

DATE: November 13, 2023

REPORT NO: PD-56-2023

SUBJECT: **Recommendation Report – Request for Policy Considerations Relating to Backyard Chickens**

CONTACT: Brian Treble, Director of Planning & Building

OVERVIEW:

- On September 11th, 2023, a local resident of Smithville, Dora Pavlidis and her neighbour, Karen Sabatine, made a presentation to the Planning/Building/Environmental Committee about permitting backyard chickens subject to limitations.
- The presentation was referred to staff for consideration.
- Upon contacting representatives of the poultry industry, OMAFRA staff and other municipalities, it is clear that this can be a very sensitive topic that is not right for everyone. A one size fits all policy does not apply. For instance, recently Pelham Council granted a very restrictive regulatory approval for backyard chickens; while Fort Erie Council refused to even entertain the discussion.
- West Lincoln staff propose, that in order to determine what is best for West Lincoln, the matter should be brought before a Public Meeting so that input from many individuals and organizations can be gathered.
- Should support be considered appropriate, two documents will require amendment, including the Township Zoning By-law and the Township Animal Control by-law.

RECOMMENDATION:

1. That, Recommendation Report PD-56-2023, regarding “Request for Policy Considerations Relating to Backyard Chickens”, dated November 13, 2023 be received; and,
2. That, staff be and are hereby authorized to hold a public meeting at a future Planning, Building, Environmental Committee meeting on the request to consider that non-farmers and urban/hamlet residents be permitted to house backyard chickens and that adequate notice be provided for such purposes and that deliberations relate to details around restrictions, permitted locations, etc.

ALIGNMENT TO STRATEGIC PLAN:

- **BUILD** a safe, connected, caring and active community.
- **CHAMPION** strategic and responsible growth.

BACKGROUND:

The Township Zoning By-law is written to distinguish livestock and fur bearing animals for husbandry purposes from pets. Section 3.13 “Prohibited Uses” and specific zone categories in an urban/non-farm context, a limited number of pets are permitted; whereas in the agricultural areas of the Township of West Lincoln, livestock operations are permitted based on a size and scale which is regulated by such things as nutrient management strategies and minimum distance separation calculations, etc.

Many municipalities have been asked to consider chickens as pets and/or to allow a limited number of chickens on a non-farm property as livestock. Generally, roosters are prohibited.

CURRENT SITUATION:

On September 11th, 2023, a local resident of Smithville, Dora Pavlidis and her neighbour, Karen Sabatine, made a presentation to the Planning/Building/Environmental Committee about permitting backyard chickens, subject to limitations. The presentation was referred to staff for consideration.

Upon contacting representatives of the poultry industry, OMAFRA staff and other municipalities, it is clear that this can be a very sensitive topic that is not right for everyone. A one size fits all policy does not apply in this circumstance. For instance, recently Pelham Council granted a very restrictive regulatory approval for backyard chickens; while Fort Erie Council refused to even entertain the discussion.

West Lincoln staff propose, that in order to determine what is best for West Lincoln, the matter should be brought before a Public Meeting so that input from many individuals and organizations can be gathered. Further, staff will encourage input through social media and other forums to ensure a full spectrum of opinion is heard and discussed.

Should support be considered appropriate, two documents will require amendment including the Township Zoning By-law and the Township Animal Control By-law. Staff can present these amendments at a later date should that become helpful.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:

The holding of a public meeting should be covered by the Township Planning Operating Budget.

INTER-DEPARTMENTAL COMMENTS:

The public meeting process will provide an opportunity for a broad spectrum of agency and public comment.

CONCLUSION:

Staff recommend that a public meeting be held so that staff, Committee, and Council can gather input in order to make an informed decision on this matter.

Prepared & Submitted by:



Brian Treble
Director of Planning & Building

Approved by:



Bev Hendry
CAO