



City of Harrisonburg, Virginia

Office of the City Manager

409 South Main Street
Post Office Box 20031
Harrisonburg, VA 22802
(540) 432-7701 / FAX (540) 432-7778

G. Chris Brown
City Attorney

TO: Kurt Hodgen, City Manager
FROM:
DATE:
RE: Amendment to allow the keeping of chickens on school property to increase number of chickens permitted

Summary: The proposed amendment to Section 15-2-24, Fowl, chickens and other domestic birds, would allow schools to keep chickens on school property, provided the property otherwise meets the conditions for a chicken permit. The proposed amendment also increases the number of chickens allowed with a permit from four (4) to six (6).

Additionally, the amendment clarifies that chickens kept in violation of the ordinance may be impounded and confiscated by the animal control officers, and clarifies the requirements for chicken pens.

Background: The proposed amendment to allow schools to keep chickens on school property comes at the request of Amy Sabarre, Director of STEM Education for Harrisonburg City Public Schools. Attached is a detailed proposal written by seventh grade students at Skyline Middle School explaining their reasons for requesting this ordinance amendment.

The proposed amendment increasing the number of permitted chickens from four (4) to six (6) addresses a reoccurring complaint that chicks are often only sold in sets of six.

The proposed amendment also adds language to ensure animal control officers can enforce the chicken permits by impounding or confiscating chickens kept illegally, and provides clearer guidance on acceptable chicken pens.

Key Issues: There may be concerns from the local poultry industry, particularly regarding the unintentional spread of diseases.

Environmental Impact: N/A

Fiscal Impact: N/A

Prior Actions: N/A

Alternatives:

- (a) Approve the proposed amendment to Section 15-2-24 as presented;
- (b) Approve the proposed amendment to Section 15-2-24 with changes;
- (c) Deny the proposed amendment to Section 15-2-24.

Community Engagement: Mr. Hobey Bauhan, President of the Virginia Poultry Federation, was contacted and informed of this proposal. At that time, he did not have any immediate input.



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Recommendation: Staff does not object to the amendment allowing schools to receive permits to keep chickens, and recommends approval of the remaining aspects of the amendment.

Attachments:

1. Proposal written by Skyline Middle School students and approved by the HCPS STEM Director.
2. Redlined version of Section 15-2-24 reflecting proposed amendments.
3. Clean version of Section 15-2-24 reflected proposed amendments.

Review:

The initiating Department Director will place in Legistar, in sequence of transmittal, the names of each department that must initial their review in order for this item to be placed on the City Council agenda. The completion of review only addresses the readiness of the issue for Council consideration. This does not address the recommendation for approval or denial of the issue.

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