



CITY OF DUNWOODY
41 Perimeter Center East, 2nd Floor
Phone: 678.382.6700 • Fax: 678.382.6701
www.dunwoodyga.gov

MEMORANDUM

To: Honorable Mayor and City Council

From: Warren Hutmacher, City Manager

Date: October 17, 2009

Subject: Backyard Chicken Raising Ordinance

Backyard chicken raising is the practice of raising chickens in a non-agricultural setting for the purpose of collecting eggs for domestic use.

Earlier this year staff was asked to research if owning backyard chickens was prohibited in residential districts in Dunwoody. According to our Zoning Code, chickens are allowed in certain districts, but not in residential districts. Additionally, neither the zoning code nor the general code of ordinances sets any regulation on keeping backyard chickens. Staff has not received any complaints regarding any prohibited backyard chickens in Dunwoody. However, staff has been requested to draft a proposal that would enable this practice to be legal in all residential districts in the City.

I have researched backyard chicken raising and have found that the practice is legal in many jurisdictions and is growing in popularity along with the organic food movement.

The City of Dunwoody has the authority to permit backyard chicken raising in residential districts along with the ability to regulate the practice to protect property rights and public safety.

For purposes of discussion, please review the following regulations regarding backyard chicken raising that can be placed in ordinance format if the Council wishes to proceed with allowing for and regulating this activity.

Staff recommendations regarding backyard chicken raising

- A text amendment be initiated to enable backyard chicken raising in all zoning districts in the City of Dunwoody
- An ordinance should be enacted that regulates backyard chicken raising with the following suggested regulations. The ordinance should be permissive enough to easily allow citizens to keep chickens on their property, but should be restrictive enough to protect the interests of neighboring residents from unnecessary noise and odor and the invitation of rodents, wild birds and predatory animals to the property. Additionally, the regulations are intended to ensure the humane treatment of animals.

1. Roosters and crowing hens shall be prohibited in the City of Dunwoody.
2. A maximum of 8 chickens may be kept at any one time on a single residential lot.
3. Permits shall be issued and need not be renewable except in the case of a change in ownership of the parcel. Purpose of the permit is to aid in the inspection of premise when necessary due to complaints and to help ensure that chicken owners are familiar with the requirements of the applicable ordinances and regulations.
4. Enclosures must be kept clean and sanitary and free from standing water. The enclosure must be designed and maintained in such a way that it is impermeable to rodents, wild birds, and predators, including coyotes, skunks, raccoons, dogs and cats.

Enclosures shall not exceed 6 feet in height and must allow for a footprint of at least 2 square feet per chicken housed in the enclosure. Maximum enclosure footprint size is 30 square feet. (to accommodate for nesting boxes, potential food storage and room to move around)

5. Enclosures must be located in a rear yard.

Enclosures must be setback at least 50 feet from the nearest residence, except that of owner. Enclosures must be setback at least 5 feet from the owner's residence.

6. Feed and any other food source provided to the chickens shall be stored in predator proof containers.
7. When no humans are immediately present and supervising the chickens, they shall be kept securely within the predator proof enclosure.
8. Enforcement shall be under the jurisdiction of the Dunwoody Municipal Court.