

## Mike Bozzo respecting Backyard Hens Pilot Project

Good day members of the planning committee . I hope this email finds you well. And thank you for continuing to support our community. It is much appreciated. I am writing to you to see if we can revisit the 'backyard Hen pilot' project for Hamilton. I have asked the council for the last few years to revisit this. Many other cities even the GTA have backyard hens.

Can you please tell me how we can further pursue this. Thank you. Mike p. Bozzo

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**Hamilton woman fighting for her 'urban' flock**

JOHN REYNOLDS THE HAMILTON SPECTATOR

Austin and Heather Bond with two of the chickens they are raising in their Hamilton backyard.

For more than three years, Heather Bond's backyard has been home to her four hens. Now she's been asked to remove them

**FALLON HEWITT**  
THE HAMILTON SPECTATOR

A Hamilton woman is hoping city staff will reconsider the idea of an urban chicken pilot project in order to save her four backyard hens. Heather Bond has had her four Barred Rock hens, lovingly known as her "Lulus," for more than three and a half years. After being diagnosed with chronic Lyme disease in October 2017, Bond brought her chicks home to eat ticks in her backyard, while also providing her family

with organic, free-range eggs. "They're a natural pesticide, they eat ticks, flies and slugs," said Bond.

And up until June 18, Bond said she had heard no complaints from neighbours and the hens' presence had gone unnoticed.

But that streak came to an end last week, when bylaw officers showed up on the doorstep of her Kensington Avenue South home. She said she was given three weeks to remove the hens or told she would be fined, as having hens

in Hamilton runs against the "Responsible Animal Ownership" by-law.

"They're our pets ... to get rid of them, it's going to be very upsetting," said Bond. "It's not like I've owned them for six months and got caught."

At risk of losing her "girls," Bond said she is now hoping to appeal to the city to once again consider allowing residents to keep chickens. The last time the idea ruffled some feathers in city hall was in 2018, when Coun. Jason Farr tried to convince the planning committee to vote in favour of an updated staff report on the concept. When that failed, he pitched

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## CHICKENS

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a pilot project in Wards 1, 2 and 3. Cities such as Toronto, Guelph, Caledon and Newmarket had already "embraced" it at the point, he added.

Neither idea made the cut.

On Wednesday, Farr said he'd be "supportive" if another councillor wanted to give it a go.

On June 16, the planning committee also received two letters from residents proposing the idea get a third run.

In a statement, Ward 3 councillor Nrinder Nann said that without full backing of council, there is "no way to amend" the bylaw as of Wednesday.

"My ideal scenario includes a protocol with public health resources to make this happen safely," said Nann.

Bond said if a councillor did consider bringing the idea forward, she'd stick her wing out as an example of how to do it "properly."

In the backyard, Bond has what she calls the "grand oasis" of chicken coops.

Built by her boyfriend, Bond said the coop has a wire bottom to keep pests such as rats out and it's elevated to keep the birds out of the snow and rain.

She said it also exceeds the required square footage for each hen.

"It definitely surpassed my expectations," said Bond. "My urban coop ended up turning out nicer than the rural one I had before."

She keeps her organic feed inside to deter rodents and the flock can only run freely around the yard if she and her son, Austin, are in the backyard.

"I go above and beyond," said Bond. "My goal is to educate people ... I think they have misconceptions."

Beyond her own sadness, she is most concerned for the impact losing the hens will have on her son. Taking care of the chickens has been his duty around the house and it's how he makes an allowance.

Austin ensures the hens are fed, collects their eggs and has learned "a sense of responsibility," said Bond.

With the chickens eating the ticks, she also believes she's worked to mitigate the risk of him contracting the same disease she lives with.

"He will be devastated," said Bond. "This isn't just hurting me ... it's hurting my son."

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