. Staff also made a presentation on the subject of urban chickens to the Oversight Committee on April 4, 2012 and to City Council at the May 15, 2012 Study Session.

Current City ordinances restrict the place and manner under which chickens can be kept inside city limits. After the staff presentation, committee members discussed the conditions, place, and manner under which chickens could be kept, heard public comment, and requested that staff prepare a revised ordinance outlining such conditions.

DISCUSSION: During committee meetings and the study session, staff reported that a growing number of Norman citizens have expressed interest in keeping chickens, mirroring nationwide trends. The April 4 meeting packets included a 120-name petition the City received requesting this ordinance change. Based on their research, staff reported that growing interest in keeping chickens in urban settings is driven primarily by three factors:

- ☐ The local food movement is gaining interest and momentum around the nation and here in Norman;
- ☐ News about food recalls and other animal industry issues have provoked concerns about the safety of the food supply;
- ☐ Many citizens view the practice of urban agriculture, including the raising of backyard chickens, as contributing to great environmental sustainability.

Article V Sec. 3-501 of Norman's Municipal Code currently requires that chicken enclosures must be at least "100 feet from the nearest dwelling other than the owner's and 25 feet from the nearest property line". Proponents of urban chickens believe that this setback requirement effectively bans chickens in all but agricultural zones or large residential estates inside the city limits.

Committee members generally agreed upon conditions under which chickens could lawfully be kept based on the policy case studies presented from other communities, as well as input from Animal Welfare and City Legal staff. Committee members agreed that the policy change was intended to allow up to four hens, which can lay around 1-2 dozen eggs per week, enough to supply an average-sized family. Under the proposed amendment, four chickens or laying hens could be kept in fully enclosed coops with at least four square feet per animal that are located at least 25 feet from a neighboring house. Members agreed that roosters would not be permitted under the proposed amendment due to the modification of the setback requirement.

Regulations on the keeping of other domesticated animals, including the keeping of more than four chickens and roosters, would not change and could continue to be kept lawfully on lots that meet the previously defined setback requirements of 100 feet from the nearest dwelling unit other than the owner's and 25 feet from the nearest property line.

RECOMMENDATION: Based upon the above and foregoing, Staff has prepared Ordinance #O-1213-18 which incorporates the suggestions made by the Oversight Committee and Council.