



The Corporation of the Town of Tecumseh

Corporate Services & Clerk

To: Mayor and Members of Council

From: Laura Moy, Director Corporate Services & Clerk

Date to Council: December 10, 2019

Report Number: CS-2019-43

Subject: Urban Hen Licensing Pilot Program – Public Information Centre

Recommendations

It is recommended:

That Report CS-2019-43 Urban Hen Licensing Pilot Program – Public Information Centre **be received;**

And that subject to approval, a by-law **be prepared** to approve the Urban Hen Licensing Pilot Program for a two-year period.

Background

Report CS-2019-36 Urban Hen Licensing Pilot Program (Pilot Program) was presented at the October 22, 2019 Policies & Priorities Committee Meeting outlining a proposed two-year Pilot Program.

As previously reported, the Pilot Program, if approved, would establish a limit of six (6) female hens, four months or older, for properties under 10,000 square feet. For properties over 10,000 square feet, an additional hen would be permitted per 3,000 square feet up to a maximum of twelve (12) hens.

Owners desirous of keeping urban hens would need to complete the Pilot Program registration form, meet all of the eligibility requirements and submit an annual license fee of \$25.00. An on-site inspection of the property to assess and ensure compliance with the terms and conditions outlined in the Pilot Program, and registration form, would be conducted by the Planning and Building Services Department, prior to issuing a license and identification band for each hen.

During the two years, the Pilot Program would be evaluated to determine whether it may continue in future years.

In accordance with the direction at the October 22, 2019 Policies & Priorities Committee Meeting, a Public Information Centre (PIC) was held to receive input from the public on the proposed Pilot Program.

Comments

Public Information Centre

A Public Information Centre (PIC) was held on Wednesday, November 20, 2019 from 3:00 pm to 5:00 pm and from 6:00 pm to 8:00 pm in the Council Chambers at Town Hall.

A notice was placed in the October 31 and November 1 publications of the Essex Free Press and Shoreline Week, respectively, to make residents aware of the proposed Pilot Program and to receive input from the public.

Residents were also provided an opportunity to submit comments on the Pilot Program via an online form available on the Town's website, up until end of business day on Friday, November 22, 2019.

Promotion of the PIC, and opportunity to submit comments online, was also provided on the Town's social media pages.

Local media, such as the Windsor Star and AM800, ran stories about the Pilot Program before and after the PIC.

Persons who attended the PIC received a copy of the Pilot Program Registration Form, Urban Hens Pilot Program Frequently Asked Questions, Windsor Essex County Health Unit Urban Chickens Health and Safety Guidelines and a pest control fact sheet. This information will also be made available on the Town's website, subject to approval of the Pilot Program.

Resident Comments

Following the close of the online comments on Friday, November 22, 47 persons had provided feedback in respect of the Pilot Program, of which 24 are in favour of the Pilot Program and 23 are opposed. A summary of the online comments is provided in [Attachment 1](#).

Six (6) residents attended the PIC; four (4) were in support of the Pilot Program and two (2) expressed concerns.

Common concerns related to the Pilot Program provided at the PIC and online are: noise, odour, and attraction of rodents and other wildlife.

Noise

Noise, defined by the Town under the Pilot Program's Terms and Conditions, means no person shall permit the persistent clucking, calling or other similar persistent noise made by any hens. The Town's Noise By-law further stipulates 'persistent barking, calling or whining or other similar persistent noise making by any domestic pet or any other animal kept or used for any purpose other than agriculture' is prohibited at all times.

Hen is defined in the Pilot Program as a domesticated female chicken that is at least four (4) months old. Prior to four (4) months, it cannot be determined whether the chick is a hen or a rooster. The keeping of roosters is prohibited under the Pilot Program.

Our research shows the stereotypical hen vocalization, technically known as 'cackling' is typically only made by hens when laying eggs. The Pilot Program will afford the opportunity to monitor concerns related to noise.

Odour

In accordance with the Pilot Program's Terms and Conditions, "the Owner shall keep all coops in a clean, dry, odour-free, neat and sanitary condition at all times, and in a manner that will provide healthy living conditions for the hens while minimizing adverse impacts to other residents in the neighbourhood to the satisfaction of the Town."

Further, the Owner will be required to agree to ensuring that all manure and waste is cleaned out regularly and stored in a secured container or composted and disposed of safely from any coop in a timely manner.

To further clarify waste requirements, the regulation was amended under the 'Terms and Conditions' which is denoted in red on the attached Registration Form ([Attachment 2](#)). In addition to ensuring that all manure and waste are cleaned out regularly and stored in a secured container or composted and disposed of safely from any coop in a timely manner, the Owner shall also ensure:

- a) coop floors are lined with shavings, straw, or other appropriate materials to absorb manure and facilitate cleaning; and
- b) coops are deep cleaned at least two times yearly including disinfecting of troughs, perches, and nests to ensure no waste residue.

Rodents

The Town has taken measures to mitigate the rodent population including: continued public education campaigns on ways to discourage rodents (removing clutter, yard maintenance, removing food sources); website and social media posts; two (2) public open houses that allowed residents an opportunity to receive advice from local pest control companies; and the introduction of mandatory hard-sided containers for household garbage.

Additionally, regulations identified under the 'Terms and Conditions' of the Registration Form stipulate:

- The Owner agrees to take necessary action at the Owner's sole cost and expense to reduce the attraction of predators and rodents and the potential infestation of insects and parasites to the satisfaction of the Town.
- The Owner shall ensure that such feed and water shall be protected against and unavailable to rodents, pests, birds and predators. Uneaten or spoiled feed must be removed in a timely manner.

Minor Revisions

To better clarify that hens are permitted in the rear yard only, a rear yard definition was added to the 'Terms and Conditions' and is denoted in red on the attached Registration Form.

As well, the Sample Site Plan depicted on Appendix A of the Registration Form was revised to illustrate a sample site plan for Lots Less than 10,000 Square Feet and Lots Greater than 10,000 Square Feet.

Concerns and/or complaints regarding the keeping of urban hens will be monitored and tracked in Cityworks. The Planning & Building Department will enforce the provisions consistent with property standards.

As noted under Report CS-2019-36, following completion of the two-year Pilot Program, an evaluation of the Pilot Program will be undertaken and a course of action with respect to the continuation of the program, or not, will be recommended to Council.

Consultations

Planning & Building Services

Financial Implications

An annual license fee of \$25.00 per registration form is being recommended to cover the cost to acquire identification bands, and nominal recovery for staffing resources to administer, monitor and enforce the Pilot Program.

Expenses relating to the identification bands, in the approximate amount of \$100.00 for 500 bands would be funded from the Animal Control Budget.

Additionally, the proposed annual license fee would be included in the 2020 Fees & Charges By-law.

Link to Strategic Priorities

Applicable	2019-22 Strategic Priorities
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Make the Town of Tecumseh an even better place to live, work and invest through a shared vision for our residents and newcomers.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Ensure that Tecumseh's current and future growth is built upon the principles of sustainability and strategic decision-making.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Integrate the principles of health and wellness into all of Tecumseh's plans and priorities.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Steward the Town's "continuous improvement" approach to municipal service delivery to residents and businesses.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Demonstrate the Town's leadership role in the community by promoting good governance and community engagement, by bringing together organizations serving the Town and the region to pursue common goals.

Communications

Not applicable ☒

Website ☐

Social Media ☐

News Release ☐

Local Newspaper ☐

This report has been reviewed by Senior Administration as indicated below and recommended for submission by the Chief Administrative Officer.

Prepared by:

Christina Hebert, BA (Hons), MA, Dipl. M.A.
Manager Committee & Community Services

Reviewed by:

Mike Voegeli
Manager Building Services & Chief Building Official

Reviewed by:

Chad Jeffery, MA, MCIP, RPP
Manager Planning Services

Reviewed by:

Brian Hillman, MA, MCIP, RPP
Director Planning & Building Services

Reviewed by:

Laura Moy, Dipl. M.M., CMMIII HR Professional
Director Corporate Services & Clerk

Recommended by:

Margaret Misek-Evans, MCIP, RPP
Chief Administrative Officer

Attachment Number	Attachment Name
1	Urban Hens Pilot Program Comments Summary
2	Urban Hens Pilot Program Registration Form