



REQUEST FOR COUNCIL ACTION

Title: Request to Review and Amend City Code Pertaining to Bees and Beekeeping

Preferred Agenda: July 27, 2021

Submitted By: Blair Larsen, Community & Economic Development Director

Reviewed By: Blair Larsen, City Manager Pro Tem

Type of Action: Resolution ____ Motion X Roll Call ____ Other ____

Relevant Code/Policy: Sweet Home Municipal Code § 6.04.020(L)

Towards Council Goal: Goal #2: Effective and Efficient Government

Attachments: Bee and Beekeeping information submitted by Ken Bronson
Code Compliance Officer Memo Re: Bees

Purpose of this RCA:

The purpose of this RCA is to request direction from the Council regarding a request from resident Ken Bronson to amend the Sweet Home Municipal Code section regulating the keeping of bees within the City (SHMC § 6.04.020(L)).

Background/Context:

The Sweet Home Municipal Code States:

§ 6.04.020(L)

L. Honey bees:

1. *There must be one-quarter of an acre that is exclusively set aside for each hive of bees; and*
2. *The overall location at which the bees are residing has at minimum one-half of an acre; and*
3. *Hives must be kept at least 50 feet from property lines and not opened towards neighboring properties.*

The City's Code Compliance Officer recently received a complaint that a property was violating this provision. After giving the responsible property owner, Ken Bronson, a warning regarding the violation, Mr. Bronson indicated his desire to ask the Council to review and amend the ordinance. He subsequently submitted the attached information. Mr. Bronson is still within the warning period given by the Code Compliance Officer.

The Code Compliance Officer subsequently conducted his own research on the matter and submitted the attached memo. In summary, Staff has found a wide variety of approaches to regulating bees, from no regulation at all, to restrictions similar to what the City has in place now. Scientific research on bees shows that they are quite safe and will not sting unless threatened.

The Challenge/Problem:

How does the City respond to citizen's requests for changes to the City Code? What regulations, if any, should the City enforce regarding beekeeping?

Stakeholders:

- Sweet Home Residents – Residents deserve the enjoyment of their homes without being unreasonably impacted by their neighbors.
- Sweet Home Beekeepers – Residents with an interest in beekeeping deserve to engage in their trade or hobby with reasonable restrictions.
- Sweet Home Community – The Community benefits from the services provided by beekeeper, such as capturing swarms, ensuring that gardens are adequately pollinated, etc.

Issues and Financial Impacts:

Any review or amendment of the ordinance will require no resources other than staff time, therefore there is no financial impact on the City beyond the existing budget.

Elements of a Stable Solution:

A stable solution is one that results in a just and enforceable City Code.

Options:

1. Do Nothing – Let § 6.04.020(L) remain as presently written.
2. Direct Staff to Draft an Ordinance Amending § 6.04.020(L) – With adequate Council direction, City Staff can draft an ordinance.
3. Direct Staff to research other options – Direct staff to research other ways to address beekeeping and any associated impacts.

Recommendation:

As this comes based on a citizen request, Staff does not recommend a specific option. Staff requests any option that gives clear direction regarding future regulation and enforcement of bees and beekeeping.