
City Council

Notice of Motion

MM14.8	ACTION			Ward:All
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Investigating the Feasibility of Allowing Backyard Hens in Toronto - by Councillor Joe Mihevc, seconded by Councillor Mary-Margaret McMahon

** Notice of this Motion has been given.*

** This Motion is subject to referral to the Licensing and Standards Committee. A two-thirds vote is required to waive referral.*

Recommendations

Councillor Joe Mihevc, seconded by Councillor Mary-Margaret McMahon, recommends that:

1. City Council request the Deputy City Manager, Cluster B, to report to the February 24, 2012 meeting of the Licensing and Standards Committee on a proposed strategy for allowing residents to keep a limited number of hens in their backyards.

Summary

In response to a growing local urban agriculture movement and desire by people to have greater control over their food supply, an increasing number of municipalities across North America have removed restrictions on the keeping of hens in urban areas. The cities which have modified their regulations include Vancouver, New York, Cleveland, Los Angeles and Kingston, Ontario.

The experiences of these cities have highlighted that residents can successfully keep a limited number of hens in their backyard in balance with the need to maintain the community's quality of life by establishing appropriate regulations that govern potential issues such as noise, odour, separation distances, selling of eggs, and waste disposal.

In Toronto, there are a number of residents who wish to keep hens in their backyards for the purposes of producing eggs for personal consumption but existing by-laws prohibit the keeping of chickens in Toronto. Backyard hens can be kept in a safe and appropriate manner that limits the potential for nuisances and public health concerns and City Council should give consideration to allowing residents to legally keep hens.

Therefore we recommend that City Council direct staff to prepare a report outlining a strategy that will allow residents to keep backyard hens in a safe and appropriate manner.

(Submitted to City Council on November 29 and 30, 2011 as MM14.8)