

Zoning and Annexation Committee Meeting Minutes
Council Chambers, John Knisely Centre
CORRECTED December 12, 2016

The Zoning and Annexation Committee meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. Committee members in attendance were Mr. Darrin Lautenschleger, Mrs. Aimee May, and Mrs. Cheryl Ramos, Committee Chair. The Chair announced that the meeting would be recorded. Also in attendance: Sam Hitchcock (Council President), Dean Holland, Kelly Ricklic, Rob Maurer, and John Zucal (Council members); Mayor Joel B. Day, Council Clerk Julie Courtright, and Greg Popham (Safety Director), Treasurer Tom Gerber, and Marvin Fete (Law Director), Lee Finley (City of New Philadelphia Health Department), and Mike Scolati (City of New Philadelphia Zoning & Building Code Administrator). Present for part of the meeting: Beth Gundy (Auditor) and Lura Davies.

PURPOSE: To discuss Codified Ordinance 1161.18: the keeping of household pets primarily focusing on fowl and any other matter to come before the Committee.

The Chair also noted that Council Members had been emailed information and articles provided by Kelly Ricklic, the Chair, Lee Finley, and Mike Scolati. Resident Chance Carr and property owner Lura Davis had been invited to the meeting as they had brought the issue of having chickens within the city limits to Council's attention.

In the absence of Chance and Lura, Lee Finley addressed concerns of the health department including infectious disease transmission, the need for chickens to roam, the noise, manure, smell, property values, and increased work for City officials/ increased expense and provided documentation. In response to a question, Lee explained that a weekly cleanout would be needed and the amount would depend on the number of birds. In response to a question from Mr. Maurer regarding other communities permitting chickens, he was pointed to documentation provided by the Chair regarding other communities from the website www.backyardchickens.com. Mr. Popham noted that complaints received by the Police Department have regarded noise and smell.

Mike Scolati, shared concerns regarding what happens with the chickens that no longer lay eggs, predators (coyotes, foxes) coming in search of an easy meal or in lieu of a chicken, a dog. He feels that we would create a dangerous atmosphere. Also a concern: what happens when chickens are set loose in the community when no longer able to lay eggs. Who is responsible to catch the chickens? Where would they go?

Mayor Day stated that he did not want to see chickens in the city and that problems would be created. Lura, upon her arrival, was asked to speak to the issue. Lura said that she had not seen any chickens running loose, that they are well contained, good pets, and not near the nuisance of dogs and cats. She felt that they should be allowed to have them and as far as she knows, they are the only ones who want chickens. She would like the right to keep these particular chickens and the city could say they couldn't bring anymore in. The surviving chickens are at a relative's farm. The Chair reviewed the presenting problem was that some of their chickens were killed by a loose dog that had gotten into the coop. Lura stated that the chickens were her grandson's pets and they collected eggs from the hens. They had 4 chickens, a guinea, and a duck.

The Chair noted that she had reached out to Dr. Sara Bliss, a veterinarian in Newcomerstown. She said chickens are no more risk than cats or dogs. The pen must be kept clean, shelter outdoors. She will be glad to assist with any legislation. The Chair also reached out to the City of Columbus Veterinarian Dr. Metzger but has not received a call back yet.

The Chair noted that she felt that more research needs to be done to address question of "urban farming" in this case chickens in the city and the process to change Zoning was explained. The Chair also requested that Lura send any research she might have. The Law Director asked if another meeting was needed since we had research. The Chair noted that she would like to hear back from the Columbus veterinarian and that if Council went this route, it would have to be regulated as to size, elimination of wasted, feet from other properties, and etc.

Motion to adjourn by Aimee May at 7:27 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Cheryl L. Ramos". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Cheryl L. Ramos, Chair

Zoning & Annexation Committee

A recording of this meeting is available from the Council Clerk.