

## City of Salem moves forward on chicken ordinance

By Salem Weekly Editors

from WillametteLive, Section News

Posted on Thu Jun 03, 2010 at 09:21:17 AM PDT



City Hall was unusually crammed May 24. About 500 people attended the City Council meeting, where the chicken ordinance was put up for a vote after failing the first time around.

"It failed just by a narrow vote," said Barbara Palermo, founder of the Chickens in The Yard coalition. The group didn't give up after the defeat, but persisted in lobbying and reaching out to the community. Palermo said chicken enthusiasts now have

overwhelming support, from city councilors, neighborhood associations and Salem residents.

"It's what people across Oregon want," she said, referring to other cities like Independence and Silverton, where residents have been fighting for the right to home-grown eggs, and other places where people can legally have coops, including Bend, Eugene, Corvallis and Portland.

The next step after the success of the motion is the drafting of the actual ordinance, which will impose conditions and fines. According to Councilor TJ Sullivan, who brought the ordinance back to City Council, three would be the maximum number of egg-laying hens someone could house, at least twenty feet away from the closest neighbor; \$50 would be the annual cost of licensing a coop, and \$250 would be the fine for the first infraction.

Violations would be difficult to define, according to Brady Rogers, Compliance Services Administrator for the City. "I would know one when I [smell it]," he said.

According to Sullivan, other cities haven't faced many problems with harmful aromas and noise, but instead with numbers and roosters.

The draft is expected to be ready for another Council review within a few months.

Councilor Sullivan explained that part of the \$50 would be used to finance the licensing, which would entail someone going out to the property and sketching the coop. Licensing would be done online exclusively.

"How much do people want to be fined for having three chickens when they can have them now for free?" objected Councilor Bruce Rogers.

As things stand presently, if some illegal chickens are reported and found, the City will issue a warning. Then, a correction notice, followed by an extension, and culminating with a fine of \$301 if there are no signs of improvement, explained Brady Rogers.

Councilor Rogers advocated for keeping illegal chickens. He advised those who want to produce their own eggs to go ahead and get the chickens, but take measures not to get caught by warning the neighbors. "Don't get complaints. We would never hear about it, and everyone's happy."

Councilor Tesler disagreed. "There are people who have ten [marijuana] plants and work it out with their neighbors ... but it's illegal," she said. "I want to have my own chickens. I'm tired of buying eggs."

Councilor Rogers said, "What we have is pretty good, but I'm willing to look at the ordinance to see these fines."

The motion to move forward was passed unanimously.