Committee of the Whole

June 24, 2024

Council President King; Council Members Baltzell, Buxton, Clausen, Gray, Sanford, and Wolfe; Mayor Hazel; Safety Service Director Hitchcock; Law Director Moore; Auditor Shinn;

President King called the Committee of the Whole to order at 6:31 pm to discuss chickens and bees in the City limits.

CM Sanford spoke about the possible legislation and Law Director Moore noted he would need to know the content in order to draft legislation.

CM Wolfe noted that he has received no good comments about having chickens within the City limits and noted he would like to keep the legislation on the books and have no chickens within the City limits. CM Buxton noted that he also has received no good comments about chickens and asked administration if we had an animal control officer and named off possible predators that could come after chickens which are animals we do not want in town. CM Baltzell noted that he also received calls against having chickens. CM Clausen mentioned he received no calls either way but spoke to some farmers who noted you will have flies if you have more chickens in this area and poultry is a big part of some nearby facilities and that it might affect them. CM Gray noted that he has received almost all negative feedback about chickens and if we are having trouble working on alley ways and zombie properties how would we also be able to police the chickens. CM Sanford noted that he has received some positive calls and try to give more freedoms but if we are receiving an over whelming number of negative responses about chickens it is something that needs to be considered. CM Sanford asked if there should be any other discussion about chickens and President King noted they can allow more time and CM Buxton confirmed that he had no positive views about it and CM Clausen noted he spoke to people outside of town but professionals in that field and what needs to be done to protect the chickens and prevent diseases. CM Wolfe noted the concerns with chicken farms and cross contamination. CM Clausen spoke about how difficult it would be to police and if engineering would even have the resources to do that. CM Sanford noted he would like to see some more consideration but if there are enough possible no votes then maybe they should not. Mayor Hazel noted that in order to get more public comments they would have to have something on the agenda. CM Sanford noted that maybe allowing people to have one or two instead could help but noted it would be hard to police with how busy we already are. CM Wolfe noted it is already hard to police illegal chickens within the City. Mayor Hazel noted that engineering responds to calls but they do not go out and try to find reasons to cite people and noted that he has received some calls approving but more disapproving the idea of having chickens within the City limits and noted there were more favorable comments about bees. CM Clausen noted that he remembers that if a dog were to get into the chickens, they may have to put the dog down and noted that is a scenario the City should avoid.

CM Sanford spoke about bees and noted that he recently saw them within 20 feet and they just did their business and went back to the box. CM Clausen noted that he has not heard anything bad about bees and noted as long as you do not go and bother the bees, they do not bother people. CM Clausen spoke about having specialist making sure people are maintaining the hives properly and noted he would be interested in seeing legislation brought forward. CM Wolfe noted he has not heard anything about the bees either way. CM Clausen spoke about some of the protections and rules that people would need to know to make sure they are handling the bees properly. CM Gray noted that the organizations that handle chickens are recommending that we do not move forward with legislation and the organizations that handle bees are recommending we go forward with possible legislation. CM Gray noted the only concern he has heard have been about allergies and noted if someone does get bees, they should be a part of the Beekeeper Association and do it correctly. CM Sanford noted they would need to make sure there is a proper distance between the hive and houses or streets. CM Baltzell also noted he has heard a comment about allergies. It was asked about what to do if a neighbor sprays their lawn and it kills the bees and President King noted there is probably no avoiding that since they would be spraying their own lawns. CM Sanford noted someone who is trained properly would treat it with the right standards. President King noted Council is able to bring an Ordinance to a meeting or separate them as two different issues or decide not to bring either. Law Director Moore noted he is able to draft the legislation but he would need to know more information from the specialist and if he could have CM Clausen’s point of contact that would help and he would look into ORC to look at appropriate language and CM Sanford noted where in the ORC they can find some language. CM Clausen made a motion to bring legislation about bee keeping within the City limits, seconded by CM Sanford. Voice acclimation passed 6-0 Aye.

President King adjourned the meeting at 6:55 pm

Submitted by Michael F. Didonato, Clerk of Council