

CITY OF MINNETRISTA



CITY COUNCIL WORK SESSION ITEM

Subject: Residential Chickens (Hens)

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Meeting Date: April 21, 2025

Issue: Should the City allow egg laying chickens (hens) in residential districts?

Discussion: Staff and City Council have heard recently from residents and a councilmember that there is interest in residential chickens. Currently, city code includes chickens in the definition for farm animals. Farm animals are currently only allowed in agriculture and agriculture preserve zoning districts or on a residential lot of at least 10 acres. Below is the existing language in city code relative to this issue:

SECTION 1110. - ANIMALS

1110.01. - Definitions.

The following words, terms and phrases, when used in this section, will have the meanings ascribed to them in this subsection, except where the context clearly indicates a different meaning:

Farm animals mean those animals commonly associated with a farm or performing work in an agricultural setting. Unless otherwise defined, such animals shall include members of the equestrian family (horses, mules), bovine family (cows, bulls), sheep, poultry (chickens, turkeys), fowl (ducks, geese), swine (including Vietnamese pot-bellied pigs), goats, bees, and other animals associated with a farm, ranch, or stable.

1110.09. - Farm animals.

Subd. 1. *Requirements.* Farm animals may only be kept in A or AP zoning districts, or on a residential lot of at least ten acres in size provided that farm animals on said residential lots are not sheltered within 300 feet of an adjoining piece of property.

Subd. 2. *Exception.* An exception shall be made to this subsection for those animals brought into the city as part of an operating zoo, veterinarian clinic, scientific research laboratory, or a licensed show or exhibition.

Mission Statement:

The City of Minnetrista will deliver quality services in a cost effective and innovative manner and provide opportunities for a high quality of life while protecting natural resources and maintaining a rural character.

If the City Council were to consider allowing residential chickens (hens), adding language to the exceptions to allow a certain number, as determined by the City Council, of chickens in residential districts would be needed. Section 1110.09 Subd. 2 could possibly be rewritten to the following:

Subd. 2. *Exceptions.* An exception shall be made to this subsection for:

(a) Those animals brought into the city as part of an operating zoo, veterinarian clinic, scientific research laboratory, or a licensed show or exhibition.

(b) Up to ? egg laying chickens (hens) may be kept on a residential lot.

Please note that many of the City's residential neighborhoods are also governed by a homeowner's association. City code does not supersede any HOA covenants. If HOA covenants do not allow for chickens, then a resident in that neighborhood would not be allowed to have chickens.

Conclusion: City Council should discuss the issue and, if there is interest in allowing chickens (hens) in residential districts, direct staff to prepare an ordinance amending Chapter 11 of City Code and bring it to a future City Council meeting.

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