



MEMO

PLANNING AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

To: Common Council
From: Dave Kittel, Director of Planning and Community Development
Date: 10/10/2024
Re: Pigeon Keeping

Following up from the last discussion the Common Council had on Pigeon Keeping additional information has been collected to help the Council facilitate a direction that they would like to pursue on this topic. No matter how the Council would like to proceed an update to the existing ordinance will be needed. In order to ensure that staff can produce updates to all the required areas in the ordinance a direction is needed from the Council on if Pigeon keeping is to be allowed in the City and if so, is it to be permitted or allowed outright. To help facilitate the discussion Staff has put together three options to review with some outside sources and some pros and cons of each option.

1. Keep existing provision, update language to remove Board of Health and update fee structure. Set requirements for size of loft and number of Pigeons. Update animal at large language to exempt Racing/homing Pigeons that are registered.
 - This will update current provisions and allow for Racing pigeons by permit like how chickens are. Schofield Wisconsin has an ordinance on homing/racing pigeons that can provide a good

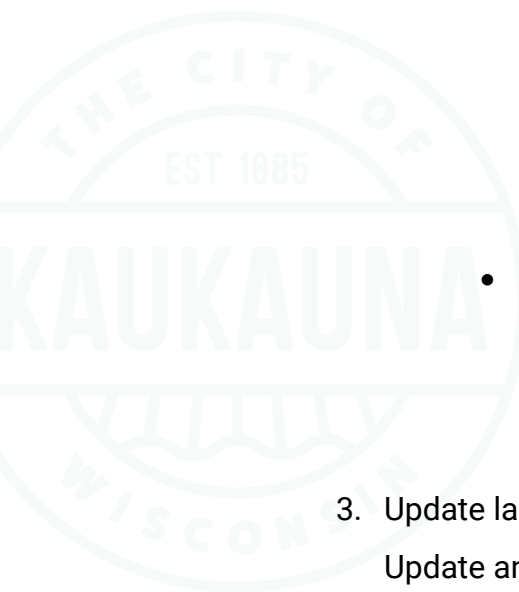
template paired with information from a local pigeon club and the American Racing Pigeon Union (AU). This provides greater flexibility of options to residents but, will add administrative items to staff. Enforcement may prove difficult as well and regulations to reduce negative effects (noise, smell, excrement) may be difficult to follow up on/enforce. Below are links to Schofield's ordinance on Pigeon lofts and AU loft information:

- Lofts:
https://library.municode.com/wi/schofield/codes/code_of_ordinances?nodeId=PTIIC0OR_CH55ZOPL_ARTVSUDIRE_DIV1GE_S55-222PILO
- Loft license:
https://library.municode.com/wi/schofield/codes/code_of_ordinances?nodeId=PTIIC0OR_CH8AN_ARTIVLI_S8-105LOLI
- AU Loft information:
<https://www.pigeon.org/pages/loftregistration.html>

2. Remove provision entirely from ordinance and not allow this activity within the municipality

- This would remove the pigeon provisions completely and is simple and clear. This will potentially force residents to relocate their pigeons. This option eliminates the potential negative effects of Pigeons and any potential health risks that could be posed. There are several diseases that can be transmitted to humans such as Histoplasmosis, Cryptococcosis, Psittacosis, E. Coli to name a few. From reviewing information from the CDC and other studies it seems that those at risk are people with compromised immune systems. Fresh droppings pose little risk. The main concern seems to come from feral pigeons and not necessarily captive pigeons that are being cared for and vaccinated. A properly cleaned and cared for loft should mitigate many health concerns.
- Studies/information on Pigeons and pathogens/diseases
<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC9218837/>
https://file.lacounty.gov/SDSInter/ceo/rmo/1004730_pigeondiseases1.pdf
<https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/15066331/>

3. Update language to remove the Board of Health, remove permit requirements, Update animal at large language to exempt Racing/homing Pigeons that are



registered. Must comply with provisions in Ch.9.15 to provide a pen/yard in a nuisance free manner.

- This option provides an opportunity for those that have pigeons to keep them and be reflective of administration on permitting. If a loft is not being taken care of it can be addressed as a nuisance in the existing ordinance. The number of people keeping pigeons is low and is not a commonly requested item. Other groups have done so in the past with minimal concerns presented. A restriction on number of pigeons would be recommended as well with this option (racing team numbers vary but 40-60 birds seem to be common with 40 for a racing team and 60 overall in a coop to have an active team and new birds in training)

It should be noted that there have been some concerns brought forth from neighbors of an existing loft. These concerns have been regarding droppings on their property as well as birds pecking at windows and gathering on their roofs. If only Racing pigeons are being kept there should be only a few times a day when they are out of the lofts and in the area. Typically, they are released for a period for exercise/training and then back in the loft. These birds are to be banded to identify the birds and owner for racing. Other pigeons are not marked in this way and have different habits from a racing or homing pigeon and may be the main source of these concerns. There are items that could be applied to attempt to limit droppings in the area such as requiring a two+ hour restrictions on flying after eating to reduce the probability of the bird droppings outside the loft area. This may be difficult to enforce.

Recommendation:

Option 3 is Plannings preferred option with Option 1 a close second.