



CITY OF ST. ALBERT ADMINISTRATIVE BACKGROUNDER

TITLE: HEN BYLAW AMENDMENTS

PURPOSE OF REPORT

The purpose of this report is to present a motion for which Councillor Hansen gave notice on March 15, 2021.

PROPOSED MOTION(S):

That Administration present for Council's consideration, amendments to the Hen Bylaw to allow the Licensing Authority to permit keeping up to six hens on a licensed property, together with such other amendments as Administration may recommend to protect the health of the hens and minimize their impact on adjacent properties.

ALIGNMENT TO PRIORITIES IN COUNCIL'S STRATEGIC PLAN

N/A

ALIGNMENT TO LEVELS OF SERVICE DELIVERY

Service Name: Planning & Development Department

Service Definition: Process payments, issue licences, and respond to resident inquiries regarding the Backyard Hens Program.

Service Component: Hen Licence purchases and renewals.

Current Service Level: Resource capacity within the Planning Branch exceeds the existing staff resourcing, due to unprecedented amounts of current planning applications, the Sturgeon Annexation, the Edmonton Annexation, and delays with the adoption of the new Municipal Development Plan – *Flourish*.

ALIGNMENT TO COUNCIL DIRECTION OR MANDATORY STATUTORY PROVISION

On March 15, 2021, Councillor Hansen gave the following motion:

That Administration present for Council's consideration, amendments to the Hen Bylaw to allow the Licensing Authority to permit keeping up to six hens on a licensed

property, together with such other amendments as Administration may recommend to protect the health of the hens and minimize their impact on adjacent properties.

BACKGROUND:

The Hen Bylaw 32/2018 was passed in January 2019. Since the program began, twenty-four (24) households have been approved a Hen Licence. Currently there are twenty (20) active licences, as four households have decided not to renew their licence for another year.

When the Hen Bylaw was written, St. Albert was one of the first communities in Alberta to embark on a hen keeping program. Based upon best practice research, four hens per residential property was the most common number found in municipalities with urban hen programs. The section below outlines the maximum number of hens permitted in other jurisdictions across Canada.

Two (2) hens

- City of Airdrie (AB), if the property area is less than 400 sq. m.
- City of Brampton (ON) without a licence

Three (3) hens

- Town of Crossfield (AB)
- Town of High River (AB)
- Town of Okotoks (AB)

Four (4) hens

- City of Airdrie (AB), if the property area is equal to or greater than 400 sq. m.
- Town of Caledon (ON)
- Village of Clive (AB)
- City of Colwood (BC)
- City of Grande Prairie (AB)
- City of Red Deer (AB)
- City of Surrey (BC)

Five (5) hens

- City of Kamloops (BC)

Six (6) hens

- City of Campbell River (BC)
- City of Edmonton (AB)
- City of Kingston (ON)
- City of Whitehorse (YT)

Eight (8) hens

- City of North Vancouver (BC)

Ten (10) hens

- City of Brampton (ON)
- City of Niagara Falls (ON)

Recently, program participants have requested that St. Albert increase the maximum number of hens permitted, from four (4) to six (6), for the following reasons:

- Introducing one hen to an existing flock is difficult, due to the pecking order behaviour amongst chickens. Therefore, it would be safer to introduce two or more hens to an existing flock, to eliminate the risk of pecking. Also, before new hens are introduced to a flock, they should be isolated. As such, isolating at least two hens together can enable socialization before being introduced to a flock.
- To increase warmth inside a hen coop, particularly during the colder months.
- To allow for more eggs. Hens tend to hatch eggs less during the winter months, and the costs involved with building a hen coop and the number of eggs received does not balance out.

Given the reasons above, Administration feels it is reasonable to increase the number of permitted hens from four (4) to six (6) in St. Albert. As such, Administration will review the Hen Bylaw and propose amendments to support the increase, such as hen coop design. In addition, Administration will take the opportunity to address other various amendments to the Hen Bylaw, such as the application process.

Due to constraints with staff resourcing, the earliest date that the proposed amendments can be brought back to Council, is May 31, 2021.

Report Date: April 6, 2021

Author: Tracy Tsui

Department: Planning & Development

Deputy Chief Administrative Officer: Kerry Hilts

Chief Administrative Officer: Kevin Scoble