

Island Health Authority Recommendations

As discussed in our meeting with Dr Stanwick, Dr Fyfe and myself, this email is a summary of our recommendations and rationale to include in the Animal Control Bylaw Amendment proposal. The recommendations are provided to address potential issues, such as: unsightly property; odours; increased rodent activity; and, attractant of other wildlife such as raccoons, skunks, birds, and coyotes. These issues are considered more of a nuisance; however, as there is an increased interest in keeping backyard chickens in a urban environment , the likelihood of the number of complaints generated will also increase. To assist with this, we are recommending the following and referencing the following Weblinks:

REFERENCE WEBLINKS

City of Vancouver Animal Control Bylaw: <http://bylaws.vancouver.ca/9150c.PDF>

City of Vancouver Guidelines for Keeping Backyard

Hens: <http://council.vancouver.ca/20100408/documents/penv3.pdf>

City of Vancouver Recommendation on Composting: <http://vancouver.ca/home-property-development/garden-composters.aspx>

Saanich Animal Control Bylaw:

<http://www.saanich.ca/assets/Local~Government/Documents/Bylaws~and~Policies/animals-bylaw-2004-no-8556.pdf>

Saanich Website on Keeping Hens: <http://www.saanich.ca/EN/main/community/agriculture-food-security/backyard-chickens/steps-to-your-hens.html>

Surrey Website on Poultry Registration:

<https://www.surrey.ca/files/Backyard%20Chicken%20Info%20Guide.pdf>

ISLAND HEALTH CONSULTATION RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. Specific section in the Animal Control Bylaw for Backyard Chickens

- A dedicated and detailed section in bylaw to address issues related to backyard chickens
- **(See City of Vancouver Animal Control Bylaw section 7.15 and 7.16, and City of Vancouver Guidelines for Keeping Backyard Hens)**
- **(See Saanich Animal Control Bylaw Section 38)**

Rationale:

Easy reference for review by the general public. A more comprehensive bylaw will assist with keeping best practise and standards for backyard chicken keeping.

2. Limit the # of chickens per lot/property

- Will need to define lot/property (i.e. house vs multi unit building/apartments)
- Recommend to limit number to no more than 12
- Recommend less than 12 if smaller lot, or in a more concentrated area
- Recommend number of chickens based on lot size **(See Saanich Animal Control Bylaw Section 38)**

Rationale:

By limiting the number of chickens per lot, this will continue the keeping of backyard chicken as a hobby than becoming more of a commercial operation. This will also help in management of the grounds, and

the amount of chicken manure and other waste (such as chicken feed, broken eggs) generated, and increased quality of care for the chickens

3. Set Backs of the Chicken Farm to Neighbouring Properties

- Recommend Setback from dwelling on lot to be 3m (10 feet)
- Recommend Setback from lot lines 1m (3 feet)
- Recommend Setback from other dwellings 3m (10 feet)
- **(See City of Vancouver Guidelines for Keeping Backyard Hens, Appendix D page 1 chart)**
- **(See Saanich Animal Control Bylaw Section 38.4)**

Rationale:

To control potential odors, noise, and unsiteness for adjacent neighbours. Neighbours are entitled to their enjoyment with or without chickens. By this control measure, this may increase the interest of backyard chickens in a sustainable manner.

4. Composting Standards

- No open composting permitted. Restrict composting and recycling of chicken manure/waste/kitchen scraps into a fully enclosed durable storage compost unit. **This may need to be addressed in the Unsightly Premises Bylaw as well**
- Location of the compost bin(s) should not be placed next to neighbouring properties in direct view. **This may need to be addressed in the Unsightly Premises Bylaw as well**
- See the City of Vancouver website for the recommended type of unit:
<http://vancouver.ca/home-property-development/garden-composters.aspx>
- Limit the volume of compost, if open composting permitted
- **(See City of Vancouver Animal Control Bylaw section 7.16(k) where it limits the amount of manure to 3 cubic ft in an enclosed structure)**

Rationale:

Victoria is considered an urban city, and rodents are present due to the lushness, water and urban environment. Rodents can multiply in a short period, therefore an infestation can occur very quickly. Open compost will attract rodents and provide great harbourage. Open compost may also create unsightly properties and will definitely create an odour issue, especially where houses are placed close to each other. With an infestation of rodents, the number of reports by the public will increase and the eradication of the rodents may be a necessity. Typical eradication method by pest control companies is the baiting method using poisons. To efficiently rid the rodent problem, it may create another issue such as the introduction and siting of increased number of dead rodents in public spaces or properties. In addition, the wildlife preying on the dead rodents may expose them to the poisons. **(See City of Vancouver Guidelines for Keeping Backyard Hens page 10 (Nuisance Issues), page 11 (Odor), page 12 (Pests))**

5. Construction of Chicken Coop

- Structure must be maintained and well constructed to prevent rodent from harbouring underneath or within it and its walls, and to prevent entry by any other animal
- Coop must be locked sunset to sunrise
- Maintain coop in good repair and sanitary condition and free from vermin and obnoxious smells and substances
- **(See City of Vancouver Animal Control Bylaw section 7.16 (f),(g))**

Rationale:

To prevent rodent and other wildlife attraction. Prevent unsightliness to property. Provide quality care of chickens.

6. Chicken Ground

- Set parameters around floor area, roof, vegetated or bare earth in outdoor, and enclosure requirement
- Requirement to keep ground in sanitary condition (i.e. free of chicken manure and feed)
- **(See City of Vancouver Animal Control Bylaw section 7.16 (a),(b), (d), (l))**

Rationale:

To prevent rodent and other wildlife attraction. Prevent unsightliness to property.

7. Personal Consumption of Chickens and Egg

- Chickens are for personal use only, and cannot sell eggs or meat from chicken
- Not slaughter chickens on property

Rationale:

Backyard chickens are meant for domestic/ personal hobby. Chickens and eggs may come with bacteria that is harmful if ingested, so should not be sold to the public. The chickens and eggs are not an approved food source for commercial retail.

8. Zoning areas

- Define areas where backyard chickens are permitted
- May want to define what is an urban farm and what the allowances are for these types of operations (and include where they are, or a listing of them in an Appendix)

Rationale:

To prevent larger properties to operate like a farm, when the zoning/use of property may not be suitable.

9. Registering Chickens

- Register the chickens with the City so there is contact information, and confirmation that the owner lives at the property housing the chickens
- Declaration that Owner resides on the property
- **(See City of Vancouver Animal Control Bylaw section 7.15 & the Saanich Animal Control Bylaw section 38)**
- See City of Vancouver webpage to register chickens: <http://vancouver.ca/people-programs/backyard-chickens.aspx>
- See Saanich webpage to register chickens: <http://www.saanich.ca/EN/main/community/agriculture-food-security/backyard-chickens/steps-to-your-hens.html>
- See Surrey webpage about registration with Ministry of Agriculture and Surrey: <https://www.surrey.ca/files/Backyard%20Chicken%20Info%20Guide.pdf>

Rationale:

This will verify which property has backyard chickens, so if a complaint is received, there is a reference point. In addition, should an illness arise, the registry can assist with contact information and verification that the property house chickens. The registry is also a requirement of the Ministry of Agriculture, and consistent with other municipalities outside of Vancouver, such as Saanich and Surrey.

If you have any questions, please contact me directly.

Thank you again for considering Island Health's recommendations in your Bylaw Amendment process.

Regards,

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