

TOWN OF NEWINGTON

131 Cedar Street Newington, Connecticut 06111

Town Planner

Memorandum

To: Town Plan & Zoning Commission
From: Andrew Armstrong, Assistant Town Planner, Zoning Officer
Date: July 1, 2020
Re: **Chicken Regulation Revision and Recommendation**

Currently the Town Zoning Regulations prohibit chickens on residential properties of less than 5 acres, which qualifies as a farm. For the past few years the Town Plan & Zoning Commission has put enforcement of this regulation on hold in order to reconsider the regulation.

In the past month, I have received an increase in complaints regarding chickens on residential properties without the required 5 acres of land. I have been able to avoid conflicts between neighbors by working with the violator and/or neighbor, but the time has come for TPZ to take action on this issue.

Many families in Newington have chickens on residential properties less than 5 acres. I have encountered many people who love and treat them as their own outdoor “pet” or “family”. Typically, people keep them for pets, insect control, and fresh eggs. The majority of these properties do not cause complaints and are rather innocuous. In my experiences, for the most part I have found chickens to not be any noisier than dogs that are kept as pets, though on occasion they do crow briefly in the morning when laying an egg. In addition, I have not received complaints about any smell or unsanitary conditions as a result of chickens. If any health or smell related complaints do arise they would be handled by the Health Department.

The latest complaint was in the process of being worked out, but the chicken owner is concerned that even if he relocates his existing coop to appease the neighbor, the new location may still not be good enough. Considering I cannot provide assurance to this property owner that the new location will be sufficient and that I am walking a fine line in not “enforcing” the chicken regulation while it has been on hold, I recommend TPZ adopt a regulation for chickens that is clear to the public and can easily be enforced.

Towns Nearby & Connecticut:

Many municipalities in Connecticut including several nearby allow chickens on single-family residential properties, though the amount of chickens allowed, method of approval, and standards or restrictions varies greatly. Some Towns do not allow chickens, some permit them as a general permit through the Zoning Enforcement Officer, others allow them by Special Permit, and some also allow them by right. The method of approval and standards widely vary.

TOWN	MIN AREA	MAX NUMBER OF CHICKENS	BY RIGHT OR SP?	COOP REQUIRED?	SETBACKS	OTHER REQUIREMENTS
West Hartford	5 acres	n/a	Farms only	n/a	n/a	n/a
Wethersfield	8,000 sf	8,000 sf or less: zero 8,000-20,000 sf: up to 5 hens 20,000 sf + : 7 or 8	By right	Yes	50' rear 25' side 100' from pond, reservoir, or watercourse	Confined by fencing 25' from any lot line.
Rocky Hill	.26 acres	0.26-0.5 acres: maximum 10 0.51-1.0 acres: maximum 20 1.0-4.99 acres: maximum 40	By right. Enclosure by permit.	No	15' side 15' rear	Non-commercial purposes only No more than 2 family lots Rear yard only, no roosters
Farmington	n/a	No more than 20 chickens	Special Permit	No	5' rear 5' side	n/a
Ellington	20,000 sf minimum	Up to 8	By right, but Reviewed by ZEO.	Yes - 200 sf max.	20' side 20' rear	No roosters less than 3 acres Free range prohibited
Manchester	n/a	Up to 12	Permit signed by ZEO	Yes- 2 sf per hen	25' from any dwelling or occupied structure	Rear yard only Fencing required for outdoor areas
Milford	n/a	Smaller Residential Zoning: Up to 5 hens Larger Residential Zoning: Up to 10 hens	Special Permit	No	25' from any street line 10' from principal building 5' from any property line	Fenced enclosure no greater than 20% of lot, located in rear yard. Any portion closer than 10' shall provide a solid fence or landscape buffer No commercial sales or activity.

Recommendation:

My recommendation to TPZ is to allow chickens in single-family residential zoning (not including farms) under conditions that they feel are right for Newington. My proposed suggestions include standards that I feel fall somewhere within the middle of what other Towns allow. My suggestion includes the following:

- Owners of chickens must submit a sketch and written statement of compliance with regulations to the Zoning Enforcement Officer.
- No roosters allowed.
- Fencing is required to prevent predators and roaming.
- An appropriate permanent shelter shall be provided:
 - Located within the rear portion of property.
 - 10-15 feet from any property line.
 - Maximum 200 sf.
- Limits on number of chickens, based on acreage:
 - 8,000 sf – 20,000 sf: up to 5 chickens
 - 20,000 sf +: up to 8 chickens
- Repeated violations could result in the Town Plan & Zoning Commission to act.
- Chickens and associated aspects must be kept in accordance with the Health District standards.
- No signage permitted.

cc:
File