

Item – 2023.EC3.4

Motion: Ruby and Stella recommend that:

- 1. The UrbanHens TO Backyard Hens Pilot Program continues as is in Wards 4, 9, 10, 11, and 19 and parts of Wards 2, 3, 8, 12 and 14.**
- 2. Ruby and Stella request that the Executive Director, Municipal Licensing and Standards report back to the Economic and Community Development Committee in April 2025 with recommendations on expanding the program once Avian Flu has flown the coop.**

By continuing the program in these areas, it allows for the families with chickens to replace them should one die and leave a lonely chicken. As chickens are social birds, they need to have a companion. This is why the program has allowed for 2-4 hens.

In March 2022 city staff brought a report to this committee recommending city-wide expansion to create a safe and permanent hen keeping program with enhanced program requirements. In April 2022, City Council directed that the pilot program be extended until March 31, 2023 and that additional wards and areas be included in the pilot. In January 2023 the program was extended to May 31, 2023.

Staff reports have said that this pilot program has been a success with very few complaints. They have also commented that there are a limited number of vets available. For vets to provide care to chickens they need credentials. With the city not making this a permanent program it is like a chicken and an egg situation. Why would vets get the credentials if the program is not staying around?

The continuation of this program should be handled the same way that the MLS and By-Law handles all other animals like rabbits, pigeons, dogs and cats etc. on a complaints base before sending out by-law officers. By continuing the program in these areas' families will have to register their hens so MLS and Animal Services can continue sending out their educational emails advising on how to protect our hens from things like avian influenza. Without this program there will be many more illegal chickens who will not receive this important information!

I would like to thank staff for all of their work on this amazing program. My family so enjoys having chickens. We first registered for the program in 2019. Our ladies not only provide us with fresh eggs daily, which are delicious, they reduce the amount of food waste that goes into our green bin and they provide us with rich compost for our vegetable garden. They are part of the family the same as our two cats.

I hope you will consider these two motions.

Thank you

Sarah Doucette



Ruby



Stella

