

## Backyard Chickens – an update memo from Aaron Sloan for ADAC Meeting, Nov 26, 2020

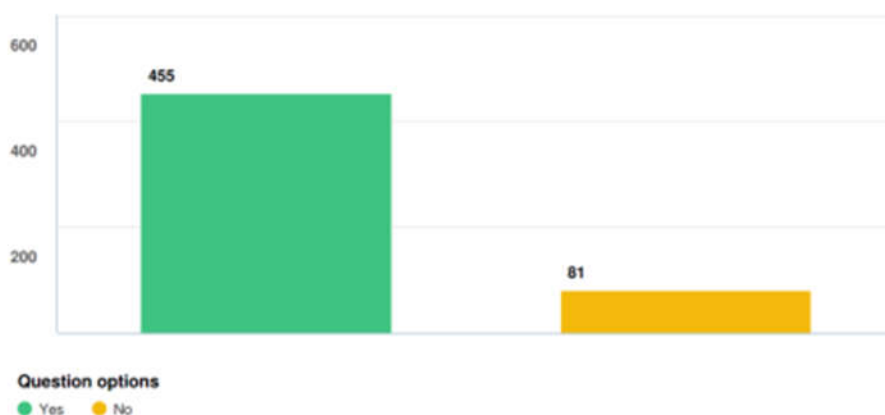
It is anticipated that the (Jan 2021) Staff Report to Council will contain the following:

In late 2019, a petition was presented to Council to propose an amendment to the current by-law to regulate animals in the City of Kawartha Lakes to allow for the keeping of backyard chickens. The author recommended a permit system be considered as a potential revenue source to the City and shared information about care and behavior, mitigation of predation and benefits of backyard chickens, including the importance of preserving the local agricultural history of the area. They advised that a petition with over 400 signatures has been submitted in support of the matter.

That the matter be referred to **staff to bring forward options to allow backyard chickens** by the end of Q3 2020.

Chickens back yard chickens have been a Council topic a few times over the years and were permitted for a brief period in Lindsay. The intention of this consultation is to provide some high level information/data for discussion and to receive comments of support or non-support for a backyard chicken program from the ADAC. I do realize the biosecurity will be a primary concern and OMAFRA and CFIA information has been included in my draft report. Part of the future program will include an education component for the use.

A public survey was completed in September 2020 and the survey received a good response rate of 536. The 1<sup>st</sup> question Currently, chickens are only permitted on agriculturally zoned properties. Should backyard chickens be permitted in residential areas, such as towns, villages and hamlets, with some limitations?



The 2021 report to council will not have a by-law to accompany it, because I am unsure if Council is prepared to pass one in the form that is being suggested and we are working to find the right fit for this issue. My feeling is that we will present some of the

suggested regulation to them but the bylaw that is created will be part of the animal control by-law in a future amendment.

A number of resources have been consulted and support for the backyard coops is occurring. Municipalities across Ontario including Toronto, Kingston and Orillia have already established safe healthy programs.

In my report draft, I will be trying to address issues such as coop size, chicken limits (4-6), vet care (health and welfare in general) rooster prohibition, odours, noise, set backs, minimum property size, manure management, laying nest, winter heat, pest control, dead stock, harvest (slaughter at an approved location and not a residential property) sales of eggs and meat and we may have a licensing component or inspections. It will be important to note to the ADAC that these coops are going to be residential and the regulations in this bylaw will not apply to agricultural properties or farming operations except perhaps the at large provision (not everyone like free range in their yard).

## Conclusion

The survey results and consultations appear to indicate public desire to allow backyard chickens with regulation to control the activity and nuisance related issues. By-law 2017-039 being a by-law to regulate animals in the City of Kawartha Lakes Schedule "A" currently prohibits chickens (gallinaceous birds) except in areas zoned for the agricultural use.

In review of by-laws in use by other municipalities, the following list of items have been considered or established as policy or regulation:

- Chicken limits;
- Prohibition of roosters;
- Minimum chicken age;
- Chickens must be enclosed in a coop with a run;
- Minimum run, coop dimensions and nesting area;
- Licensing, registration of coops;
- Minimum lot coverage including setbacks from the property lines and prohibition of placement in the front yard of a property;
- Standards for cleanliness, odours and vermin;
- Prohibition of meat and egg sales;
- Application process – includes permission from property owner in the case of a tenant,
- Veterinary and health requirements; and,
- Source Water Protection Areas.

Options at this time are as follows:

Status quo – Continue to prohibit chickens in residential locations that are not agricultural in nature or limited by zoning. Chickens would continue to be viewed as livestock.

Option 2 (recommended option) – 2-3 year trial program and by-law with limitations to certain areas of the city such as hamlets and villages with lots bigger than ½ acre or even simply limited coop numbers to an amount that can be inspected and approved without negative impact to current staff work load. Limits on the chicken number to 4 or 5 hens and prohibition of roosters etc. Some provisions similar to option 3 but 2-3 year trial.

Option 3 will basically be a full program for all non agricultural areas. 4-5 hens, Amendment to the By-law to Regulate Animals by removing Chickens as a prohibited animal and adding provisions to regulate and license coops to ensure that the coop locations are tracked and appropriate based on property size, coop is adequately sized, has a lockable door, is roofed and has nest boxes. The by-law amendment will also prohibit sale of meat and eggs, limit number of hens, prohibit roosters, prohibit noise, provide guidance for manure management, provide guidance for health and dead chicken disposal, welfare and provide for an inspection of the coop prior to the use and issuance of the license. The licensing of coops will be similar, to how we license dog kennels requiring a yearly inspection.

**Aaron Sloan**

Manager, Municipal Law Enforcement and Licensing

City of Kawartha Lakes

705-324-9411 ext. 1223