

City Council approves backyard hens in Edwardsville

by Steven Spencer, Staff Writer
January 3 2018 11:26 AM

EDWARDSVILLE - The Edwardsville City Council voted 5-2 Tuesday night in favor



of approving an amendment to the animal ordinance to allow for the keeping of domesticated chickens.

The ordinance was sent back to committee, after being discussed at council last month, due to the number of licenses and the interest of council members to institute a trial period for domesticated hens.

"One of the top changes was, since this was last in council, we have reduced the number of licenses to 20 and have truly made this a trial period for domesticated chickens," Alderman William Krause said. "During the course of the two years that this is to pass we have a findings and fact report with several items, that would document how this is unrolled with number of escaped hens or if there have been disturbances with the neighborhoods. Then two years from now it will be up to council to reauthorize and then raise the number of licenses if there are no serious issues with the ordinance as it is currently laid out."

Council's approval allows up to 20 licenses to be permitted and a maximum of six female chickens to each citizen who obtains a license. Each applicant is required to have an approved occupancy permit for their chicken coop from the building inspector. The size of the coops are limited to 50 square feet and seven feet in height with a run space of 10 square feet per chicken required.

"We do require that the home owners surrounding the property would have to sign off on this and also if you're apart of a homeowners association, you would also require proof from the home owners association," Krause added.

Each license will be valid for a one year period for a \$50 fee in addition to standard building permit fees that would be required for construction of the coop. The chicken licenses will need to be renewed annually for \$25 and do not travel with the owner if they were to move and can't transfer to a new owner of the licensed location.

Although the ordinance was approved for a two-year trial period, some council members expressed their concern regarding the hens. Alderman Janet Stack said that although she is still on the fence about the hens, she thanks the committee for listening and addressing everyone's concerns and requests for changes.

"I'm still on the fence," Stack said. "I think we can try a trial and see what happens."

If the city of Edwardsville decides to eliminate the possession of chickens after the two-year period, then those who have obtained licenses would be allowed continue to maintain their chickens on their property until they died but no replacement chickens would be allowed.

"Since this is a trial period there's more provision within this ordinance for control and to ensure that there's not a nuisance to the neighbors than we have for many of our other ordinances."

The ordinance only allows the keeping of hens, roosters and the sale of eggs remain prohibited. While there is no restriction on the species of chicken the ordinance does state a minimum of two chickens and maximum of six.

"If I could just quickly thank all of you involved in this process," Mayor Hal Patton said. "Every one of these council members has had input and had very constructive dialogue."