



Town of Cortland Agenda Request

(SUBMIT FORM TO THE TOWN CLERK NO LATER THAN ONE WEEK BEFORE THE SCHEDULED MEETING)

ALL REQUESTS ARE SUBJECT TO THE APPROVAL OF THE MAYOR

RESOLUTION ORDINANCE INFORMATION OTHER

DATE PREPARED: 01/08/26

FOR MEETING ON: 01/12/26

DESCRIPTION/TITLE: ALLOWING DOMESTICATED HENS AND BACKYARD COOPS

REQUIRED ACTION: ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF RECEIPT OF PLANNING COMMISSIONS FAVORABLE RECOMMENDATION OF ZONING TEXT AMENDMENT.

MOTION FOR A VOTE OF APPROVAL OR DENIAL OF ORDINANCE. (ACTION ITEM)

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: ZONING ADMINISTRATOR RECOMMENDS THE BOARD CONSIDER THE PLANNING COMMISSIONS RECOMMENDATION AND ORDINANCE

STATEMENT OF SUMMARY: A ZONING TEXT AMENDMENT IS REQUIRED TO ALLOW THE REQUIRED COOPS, AS A PERMITTED ACCESSORY STRUCTURE, IN-LINE WITH THE DIRECTION TO FACILITATE THE KEEPING OF CHICKENS WITHIN TOWN LIMITS

AGENDA PLACEMENT:

BOARD REVIEW OF PENDING BUSINESS NEW BUSINESS CONCERNS STAFF REPORTS
 COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE PRESIDENT'S REPORT CONSENT AGENDA UNFINISHED BUSINESS
 PUBLIC HEARING

Prepared by: BCW

Approved by:

Date

**TOWN OF CORTLAND
COUNTY OF DEKALB
STATE OF ILLINOIS**

ORDINANCE NO. 2026-XX

**AN ORDINANCE ALLOWING DOMESTICATED HENS AND CHICKEN
COOPS/ENCLOSURES SUBJECT TO CERTAIN REGULATIONS**

**ADOPTED BY THE MAYOR AND BOARD OF TRUSTEES OF THE TOWN
OF CORTLAND, DE KALB COUNTY, ILLINOIS ON THE
_____ DAY OF _____, 2026.**

Effective Date: _____

ORDINANCE NO. 2026-XX

TOWN OF CORTLAND, ILLINOIS

**AN ORDINANCE ALLOWING DOMESTICATED HENS AND CHICKEN
COOPS/ENCLOSURES SUBJECT TO CERTAIN REGULATIONS**

WHEREAS, the Town of Cortland (the “Town”) is a non-home-rule municipality created in accordance with the Constitution of the State of Illinois of 1970 and the laws of the State; and

WHEREAS, pursuant to Sections 11-5-3, 11-5-6, and 11-20-9 of the Illinois Municipal Code (65 ILCS 5/11-5-3, 5/11-5-6, and 5/11-20-9), the Town of Cortland has the power to regulate the keeping of animals including domesticated hens within the Town; and

WHEREAS, the Mayor and Town Board deem it appropriate to modify various provisions of the Cortland Municipal Code in order to allow and regulate the keeping of domesticated hens within chicken coops/enclosures in furtherance of the health, safety, and welfare of the citizens of the Town of Cortland; and

WHEREAS, given that portions of the zoning chapter of the Cortland Municipal Code require amendment, a public hearing was held before the Cortland Planning Commission on December 4, 2025, in accordance with state law; and

WHEREAS, the Cortland Planning Commission has recommended approval of text amendments to the zoning chapter in accordance with its Recommendation Letter PC 25-01, which is attached hereto and incorporated herein as “Exhibit A” to this ordinance.

THEREFORE, BE IT ORDAINED BY THE MAYOR AND THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES OF THE TOWN OF CORTLAND, DE KALB COUNTY, ILLINOIS, AS FOLLOWS:

SECTION ONE: That Title 4, “Public Health and Safety” shall be amended by modifying the current subsection M of Section 4-2-1 to provide as follows (strikeout below to be deleted):

4-2-1: Nuisances Enumerated

- M. *Keeping Animals or Fowl.* To keep or suffer any swine, goats, ~~chickens~~, ducks, and geese in any enclosure or pen within the town unless within an agricultural zoning district, or to keep house or pasture within the town any swine, sheep, goats, ~~chickens~~, ducks or geese so as to be offensive to those residing in the vicinity.

SECTION TWO:

That Title 5, “Police Regulations” shall be amended by adding a new Article B as follows:

CHAPTER 1, ARTICLE B– DOMESTICATED HENS

5-1B-1: Definitions

- Coop: An enclosed structure with a roof for housing hens.
- Domesticated Hen: A female chicken (*Gallus gallus domesticus*) kept on residential or agricultural property as permitted.
- Rooster: A male chicken (*Gallus gallus domesticus*); prohibited within town limits.
- Slaughtering: Killing of hens for any purpose (except for humane reasons); prohibited.

5-1B-2: Keeping of Domesticated Hens

- A. Hens may only be kept in accordance with the provisions of this Article.
- B. The keeping of hens must avoid nuisances and unhealthy conditions.
- C. No keeping of hens shall unreasonably interfere with the use of neighboring properties.

5-1B-3: Restrictions

- A. Only lots zoned and used for single-family purposes (or agricultural property) that are 11,000 square feet or larger may have hens.
- B. No more than six (6) hens per lot shall be permitted.
- C. Roosters are prohibited.
- D. Coops must be in rear yards, located not less than twelve (12) feet from property lines, and not located within any easement area on the subject property.
- E. Slaughtering is prohibited.

5-1B-4: Coop and Run Requirements

- A. A chicken coop up to one hundred and forty-four (144) square feet with a maximum height of ten (10) feet, and an enclosed outside run of at least thirty-two (32) square feet, is required.
- B. No electric connection made via extension cords shall be allowed.
- C. Hens must be confined within the coop, cage or in an appropriate run at all times.

5-1B-5: Sanitation

- A. Coops must be rodent-free, clean, and sanitary.
- B. Feed must be stored in sealed containers.
- C. Waste must not cause detectable odors on adjacent lots.
- D. Noise from hens must not disturb neighboring residents.

5-1B-6: Enforcement and Compliance

Complaints will be investigated by the Town of Cortland Police Department. Violations may result in citations and fines through the administrative adjudication process or any other process permitted by law.

SECTION THREE:

That Title 9, “Zoning Regulations” Chapter Three, “Miscellaneous Zoning Regulations, Section 9-3-13.B.2 “Table of Permitted Yard Obstructions” shall be amended as follows:

Structure Or Use	Front Yard	Corner Side Yard	Side Yard	Rear Yard
Animal houses, for domestic animals, excepting domesticated hens , not to exceed 16 square feet in area and 4 feet in height				P

That Title 9, “Zoning Regulations” Chapter Three, “Miscellaneous Zoning Regulations, Section 9-3-13.B.2 “Table of Permitted Yard Obstructions” shall be amended to add a new row as follows:

Chicken coop with enclosed run (in accordance with Section 9-4-35 of this title)				P
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SECTION FOUR:

That Title 9, “Zoning Regulations”, Chapter 4 “Supplementary Regulations for Specific Uses” shall be amended by adding a new Section 9-4-35 below:

9-4-35: Chicken Coops and Enclosures

- A. *Lot:* Only lots zoned and used for single-family purposes (or agricultural property) that are 11,000 square feet or larger may have hens.
- B. *Location:* Coops must be in rear yards and at least twelve (12) feet from property lines and not within any easement on the subject property.
- C. *Size:* A chicken coop up to one hundred and forty-four (144) square feet in size with a maximum height of ten (10) feet, and an enclosed outside run of at least thirty-two (32) square feet, is required.

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SECTION FIVE:

Effective Date. This Ordinance shall be in full force and effect after its passage and publication as provided by law.

PASSED, APPROVED AND ADOPTED by the Corporate Authorities of the Town of Cortland, Illinois this ____ day of _____, 2026 and filed in the office of the Town Clerk of said Town on this date.

AYES:

NAYS:

ABSENT:

APPROVED: _____, Date ____ / ____ / 2026
Mayor, Town of Cortland

ATTEST: _____, Date: ____ / ____ / 2026
Town Clerk, Town of Cortland

**RECOMMENDATION LETTER TO THE
TOWN OF CORTLAND BOARD OF TRUSTEES
PC 25-01**

Exhibit "A"

TO: Cortland Board of Trustees

FROM: Cortland Planning Commission

DATE: December 31, 2025

SUBJECT: PC 25-01: Request a text amendment modifying Title 9 Zoning Regulations to permit backyard chicken coops

APPLICANT: Town of Cortland
59 S. Somonauk Road
Cortland, IL 60112

The Cortland Planning Commission conducted a Public Hearing on December 4, 2025, at 7:00 p.m. at the Cortland Town Hall, 59 S Somonauk Road, Cortland, Illinois. The purpose of the Public Hearing involved consideration of the request by the Town of Cortland, as applicant, for a text amendment in accordance with Title 9, Chapter 9, Section 2B of the Cortland Town Code. The proposed amendment consists of modifying Title 9 to permit backyard chicken coops including a revision to Section 9-3-13.B.2 to allow for chicken coops with enclosed runs. The proposed amendment also includes the addition of Section 9-4-35 to specify additional criteria of lot, size, and location of backyard chicken coops. The Planning Commission reviewed and considered the material and information presented at the public hearing.

Recommendation

Mr. Barnhart made a motion to recommend the Town Board approve the text amendment with the inclusion of a maximum coop height of 10 feet in Section 9-4-35C., seconded by Ms. Steadman.

Roll call vote as follows:

Yea: Commissioners Julie Steadman, Robert Barnhart, Mark Hedrick, and Vicky Torres

Nay: Commissioner Brad Lawson

Absent: None

Roll call vote: 4-yeyes, 1 nay, 0-absent

Motion carried, and the recommendation of approval of the proposed text amendment with inclusion of a maximum coop height of 10 feet in Section 9-4-35C shall be forwarded to the Town Board for consideration at its January 12, 2026 meeting.

Respectfully Submitted,



Mark Hedrick, Chairman
CORTLAND PLANNING COMMISSION