



REQUEST FOR COUNCIL ACTION

Title: Amended Beekeeping Ordinance

Preferred Agenda: October 26, 2021

Submitted By: Blair Larsen, Community & Economic Development Director

Reviewed By: Ray Towry, City Manager

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: Amended Bee Ordinance

Purpose of this RCA:

The purpose of this RCA is to present an amended beekeeping ordinance to the Council for a vote.

Background/Context:

This past June, Sweet Home resident Ken Bronson requested that the Council amend the Sweet Home Municipal Code section regulating the keeping of bees within the City (SHMC § 6.04.020(L)). At the June 22nd Council meeting, the Council directed staff to draft an amended ordinance and bring it back to the Council.

The Sweet Home Municipal Code currently 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 proposed amendment allows up to five hives per property or lot, which must be kept 10 feet from property lines, unless there is a fence, wall, or other barrier at least 6 feet in height. The proposed ordinance also requires beekeepers to keep their hives well maintained and ensure that bees have access to water. Beekeepers must also notify their neighbors of the presence of bees.

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. Conduct a first reading of the proposed ordinance – The proposed ordinance will be read at this meeting and scheduled for a second reading at the November 9th meeting.
3. Make changes to the proposed ordinance and conduct a first reading – The changed ordinance will be read at this meeting and scheduled for a second reading at the November 9th meeting.
4. Direct Staff to research other options – Direct staff to research other ways to address beekeeping and any associated impacts.

Recommendation:

Staff recommends option 2: Conduct a first reading of the proposed ordinance.