

**Village of Shorewood
Community and Business Relations Committee
December 4, 2023**

Call to Order: Chairperson Tr. Couto called the meeting to order at 6:01 p.m.

Members Present: Tr. Couto, Tr. Arndorfer, and Tr. Stokebrand

Members Excused: None

Others present: Tr. Ircink, Tr. Lynn (partial), Pr. McKaig (partial) and Planning & Development Director Griepentrog

1. Consider recommendation of possible ordinance change to allow the keeping of chickens.

Discussion Points

- Director Griepentrog provided an overview of his memo via a brief presentation.
 - The presentation included similar information that was shared at the September 18th and November 6th meetings, as well as a draft ordinance based on Milwaukee and Wauwatosa's codes.
 - He noted that three options were included related to neighborhood notice or consent that he wanted the Committee to discuss.
 - He stated that the draft ordinance contained a prohibition on the commercial sale of eggs, which was also included in Wauwatosa's code.
 - He also noted that various other clean-up would be needed within Chapter 192 outside of the section specific to chickens that had yet to be prepared.
- Tr. Stokebrand shared the following comments or concerns related to the allowance of keeping chickens and/or the draft ordinance:
 - Allowing chickens in the village could pit neighbors against neighbors.
 - Not all properties will meet the requirements to allow them to keep chickens.
 - Raising chickens to produce eggs is not a cost savings issue.
 - There are not enough animal welfare precautions.
 - The potential for diseases that can jump species.
- Tr. Arndorfer shared that he did not have any major outstanding concerns based on the experience of other communities.
- Tr. Couto opened the discussion up for community comments at 6:17 pm.
 - Alexa Safer, 4022 N Larkin St, stated that the second two options pertaining to neighborhood notice were good options. She also noted that the concerns related to the animal welfare of chickens were a double standard because the Village allowed residents to keep other animals without further regulation. She stated that the people who would want to keep chickens would have a love for animals. She agreed that a regulation against the commercial sale of eggs made sense. She encouraged the Committee to send the discussion onto the Village Board.
 - Barbara Kiely Miller, 4051 N Downer Ave, suggested that the ordinance should clarify that coops should not be located within the street-side yard and that screening from neighboring properties should be included. She was also concerned with antagonism that might be created or exacerbated between neighbors related to this issue.
 - Linda Laarman, 1811 E Elmdale Ct, stated that she remains opposed to keeping chickens in Shorewood. She agreed with the concerns enumerated by Tr. Stokebrand. She noted that the issue of chicken manure was one of her primary concerns. She said that her research shows that chicken manure deposited directly onto plants burns them and contaminates the soil and groundwater. She noted that chicken manure is full of various pathogens. She stated that manure must be aged or composted to become safe, which would take at least 6 months. She said that other communities, including Madison and Hudson, include rules on what must be done with chicken manure. She noted that she would like to see an inspection performed before a permit is issued. She questioned if it would be acceptable for a chicken yard to be closer than 25 ft. to a residential structure when a coop is not; she did not believe it should be. Lastly, she noted that the ordinance contained

language related to the spread of disease among birds or to humans, but not other animals, such as dogs and cats or squirrels and rabbits.

- Cory Wycklendt, 2212 E Menlo Blvd, noted that she was speaking on behalf of her husband Dan, but that she was also not opposed to keeping chickens. She noted that they have successfully taken care of chickens in the past when they lived in Milwaukee and really enjoyed them.
- Sandie Pendleton, 3529 N Frederick Ave, stated that he and his wife spoke in favor of keeping chickens in Shorewood the last time this topic was discussed. He noted that reasonable minds can differ on this topic, but he believed the fact that keeping chickens in other communities has worked out just fine was a very persuasive argument. He understood that pitting neighbors against each other was not a good thing, but also stated that requiring neighbor consent, as in Wauwatosa's code, was not a good option. He believed that anyone who is opposed to their neighbors having chickens should have to make their argument to either staff or a Village committee/board. He agreed that chickens can carry disease and believed that people should be made aware of that, but also noted that cats and dogs can spread disease.
- Therese Block Pendleton, 3529 N Frederick Ave, noted that she heard a lot of discussion about chickens pitting neighbor against neighbor, but said in her experience, chickens brought the neighborhood together.
- Tr. Couto closed community comments at 6:33 pm.
- Tr. Stokebrand questioned if neighbor consent/notice would be required from all tenants. Director Griepentrog noted that the current requirements are directed to property owners with the expectation that the property owner notify their tenants, if desired. He also noted that an applicant who rents would need to get permission from the property owner to apply to keep chickens.
- Tr. Couto stated that his preference would be to require neighbor consent to keep chickens. He noted that Shorewood is dense and that properties are very close together.
- Tr. Couto questioned how chicken waste would be disposed.
 - Director Griepentrog stated that he asked DPW that question and waste could either be thrown out with other solid waste or composted.
- Tr. Couto questioned who determined what "adequately-sized" meant in relation to the size of a chicken coop.
 - Director Griepentrog noted that would be up to the Village inspectors and could be challenged to the Board of Appeals, if necessary.
- Tr. Couto said he would like to specify that coops shall not be placed in a side yard as well and that eggs shall not be commercially sold.
- Tr. Couto questioned how the Health Department would determine whether chickens are being kept in a sanitary manner.
 - Director Griepentrog noted that he could not speak for the Health Department but stated that their inspection would more than likely take place based on complaints.
- Tr. Couto questioned where the other Committee members stood on neighbor notification.
 - Tr. Arndorfer stated that he would prefer the third option, which was drafted based on the Village's beekeeping ordinance and required notification and staff approval rather than consent.
 - Tr. Stokebrand stated that she would prefer neighbor consent, like Wauwatosa.
 - Tr. Couto reiterated that he would also favor neighbor consent.
- Tr. Lynn stated that he loved the process this discussion has gone through and believed the Village was doing all of the right things to make sure issues are addressed. He believed residents who wanted to keep chickens would be equally thorough and noted that Shorewood residents care deeply about their community and their neighbors. He stated that neighbor notice, as is currently done with beekeeping, was his preference and noted that he would not want to allow a neighbor to unjustly block an application.
- Pr. McKaig stated that she appreciated the work of the Committee and hoped that they would advance the discussion out of Committee to the Village Board.

Action

- Tr. Stokebrand motioned to not forward the possibility of keeping chickens in Shorewood to the Village Board. There was no second, so the motion failed.
- Tr. Arndorfer motioned that the full Village Board consider this ordinance change [to allow the keeping of chickens] at a future meeting without an endorsement from the Committee; seconded by Tr. Couto.
 - Tr. Stokebrand noted that she was still missing confirmation on adequate animal welfare.
 - Tr. Arndorfer stated that they have to trust that the people who want to take this on will do a good job. He noted that neighbors can, and already do, disagree over various things, including loud dogs. He also noted that not every property would be allowed to keep chickens, which is also true of other things including fire pits and water features. He wanted to make sure that the topic of manure was approached with a great deal of thoughtfulness.
 - Tr. Couto reiterated that he was not in love with this idea but was in favor of sending the discussion to the full Board. He asked that regulations related to the design of the coop be given further thought.
 - Vote 2-1 (Tr. Stokebrand voting no.)

Follow Up-Items

- Director Griepentrog will present the draft ordinance at a future Village Board meeting for consideration.

Motion to adjourn. Tr. Stokebrand moved to adjourn; seconded by Tr. Arndorfer. Motion carried at 6:54 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Bart Griepentrog, AICP
Planning & Development Director