

**Village of Shorewood
Community and Business Relations Committee
September 18, 2023**

Call to Order: Chairperson Tr. Couto called the virtual meeting to order at 6:03 p.m.

Members Present: Tr. Couto, Tr. Arndorfer, and Tr. Stokebrand (joined within the opening presentation)

Members Excused: None

Others present: Planning & Development Director Griepentrog, Village President McKaig (partial), Tr. Lynn (partial), Dan Wycklendt, Linda Laarman and Barbara Kiely Miller

1. Introduction to discussion of an ordinance change to allow the keeping of chickens.

Discussion Points

- Director Griepentrog provided an overview of his memo via a brief presentation, including the current code, a list of other communities who allow the keeping of chickens, the possible benefits and downsides of allowing chickens, and next steps related to public engagement and a possible draft ordinance.
- Tr. Couto noted that the ordinances from Wauwatosa and Glendale within the packet looked very similar.
- Tr. Couto requested to receive citizen input (at 6:08 p.m.) prior to committee discussion.
- Dan Wycklendt, 2212 E. Menlo Blvd., stated that he has been a fan of allowing chickens for a while. He noted that his family kept chickens when they lived in Milwaukee. He believed Milwaukee's ordinance was well written and well thought out. He stated that keeping backyard chickens was a simple task. He noted that keeping chickens was cheap and allowed for disposal of food scraps that would otherwise go to waste. He noted the added benefit of receiving up to three eggs a day from four chickens. He stated that his neighbors liked it. He agreed that if you did not keep care of the cage that an odor could occur, but suggested the same could happen with dog waste in someone's yard. He believed that the waste produced by chickens was easier to clean up because it was contained. He stated that his neighbors liked having his chickens roam in their backyards because they ate pests out of their yards and gardens and would come home at night. He noted that he had no problems for the entire couple of years that his family had the chickens. He said they never saw any rats or other animals stealing the eggs. He believed his chickens were happy and noted that his kids often played with them. He believed allowing chickens would be a great asset for Shorewood.
- Linda Laarman, 1811 E. Elmdale Court, stated that she did not support this concept, but would ultimately need to see what might be proposed. She noted her opposition was based on this being a novelty not a necessity. She stated that Shorewood was not located in a food desert. She said she was skeptical about chickens not attracting critters and believed animals like raccoons, skunks, coyotes and foxes could be a problem. She noted that Shorewood was a very dense community and feared that this could lead towards animosity amongst neighbors. She appreciated the neighbor consent required within Wauwatosa's ordinance, but pointed out that could also cause friction. She also stated that enforcement would be difficult and referenced recent experience in her neighborhood about trying to enforce two cats that were allowed to roam freely. She said her neighborhood received sympathy for the situation, but no follow-up. She did not believe that Village employees should have to spend their time on chicken enforcement.
- Barbara Kiely Miller, 4051 N. Downer Ave., questioned what had changed since 2014/15 when the Village Board last discussed this matter and decided not to pursue an ordinance change.
 - Tr. Couto believed that residents wanted to talk about the matter again and noted that President McKaig made the motion in February based on interest she had seen or heard, and subsequently assigned the conversation to his committee. He did not believe that having the conversation again would hurt.
- Ms. Kiely Miller stated that the conversations she has seen online were evenly split between people who loved the idea of having chickens and those who loved chickens, but not the idea of having them in

Shorewood. She pointed out that most lots in Shorewood are fairly narrow. She said that she understood all of the concerns that she has heard online but did not yet have an opinion to share.

- Public comment was closed at 6:18 p.m.
- Tr. Arndorfer noted that several other communities have updated their ordinances since Shorewood's last conversation and believed that bringing the idea back up for conversation made sense. He said that his biggest questions related to what enforcement would look like in practical terms if this were to proceed, particularly given the resources available. He said based on the numbers of active permits shared in other communities [Glendale 4 and Wauwatosa 25], he did not believe Shorewood would be overrun with coops anytime soon if this were to go through. He noted that Shorewood would need to have similar space and maintenance requirements as included in those other ordinances. He stated that he would be interested in learning more about what an ordinance would look like in Shorewood.
- Tr. Stokebrand questioned if lots were too small in Shorewood to allow the keeping of chickens under the same requirements of other ordinances.
 - Director Griepentrog noted that Milwaukee and Wauwatosa have similar densities and both of their ordinances have the regulation for coops to be located 25 ft. from a residential structure (not the lot line), so he believed that would also work in Shorewood, but would confirm. He stated that not every lot may qualify or that perhaps the 25-ft requirement could be adjusted.
 - Tr. Stokebrand noted that if it cannot be allowed throughout the village that it should not be allowed.
- Tr. Couto stated that this idea is a problem that doesn't exist in search of a solution, but he was interested in hearing more about what the possibilities were.
- Tr. Stokebrand questioned if the poop or a dead chicken would go in the garbage bin, and what happens to a laying hen that no longer lays eggs if we don't allow slaughtering.
 - Tr. Couto stated that he did not see these items addressed in other ordinances.
 - Director Griepentrog stated that he believed that waste could be treated similar to dog waste and thrown into the garbage. He said he would confirm with DPW and other communities.
- Tr. Arndorfer confirmed that he was willing to proceed with additional discussion and community input.
- Tr. Stokebrand stated that she was not interested in spending staff time to learn more about the issue.
- Tr. Couto said he was willing to have another conversation with the additional information that was requested. He did not believe that we were ready to prepare a draft ordinance yet.
- Director Griepentrog confirmed that additional public engagement was desired, particularly through an article in the Village Manager's Memo with a brief survey and opportunity to ask questions.
 - Tr. Couto stated that additional community input would be great.
- Ms. Kiely Miller requested that the issue of veterinary care also be addressed.
- Tr. Lynn stated that he was "pro chickens in Shorewood."

Action

- No action was taken.

Follow Up-Items

- Director Griepentrog will perform additional community outreach on the topic and research answers to the questions posed within tonight's meeting and the additional engagement and bring that information back to the committee for discussion at a future meeting.

Motion to adjourn. Tr. Stokebrand moved to adjourn; seconded by Tr. Couto. Motion carried at 6:29 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Bart Griepentrog, AICP
Planning & Development Director