



## REQUEST FOR DECISION

**MEETING DATE:** April 15, 2024

**TITLE:** C-1313-24 - Hens Bylaw and Program

**DIVISION:** Sustainable Growth and Development Services

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### **SUMMARY:**

The results of the Community Standards Bylaw survey identified the desire to permit hen keeping in Spruce Grove. Administration was directed to develop a permanent program rather than a pilot project. With evidence from jurisdictional research and initial training, Administration has prepared a full implementation program for hen licensing including a Hens Bylaw and associated Land Use Bylaw and Development Fees and Fines Bylaw amendments.

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### **PROPOSED MOTION:**

To be determined based on discussion and feedback of Committee.

### **BACKGROUND:**

The 2022 - 2025 Strategic Plan contains an objective to develop an urban agriculture strategy, which includes review of an urban farming policy. In conjunction with the Community Standards Bylaw public engagement, direction was given in August 2023 to proceed with development of a permanent hen keeping program to launch in 2024. Administration was requested to return in the spring with the following for consideration:

- Project plan;
- Resourcing plan;
- Implementation plan; and
- New bylaw and recommendations for bylaw amendments that will need to be made to enable the desired licensing practices.

## **ANALYSIS:**

A full program for hen keeping has been developed which has included:

1. Background review and research
  - Engagement regarding potential support for hen keeping through Community Standards Bylaw initiative
  - Due Diligence Report completed
  - Interviews and discussions with other municipalities
2. Program and process requirements
  - Standards
    - 3 - 6 hens
    - Coop and run requirements
    - Certification, mentor, veterinarian, temporary care
    - Disease prevention checklist
  - Process and Procedure Requirements
    - Licence document and conditions
    - Verification inspection
    - One-time fee, free annual renewal with inspection
    - Neighbour notification
    - Manual process
  - Compliance Requirements
    - Ticketing
    - Appeals to Community Standards Appeal Committee
3. Bylaw and regulatory preparation
  - Develop new Hen Keeping Bylaw
  - Amend Land Use Bylaw, Development Fees and Fines Bylaw
4. Staff training
  - Hen Keeping 101
  - Farm visit
  - Inspection 'drive-along'
5. Enforcement and Communications support

## **OPTIONS / ALTERNATIVES:**

The following options are being proposed to Committee, which may recommend to Council:

### Option 1 (Recommended)

Support the proposed Hen Keeping Program and city-wide program launch in June 2024, and undertake a review of the program in 2025 to adjust the program as needed.

## Option 2

Adjust the Hen Keeping Program and postpone the city-wide program launch.

### **CONSULTATION / ENGAGEMENT:**

Results from the Community Standards Bylaw *What We Heard* Report provided Administration with feedback from community responses to hen keeping and beekeeping within the city.

The jurisdictional scan guided further research; Administration explored options with similar sized municipalities. Inquiries were made to other municipalities regarding hen programs, internal processes, bylaw definitions, and lessons learned to inform the proposed options.

### **IMPLEMENTATION / COMMUNICATION:**

Timelines for the Hen Keeping program are:

DATE	ACTION
March - April 2024	Finalize Hens Bylaw, other bylaw amendments and program details
April - May	Develop communications plan
April 15	Hens Bylaw and program presented to GPC
May 13 & 27	Hens Bylaw and other bylaw amendments to Council for first, second and third reading
June	Launch program

A Communications Strategy is being developed to update the City's website and social media tools with regard to the Hen Keeping Program.

### **IMPACTS:**

The level of interest in hen keeping in the City is unknown. Other smaller and mid-sized communities have issued anywhere from one to over 100 licences.

Staffing requirements for developing the program and bylaw are estimated at 975 hours for three staff over six months.

Ongoing management of the program is estimated to require 65 - 70 hours per application including pre-application discussions through to licence issuance, inspections and potential appeal.

An additional licencing position would be required to support this program; they would also provide support for other licencing requirements (business, mobile vending).

**FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:**

Training costs are minimal, but the time and mileage for courses and farm / inspection visits is required. This can be covered through the Planning and Development department operational budget.

Personal protective equipment (PPE) is required for inspections and estimated at \$150 per staff person. It is expected the responsibility for this program will be shared by three to four staff. This can be covered through the Planning and Development department operational budget.

A temporary Licencing position is being requested through the Community Standards Bylaw work, as this program was initiated through that initiative. Ultimately two positions will be needed to manage the growing demand for business and mobile vending licencing, and upcoming new programs including hen keeping, pawn shops, vehicle for hire, and beekeeping. Planning and Development is awaiting direction on how best to approach requesting funding for these positions.