Committee of the Whole

May 13, 2024

Council President King; Council Members Baltzell, Fleck, Sanford, and Wolfe; Mayor Hazel; Safety Service Director Hitchcock; Law Director Moore; Auditor Shinn; Clemons & Nelson Rep Fred Lord

President King called the Committee of the Whole to order at 6:32 pm to discuss chickens and bees in the City limits.

President King thanked Administration and the Law Director for providing information through emails before the meeting on how other Cities are operating.

CM Sanford noted he did a social media poll and would forward the results to council as well as gave a rundown of the numbers which included 22 people within the City limits wanting to allow chickens and 5 not in favor and outside of town was 7 in favor and 2 opposed. As for bees 15 in town were in favor and 7 were not in favor as well as 3 in favor and 3 not out of town. CM Sanford noted people did not want roosters and wanted to limit the number of chickens as well as possible having fences based on the comments he received. CM Sanford noted people were more concerned with bees and possible allergies and noted that bees can travel 2-3 miles so there can be bees coming from out of town regardless. CM Sanford spoke about possible inspections to make sure things are being done correctly with the owners of either chicken or bees if they decide to allow it.

Mayor Hazel noted that he got plenty of the same responses but there was concern for the bird flu but also people voiced concerns about the noise, smell, and manure while also saying he did hear a lot of excited people as well.

President King mentioned that other towns do a permitting process and thought that might make sense if Council decided to allow it and noted they did not have to charge it was just for keeping accountability and making sure people are doing it the right way. Mayor Hazel noted that an HOA can say no to allowing chickens or bees even if Council passes it. CM Sanford noted the possibility of limiting the number of permits in the first year and increasing it depending on the feedback. CM Baltzell noted he did not have a very strong opinion either way but noted that for the people concerned about the noise and manure that dogs and cats produce about the same while noting there was a limit to the numbers of cats and dogs someone can own. CM Baltzell noted as long as it does not infringe upon the neighbors, he is not against it as long as the correct parameters are applied. Mayor Hazel noted that it is possible that dogs or cats or other animals may try to attack the chickens and noted a certain type of fence may be required while noting we do not want to involve the government more and President King noted that when they write the permit or Ordinance they can talk about possibly taking the chickens away if they are not being taken care of properly.

CM Sanford spoke about possibly having an inspector come and make sure everything is being done right possibly as a volunteer and President King noted it would probably fall under engineer and should be complaint driven which administration agreed with.

Mayor Hazel noted that it would be a good idea for a permit so you can keep track of how many birds are within the City limits and also where they are at.

CM Wolfe noted that is something we have dealt with before when it comes to complaints about chickens that were fenced in and free reigning and that the City had to go and get them so it could possibly create work for staff. CM Wolfe also spoke about how in Westview in the adjacent property there use to be a bee hive and there was never a problem with the bees. CM Wolfe noted when he was younger and people were not spraying their yards as often there were honey bees everywhere and does not see it as much of a safety problem.

CM Sanford noted that there should be another meeting in the coming months and Mayor Hazel suggested bringing a drafted legislation to that meeting and Council agreed that would be helpful so they can make changes and Council noted they would like a permit process at no cost and to limit the chickens to possibly up to six but subject to change.

President King adjourned the meeting at 6:32 pm.

Submitted by Michael F. Didonato, Clerk of Council