



Backyard Hen Program

Department Report No. PED-2023-02

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Date: June 8th 2023

Presentation for: Committee of the Whole

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What is a Backyard Hen Program?



- A backyard hen program is a municipal program allowing property owners in residential areas to keep hens under certain conditions.
- As we will see, the number and location of hens to be permitted varies across municipal areas.
- There is no “gold star” example as a best practice as every municipality must to consider for itself what is appropriate use in residential neighbourhoods and areas.

Current Situation



- Provincial regulations in Ontario have traditionally separated agricultural and residential land uses in order to avoid conflict between farm operations and residential dwellings.
- In Champlain Township, the Animal Control By-law is silent on the issue of Backyard Hens.
- The zoning by-law defines poultry as part of livestock. Livestock is only permitted in agricultural and rural areas as part of a farm operation or hobby farm.
- The minimum lot size for a hobby farm is 5 acres. A hobby farm is subject to MDS.

Program Considerations



- Number of Hens
- Minimum Lot Size
- High Density Residential Areas (Row Housing, Apartments etc)
- Neighbourhood Compatibility
- Notification and Appeal Systems
- Standards for Animal Care
- Public Health and Nuisance
- Public Consultation

Core Regulations



Municipality	Minimum Lot Size*	Number of Hens	Permit System
Township of Russell	500m	3-5	Yes
Alfred and Plantagenet	None	6	Yes
Carleton Place	325 m2	6	Yes
Arnprior	500 m2	4	Yes
City of Edmonton	250m2	3-6	Yes
City of Vancouver	None	4	Yes
Quinte West	2,023 m2	4	Yes
Niagara Falls	370 m2	10	No

Implementation



- Most municipalities have a permit or license system to control and monitor the placement of hen enclosures in residential areas.
- Backyard hen licences are limited for applicants who reside on the property when hens are to be kept.
- Both renters and owners are equally eligible for permits provided any renter has authorization from the property owner.
- Of the backyard hen programs reviewed, most contained strong compliance and enforcement regulations.
- Council may consider testing the program by first adopting an 18 month pilot program.

Recommendations



- Minimum 500 square meter lot size
- Maximum of 30 licenses for Residential Lots in Champlain
- Maximum of 4 hens per lot
- Coop and Hen Run Design Standards
- License Program
- 18 Month Pilot Program
- Public Consultation Period 1-2 months

Questions and Comments

