

Referred to Council  
and the  
ARCP Committee



# CITY COUNCIL MEETING OF:

FEB 15 2011

COMMUNICATION

No: 06-084

February 1, 2011

Dear Mayor and Council,

At the ARCP meeting on January 27, 2011, the committee agreed to ask staff for more planning information with respect to backyard hens. While this work is underway, we would like to take this opportunity to respond to some concerns that continue to be raised even though staff considered them carefully in their report and drafted the bylaw accordingly.

**1. Possibility of disease from backyard hens**

- a. There are many sources of disease, and hens have been assessed a very small risk
  - i. Ed Gardner, Manager of Environmental Health KFLA Public Health stated that backyard hens are not a public health issue (March 10, 2010)
  - ii. None of the lead federal and provincial departments on the issue have advised municipalities against backyard hens: OMAFRA Ontario Ministry of Agriculture Food and Rural Affairs, the Canadian Food Inspection Agency, or the Ministry of Natural Resources.
  - iii. City Staff's draft hen-related bylaws are more stringent than most municipalities. They are carefully prepared and incorporate many biosecurity controls.

**2. Backyard hens and impact on local agriculture**

- a. The National Farmer's Union local 316 supports backyard hens in Kingston because "increased participation of urban consumers in food production may lead to their greater appreciation and consumption of local foods."

**3. Nuisance concerns for backyard hens**

- a. Hens are no more of a nuisance than many other things we do, and again, Staff's draft bylaws are stringent and carefully considered.
  - i. Mandatory registration as a means to track owners and disseminate best practices;
  - ii. Hens enclosed at all times; Maximum of six hens; Hens confined to coop at night (At a distance of 1m, hens register 55db while laying an egg. Adult conversation registers 70 db.)
  - iii. No roosters;
  - iv. No sale of eggs or manure;
  - v. Manure and feed must be stored in secure enclosed containers;
  - vi. Tenants must obtain permission from the property owner to keep hens on the owner's property;

Backyard hens are living happily in Victoria, Niagara Falls, Vancouver, Portland, New York City, and hundreds of other municipalities in North America. It's a news story when the laws are changed, but never afterwards – backyard hens are long proven to be no big deal.

The change that petition signers want to see is not 'a hen in every yard', and certainly not other 'farm' animals. The change we want is a Kingston that recognizes in policy the importance of preserving and encouraging food skills. A Kingston where those who want to take tangible steps towards a more humane and sustainable diet are allowed to do so.

Regards,

*M Payne*  
Michael Payne

Urban Agriculture Kingston

(Feb 3/11)

cc: Council  
Clerk CAO

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DEPARTMENT OF  
THE CITY CLERK

FEB 03 2011

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