

SAFETY COMMITTEE

MAY 22, 2017

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 p.m. by Chairman Nelson Evans. Committee members present were Nelson Evans and Rick Rettig. Jim Matuszak was absent. Also present were City Administrator Bridgette Kabat and Law Director Karlene Henderson.

LIQUOR PERMIT – FLYING JOE

Ms. Kabat said that a request has been received regarding a liquor permit for The Flying Joe at Levis Commons. Chief Paez said that he has no problem with the request. The Committee agreed 2-0 to not recommend a hearing be held regarding this request.

CHICKENS

Krista Kiessling, Maple Street, was present to discuss her proposal to allow backyard hens in the City as it pertains to the Codified Ordinances regarding enforcement. Ms. Kiessling said that she reviewed Chapter 618 and she does not think there would need to be many changes should backyard hens be allowed because she feels they should abide by the same rules that apply to other pets. She said that her proposal limits it to six hens and requires appropriate housing of ten square feet per hen. The coops must be kept clean with no odor or noise nuisances which is similar to existing language. Ms. Kiessling said that section 660.04 addresses noxious odors and would not need to be changed to reflect the addition of backyard hens. She said that her group has done a lot of research on other communities that allow hens and they have had few enforcement issues. She added that 634.06, the section on noise, does not need to be changed because of how it's written, it would also apply to chickens.

Mr. Rettig asked why Ms. Kiessling's proposal is for a limit of six hens. Ms. Kiessling said that a lot of places won't let you buy less than six, and she has a family of four and they have five chickens and they produce enough eggs for her family.

Chief Dan Paez said that his division produced a list of issues regarding this proposal. He said that some of the issues have already been addressed such as number of chickens allowed and if roosters would be permitted. His other issues were: waste and abatement; how would they be contained on the property since they can fly at least a short distance; how will they be fed – will it be thrown on the ground which might attract rodents; the possibility that the chickens will attract hawks, coyotes and skunks; chicken waste – will it be composted and how will that be regulated; will there be a requirement to have coops a certain distance from the property line; who is going to be tasked with monitoring or will it be complaint driven.

Ms. Kiessling said that regarding the ground feeding, she may throw snacks on the ground, but they use feeders in the enclosed coop and they don't let the hens out of their fenced in backyard. She said that with regards to attracting rodents and other animals, Andy Schneider of the USDA thinks that bird feeders are more of an attraction because the chickens eat all the food and there's nothing left at the end of the day for predators. She said that the coop and egg boxes are latched at night and biosecurity is one of the issues that would be covered in the required class. She said that with regards to the

waste, they compost theirs and it is great for gardens. She added that if the hens are cared for properly, you won't smell them.

Mr. Rettig asked how many families have chickens in Perrysburg. Ms. Kiessling said that she can confirm that there are ten to twelve families that have them. She said it is not for everyone because it is a lot of work. Mr. Evans asked if any of her chickens have ever gotten out of her yard. She said that they did have one that got out and they had to trim her wings. Mr. Evans asked about the possibility that they be kept permanently in a pen. Ms. Kiessling said that some people do that, but she is advocating to treat them as pets and she would not ask that someone bring home puppies and keep them chained up and crated. Mr. Evans asked what happens when she can't educate the people anymore. Ms. Kiessling said that there is a strong community of chicken owners and maybe they could set up a 501(c)(3) that is citizen run through donations. Mr. Evans asked Chief Paez how many phone calls the Police Division has received regarding chickens. Chief Paez said he would have to talk to the Animal Control Officer. Ms. Kiessling said that she did a records request and only found three complaints over the last couple of years.

Mr. Rettig asked what part of town the majority of the chickens are in. Mr. Kiessling said that they are all over, there is no socioeconomic boundary. Ms. Kabat clarified that the Zoning Code currently permits chickens in Agricultural and R1 zoning districts; Ms. Kiessling's proposal would add them to R2 and R3 zoning districts.

Mr. Evans asked if this is approved and someone isn't as conscientious as Ms. Kiessling, would they call the Police Division or Planning and Zoning Division. Ms. Kiessling said that she would recommend a link on the City's website with clear information regarding the requirements for keeping chickens. Mr. Evans also questioned if he were to sell his house, how many fewer people would look at it if the house behind him had chickens. Ms. Kiessling said that we can't impose our personal preferences on others. She said that she doesn't like smoking, but she can't stop her neighbors from doing it. Mr. Evans noted that people bought properties with this not being allowed and he questioned what might come next. Ms. Kiessling said that the Mayor brought up that point and they checked with other communities and that has not happened. She added that she is confident we won't have problems if this is approved. Mr. Evans said that the issue is going to be whether City Council wants to approve this and who would enforcement be turned over to. He added that the Animal Control Officer is already super busy. Mr. Evans thanked Ms. Kiessling for her efforts.

Jim Wolfe, Pauly Drive, said that he has lived here 38 years and he is opposed to chickens being allowed. He said they are not neat eaters and the food on the ground attracts possum, raccoons and skunks.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 6:46 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Nelson Evans, Chairman
Safety Committee

Next meeting: Monday, June 26, 2017 at 6:00 p.m.