

Chicken ordinance gets public hearing

By Salem Weekly Editors

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At a recent city council meeting, councilors voted to move forward with a public hearing on the ongoing chicken ordinance.

The ordinance would allow:

- Three hens per residence
- Chickens to be confined within a coup at all times
- Coop should be 20 feet away from any residence
- Coop should be maintained to prevent noise or odor for neighbors
- Coops will be inspected by outside vendors paid for by the owner
- \$50-\$67.50 license fee

Barbara Palermo of Chickens in the Yard, a supporter of allowing citizens to raise chickens in city limits, said in an email that her organization is lining up several speakers to cover various aspects of chicken keeping.

"We feel the councilors are fairly well educated on the basics which we fully addressed at the last public hearing and in the research packet I have provided to them. Therefore, we will concentrate on concerns more recently expressed," she said.

The organization does not fully agree with the parameters of the new ordinance, but Palermo said that the process requires baby steps and that something is better than nothing.

"Ideally, we would like to see an ordinance that is less restrictive and complicated, more like the one Beaverton recently passed," she said. She explained that Beaverton allows four hens, 20 feet away from neighbors and free-range possibilities during the day if supervised - with no permit, fees, or inspections.

She said, "Given the overreaction and controversy we've faced here in Salem, we are forced to accept something much more restrictive in order to get this ordinance passed. However, I am hopeful that these harsh rules will prove unnecessary and be short-lived."

The chicken focused public hearing will occur on September 20 at 6:30 p.m. in the City Council chambers at City Hall.