

From: Vicki Racz
Sent: October 8, 2020 11:28 PM
To: clerk@hamilton.ca
Subject: Proposal for Urban Hens Pilot Project Hamilton

Dear Councillors,

First, thank you for the work you have done for our wards and our communities. I write to you today regarding the upcoming Urban Hens Pilot Project. To us residents, especially in these uncertain times, it is important to have the freedom of choice within our own backyard.

There are many benefits to adopting this pilot program in the City of Hamilton:

- comprehensive requirements to ensure safety and cleanliness of both residents and hens
- reasonable restrictions such as limit of 4 hens
- mandatory regular cleaning of coops
- enables residents to have the liberty of self-sufficiency
- helps tackle food insecurity within our City by providing a low-cost source of eggs
- chickens divert waste from landfills as they consume much of household compost
- hens are quieter than dogs- a dog's bark is 90 decibels, whereas a hen's egg laying song is only 60 decibels

Please consider some important factors, this will not take away from the massive chicken farms that exist to feed the general population. Keeping your own hens not only provides a clean and fresh free range food source for personal consumption but many people suffer from food allergies that deters them from eating eggs as the chickens from feed lot farms are fed grains which are the issue for people with gluten intolerance and or celiac disease.

Coops can be kept clean and maintained weekly clearing out their waste. Chickens mainly poop when they roost at night. When kept clean they don't smell as bad as the neighbour with the constant barking dogs and the poop they never clean because they let their dogs do whatever they want.

Coops are also enclosed and when set up properly from predators the "pests" have no way in. There are many neighbours that keep bird feeders that attract rats, mice, opossums. These pests also bring along the fleas and ticks that live in their fur. Chickens love to forage and will seek out ticks as they are one of their favourite snacks. Responsible chicken owners will also provide the necessary requirements to allow their chickens to free range in their yards. Best practices to ensure chickens don't "run at large" are cutting flight feathers. Which grow back much like the wings of budgies people buy at pet stores that are clipped. This doesn't hurt the bird at all as will ensure they cannot fly high enough to escape.

Some other points I would like to add;

- by using self sustainable practices, cutting back on household waste, and composting Chicken waste in appropriate compost containers, this will reduce garbage in landfills, reduce cost to city for waste, while also providing backyard gardens with rich soil for their vegetable and herb plots. Plus, this will make less reliance on our already fragile commercial food system, allowing others who can't grow gardens or raise chickens easier access to the food from commercial services.

- There have been other councillors in other wards that have received similar emails to this one. I hope that this will be considered as there have been shortages of certain foods and prices have increased.

There are

also other pilots that are ongoing in the city of Toronto and has been successful as many of my friends that live there have backyard hens.

- I also encourage you to take a look at a few urban hen coop designs that many people have set up that are clean and successful. Many backyard hens that are kept are also what's called a bantam breed, meaning they are much much smaller than your average farm or meat production chicken,

which is what many people think of when the word chicken comes to mind. Hens are the only birds needed to produce eggs. Some examples of bantam chicken breeds are: Silkies, bantam Cochin, Rhode Island reds, Orpingtons as well as many others that are just beautiful, and many even keep them as pets as oppose to a food source.

I urge you to support this pilot proposal, as there are overwhelming positives to owning hens. This not just a matter of food security, it is a matter of freedom of choice in our own backyards. Can I count on your support?

Thank you very much,

Victoria