

March 30, 2021

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Dear Council

I am writing to ask you to reevaluate and pass a general amendment for the bylaw on having chickens in West Elgin.

Here are some general information about having chickens at home.

- The number 1 reason people like chickens: Chickens provide a valuable low-cost food source.
- Chickens provide value as a pet, teaching kids about responsibility through caring for an animal who can love them back.
- Chickens divert waste from landfills. Up to 50% of all household waste is compostable and chickens are happy to eat much of that waste. Introducing chickens reduces the cost of disposing of waste.
- Chicken manure is recommended by the US Extension Colleges for use in composting when it is aged for 6 months prior to application as an effective means of eliminating the risk of disease.
- A dog's bark is 90 decibels and our city allows 4 dogs which has a cumulative maximum possible noise level of 100 decibels (sound pressure is a logarithmic scale).

- A hen's laying song is 60 decibels so it would take 12 hens producing noise at the exact same time to produce more noise than 1 dog.
- A rooster is as loud as a dog barking, though it tends to crow more often than dogs bark. Roosters can be kept in a way that helps them be quieter and they should not be regulated more strictly than dogs.
- If chicken food is not properly kept it can attract unwanted animals (e.g. mice). However, a homeowner can also make mistakes that attract mice by doing a bad job of composting, putting out birdseed, or putting out dog or catfood and yet most cities do not regulate those activities.
- A chicken's manure should not smell if processed properly. Cat and dog manure are generally advised not to add to a compost bin because of the risk of spreading disease to a garden.
- It takes 10 chickens to make as much poop as 1 large dog.
- Backyard Chickens present a health risk to humans from salmonella infections. However, wild birds (like geese) also present this risk as do reptiles like turtles. Dogs transfer diseases to humans such as worms that can cause blindness and even death. Dog-to-human worm infections occur at a very high rate, but we are so used to dogs in our lives that we do not judge it as a surprising risk.

Sincerely yours

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