

MINUTES
June 9, 2020 – 5:30 p.m.
Planning and Zoning Commission
Online GoToMeeting

Present: Andrew Anderson, Kayla Bendorf, Jodi Hansen, Wendi Ingram, Steve Nienhaus and Robert McFadden
Excused: Rochelle Conway
Staff: Andrew Fangman, Assistant Community Development Director, Community Development
Christa Bailey, Office Coordinator, Community Development

Chairperson Jodi Hansen opened the meeting at 5:30 p.m. and read the mission statement.

Minutes:

Steve Nienhaus motioned to approved the May 12, 2020 and May 26, 2020 minutes; Andrew Anderson seconded the motion. All ayes, motion carried.

Zoning Ordinance:

Review of Regulations Regarding the Keeping of Chickens in Residentially Zoned Areas, Chapter 29 of Title 10 of City Code.

Jodi Hansen explained this agenda item was continuing a discussion from the May 26, 2020 Planning and Zoning Commission Special Meeting about potentially changing the regulations to allow chickens to be kept on residentially zoned properties of less than two acres and then she opened the discussion for comments from citizens.

Phil Fitzgerald, 3306 Mulberry Ave, stated that he does not support changing the regulations to allow chickens on smaller parcels and he believes that the Commission is hearing mostly from citizens in favor of the change but they are in the minority, the majority of citizens are opposed to the change but are not as outspoken. Mr. Fitzgerald referenced that this issue has been brought before council previously but did not result in any changes to the regulations. Mr. Fitzgerald stated that keeping chickens is not a cost-effective way of producing eggs and meat for most people and with the added possible negative impacts of chickens including offensive smells, predator attractant and City staff time to enforce the regulations it greatly outweighs any advantages of allowing chickens.

Dennis Taylor, 3204 Mulberry Ave, shared that at the previous meeting he raised several questions and concerns about allowing chickens on smaller parcels but none of the people at that meeting who supported the keeping of chickens addressed or offered solutions for his concerns. Mr. Taylor expressed if the regulations were to be changed it would inject more conflict between citizens into an already socially unrest environment. Mr. Taylor reiterated his concern from the previous meeting about the cost of enforcing new regulations and its impact on the taxpayers. Mr. Taylor also stated that he believes the value of homes would be negatively impacted by allowing chickens and he wants to live in a clean, safe and quiet community but chickens are in direct conflict of this.

Barbara Noble, 3212 Mulberry Ave, echoed Mr. Taylor's comments stating she is not in favor as she does not want to live next to farm animals and she is also concerned about neighbor relationships deteriorating, especially for smaller lots. Ms. Noble recommended that no changes be made to the regulations, noting her concerns about decreasing property values, health issues and disposing of chicken waste or carcasses.

Dyann Roby, 2208 Oak Valley Dr, stated she is opposed to changing the regulations as well as she is worried about liability issues, mistreating of chickens, disposing of chicken carcasses, predators, excessive noise and offensive smells. Ms. Roby believes changing the regulations would have a negative impact on the entire Muscatine community.

Bill Phelan, 2806 Termini Dr, expressed that he is opposed as well for all the same concerns the previous speakers described.

Robert McFadden shared an idea with the Commission about potentially leasing out small lots on the land around the dog park for people to keep chickens on. Jodi Hansen asked Andrew Fangman if this idea has been explored already to which Mr. Fangman replied it has not been and while he has not seen any other cities that have implemented such an idea, if there is enough interest it may be worth examining further. Andrew Anderson relayed a message from Peggy Gordon that the land around the dog park is part of the Pollinator Park and cannot be used for Mr. McFadden's idea.

Mr. McFadden stated that he received several calls from citizens who all voiced an opposition to changing the regulations.

Steve Nienhaus questioned if Mr. Fangman had come across any studies during his research that showed property values decreasing due to chickens. Mr. Fangman reported that type of study would be difficult to establish and as such he had found no specific studies relating to that. Wendi Ingram alleged that as a real estate agent she feels like property values would go down since typically the only instance in which the property value is not affected by an additional shed is when the shed exterior matches the exterior of the home. Mr. Nienhaus asked if poorly maintained dog houses affect property values as well and Ms. Ingram said that there are actually not many dog houses in Muscatine.

Ms. Hansen asked Mr. Fangman for an update on the potential of a chicken rearing class and Mr. Fangman explained that a class is offered through the Eastern Iowa Community College at the Davenport campus location because Davenport and Moline currently require their citizens to attend the class to have chickens but if Muscatine decides to pursue this route they would most likely offer the class at the Muscatine campus as well.

Mr. Anderson shared that he received several calls and comments from community members who were all opposed to changing the regulations as well. Ms. Ingram added that she received several comments as well and they were all opposed also. Mr. Anderson commented that it feels like the regulations should not be changed at this time.

Wendi Ingram motioned to not make any changes to the regulations regarding the keeping of chickens; seconded by Robert McFadden.

Four ayes: Wendi Ingram, Andrew Anderson, Robert McFadden, Kayla Bendorf

Two nays: Steve Nienhaus, Jodi Hansen

Motion carried.

Meeting adjourned at 6:01pm.

ATTEST:

Respectfully Submitted,

Jodi Hansen, Chairperson
Planning & Zoning Commission

Andrew Fangman, Secretary
Assistant Community Development Director