

OPEN HOUSE COMMENTS

January 28, 2025

Council Chambers - 18 Centre Street, Spencerville



Proposed Zoning By-Law Amendment - Domestic Fowl Coop

COMMENT NUMBER	COMMENT	RESPONSE
1	What happens if someone just starts a chicken coop without a license or proper information?	We're looking into this. Currently, it is a zoning bylaw compliance issue. If we receive a complaint and the use is not permitted or does not comply with zoning by-law requirements, the township will request that the use cease or be brought into compliance. Zoning compliance can be a lengthy process. Investigation is complaint-driven. Similar to someone constructing a building without a permit. When we require licensing, it's easier to enforce rules and penalties.
2	10 metres from a door or window? Does this include a window on a shed?	The 10 metre setback rule is intended from any window or door from any residential dwelling on the subject property or on the adjacent property. Windows from sheds or other accessory structures are not subject to this provision. We will look into clearer language.
3	Are the birds allowed to be free in your yard?	It is intended that the birds only be located within the coop and run areas. We will look into the wording to provide clearer language and wording for the settlement area vs rural area.
4	What about a current coop that may or may not meet these regulations?	We are looking into this. If this remains only a zoning by-law requirement, then any coop established prior to the changes would have legal non-complying status and may continue, however if that use stops and starts again, it will have to comply with current requirements.
5	For rural properties, why 3 instead of 5?	It is intended to reduce the number of fowl from 5 to 3 in the settlement area. The proposal is to try and harmonize the provisions to apply to all domestic fowl coops. We can look into alternative wording to separate the settlement provisions from the rural.
6	Are you licensing per coop or per bird?	The intent of the licensing or application process is to apply it to the coop only and not individual birds.
7	What about everyone that has a coop now that doesn't meet these regulations?	see question number 4 above.
8	There are standard size and Bantam size chickens. Laying hens are considered standard. Maybe more could be permitted if they are smaller (Bantam).	The number of fowl is based on the average size. There are no provisions to permit more or less fowl based on size.
9	Suggest different set of provisions for permitting chickens on 3 acre lots in rural area.	The proposed changes to the zoning by-law provisions is to permit such use in a settlement area. It is not our intent to change the provisions which would negatively impact the rural community. We will look into the current number of fowl permitted on larger lots in the rural area (3.5 ac to 1 acre). Lots greater than 3.5 acres are subject to the Hobby Farm Provisions of Section 4.5(1) of the zoning by-law which are permitted to have additional animal units.

10	They become pets. We don't want to get rid of them when they aren't producing. The Rural area should permit more.	see question number 9 above.
11	Cost associated with licensing? This seems costly to implement. Even just one visit for an hour costs the municipality \$40. People won't want that to come out of taxation.	The township has not made a decision on implementing a licensing or application system. A cost may or may not be applied. It is intended that any system is to be a simple process and for any owner to apply for. Web-based applications or licensing can be an option. It was envisioned that the cost of the application would cover the inspection.
12	Coops will need to be moved. Do I need an application because I moved it?	The intent of the licensing or application process is to apply it to a "building envelope" area where someone can locate the coop. We understand that there are designs which are mobile which allows the coop and run to be moved and located within the rear yard. We also understand that if there is a need to relocate a permanent coop then it can be relocated within the defined area. This will provide flexibility and not require someone to constantly come back for approval.
13	If this isn't an issue in the Township, there should be less barriers. 5 isn't enough in rural areas.	see question number 9 above. We can look into this at a future date.
14	I feel that licensing shouldn't be applicable in settlement areas.	Licensing in the settlement area is important. Township staff will be made aware of coops in the settlement area and can keep track of them. We can also use the information to address complaints as staff will have an approved plan which the owner will have to comply with.
15	Education portion should be available on the website at all times.	The township will gladly add an educational component on our website regardless if there is a licensing or application process.
16	Greatly discourage any licensing or permitting requirements. In the building industry, this hasn't worked. Over the last year, building permits have doubled in cost. Notice given for the meeting was misleading. There wasn't enough advertising about permitting. Permitting 5 chickens in unreasonable. Your tracking would never be up to date.	The Open House is not a mandatory requirement under the Planning Act for this type of amendment. The township held an Open House to obtain public input and suggestions prior to a formal Public Meeting. We are very happy with the turn out and discussion. See question 9 above for more.
17	There will be lots that can't meet all of these setbacks	That is correct. The requirements may not be suitable for all lots. The required setbacks from lot lines and adjacent residential uses as well as setbacks from a well or well head protection zone is to address potential impacts on the continued enjoyment of adjacent residential uses and their outdoor space, protect ground water in the rural or partially serviced settlement areas and to protect the users of the subject property. Some lots may be too small to permit the coop.

18	Currently have zoning bylaw in place regarding domestic fowl coops? How is this enforced?	Currently there is no way the township is made aware of the establishment of a domestic fowl coop or if it would be permitted on a subject property. We would hope that residents have done their diligent and researched the requirements prior to establishing the coop and follow the regulations. We are only made aware of such issues on a complaint driven basis.
19	12 ducks smell awful.	This is an example of why the regulations have been put in place.
20	What if we've made a complaint and nothing is done?	A complaint can be made in many ways. One is to visit our website and make an online complaint. This will create a ticket which can be tracked and will be addressed by staff. You will be given a ticket number you can always follow up on. Another way is to contact the Planning and Building Department by phone or email. We can take your information and create a service ticket for your issue to be addressed. It is always best to have your concern submitted in writing in email or the online portal for a paper trail. People can always contact me (Municipal Land Use Planner) anytime at the email address and/or cell number within the presentation or on the business cards provided at the meeting.
21	What is the primary driving factor behind this change?	Some residents in the settlement area approached our Councilors and requested that the township look into permitting domestic fowl coops to be provided in settlement areas, similar to other municipalities.
22	Has anyone reached out to Augusta? Do they have a licensing requirement?	At this time we are reaching out to the public for community feedback. We will be reaching out to other municipalities about the positive and negative issues when applying a licensing or application system for domestic fowl coops.
23	Concern for fee increases. Btw, coyotes can change the amount of chickens you have overnight.	Any fee applied would be nominal. This would be a decision of Council if a fee will be applied or not. The permit will be for the coop use only and not applied per fowl. The intent is not to have an owner re-apply each time if the number of fowl changes as a result of death or other.
24	One township has different fines for different non-compliance issues.	We will look into this if the township decided to apply a licensing system and by-law.
25	More people should be aware that we are reducing the number from 5 to 3 for the rural area.	See questions 5 and 16 above.