

Bylaw C-1313-24

Hens Bylaw and Program

City of Spruce Grove
First and Second Reading
May 27, 2024

Background

- Through Community Standards Bylaw work, desire identified to permit hen-keeping and beekeeping
- Two year pilot project



Source: Alison Burrell at Pexe

Due Diligence

1. Engagement
2. Background research
3. Regulatory requirements
4. Municipal scan
5. Staff training
6. Legal review

Regulatory Requirements

1. Hens Bylaw
2. Amendments to:
 - Land Use Bylaw
 - Development Fees and Fines Bylaw



Municipal Scan

Review of other municipal Urban Hen Keeping program requirements
Interviews with other municipalities (requirements, learnings, expectations)

Municipality	Permits/Licences	Permit/Licence Cost	Enforcement
Red Deer	102	\$36.15	2
Grand Prairie	24	Free	4
St. Albert	19	\$49	1
Cold Lake	6	\$30	0
Leduc (Pilot)	1	Free	0

Staff Training

1. Chickens 101

- 3-hour training program
- Hen enclosure design, winter precautions, health and care requirements, breeds, waste management and biosecurity

2. Farm visit

3. Inspection “ride-along”

4. PPE requirements

Hen Keeping Program Development

- Animal welfare
- Disease prevention
- Predators and pests
- Impacts to neighbours
- Inspections and violations
- Resources required



Animal Welfare

- Hen enclosure requirements (size, winter proofing, and ventilation)
- Hens must be 16+ weeks old
- Hen Care Checklist
- 3 to 6 hens to promote ideal interaction
- Urban Hen Keeping course required
- Site inspection (annual and complaint based)

Backyard Hen Enclosure CARE CHECKLIST



This checklist indicates activities that should be completed by the licence holder for the ongoing care and maintenance of the hens and the hen enclosure. The licence holder may adapt this checklist or create their own to submit with their application package.

DAILY

A backyard hen enclosure with 3 to 6 hens may require 15 to 30 minutes of care in the morning and the evening.

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Fresh feed and water | <input type="checkbox"/> Clean off roosts |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Open/close the coop | <input type="checkbox"/> Remove soiled bedding |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Overall health/behaviour check | <input type="checkbox"/> Clean up spilled feed/water |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Collect eggs | <input type="checkbox"/> Refill grit, oyster shells, scratch (winter) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Check the weather | <input type="checkbox"/> Update record keeping |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Turn lights on/off | |

WEEKLY

A backyard hen enclosure with 3 to 6 hens may require 60 minutes of care once a week.

- Clean and disinfect waterers
- Inspect the coop
- Assess the litter
- Check the dust bath

MONTHLY

A backyard hen enclosure with 3 to 6 hens may require 3 hours of care once a month.

- Clean up feed and bedding material
- Thoroughly clean the coop

SEASONAL

To be completed seasonally.

- Adjust hen enclosure structure for weather conditions
- Deep clean of the coop



Disease Prevention

- Documentation of mentor and veterinarian
- Disease Prevention Checklist
- Premises Identification Number
- Hens must be in a fenced yard and locked enclosure
- Hens with communicable disease to be confined and no contact with other animals/humans (Responsible Pet Ownership Bylaw)
- Regulations for diseased hens (Animal Health Act)
- Regulations for disposing of deceased hens (Animal Health Act)

Predators and Pests

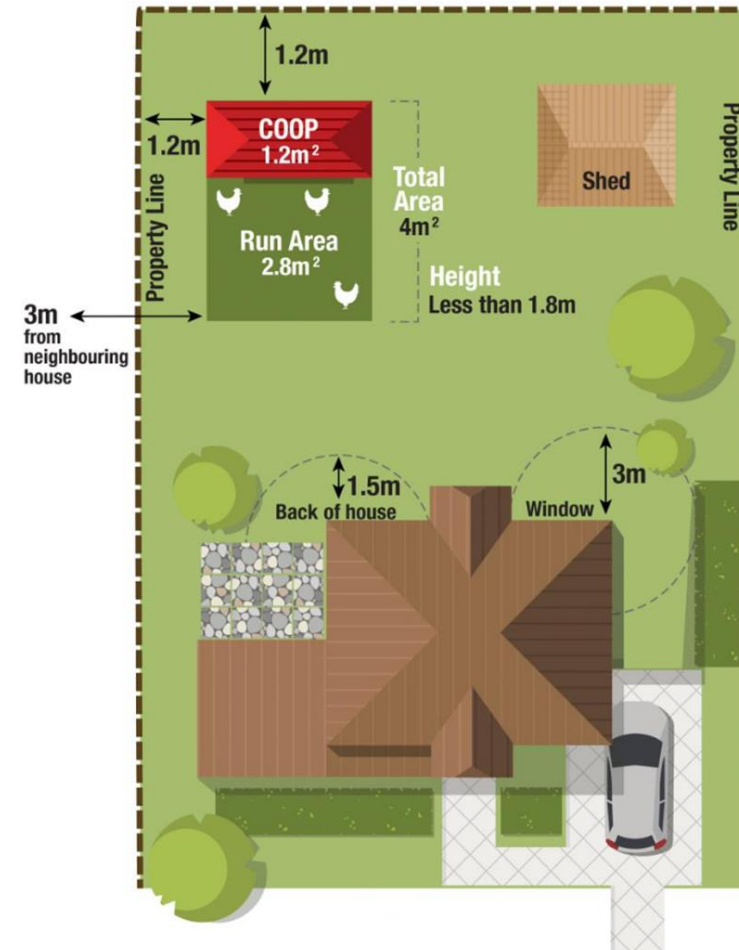
- Hens must be in a locked enclosure and fenced yard
- Enclosure covered with hardware mesh and protected underneath
- Must discard of leftover feed and manure



Impacts to Neighbours

- Neighbourhood notification required
- Right to appeal licence
- No roosters permitted
- Minimum setback requirements
- Community Standards Bylaw and Responsible Pet Ownership Bylaw

Backyard Three Hen Coop Example
Minimum Requirements



Inspections and Violations

Inspections

- Verification upon approval and annual upon licence renewal
- Site access approval required

Violations

- Inspection to investigate complaint
- Work with homeowner to come into compliance
- Warning letter
- Ticketing (Enforcement Officer)
- Revoke licence
- Seizure and Impoundment

Resources Required

- Staffing support to address inquiries, process applications, inspections, and enforcement
- PPE
- Program monitoring and reporting

Process



- Annual Licence document and conditions
- Initial verification inspection
- One-time fee with free annual renewal upon inspection
- Review and process requirements
- Reporting
- Neighbour notification
- Manual processing by City
- Appeals to Community Standards Appeal Committee

Resolution

THAT Committee recommend to Council to implement a pilot project for two years for the Hens Program.

- Reduced licencing fees (\$50)
- Robust communication plan
- Applicant must sign the application form and acknowledge the terms and conditions of the licence
- Issue notification of program cancellation and provide 6 months for removal of Hens
- Inspection to confirm removal of hens
- Repeal program and Hens Bylaw.

Additional Clarity

1. **Bring more clarity around the wording of 5.4(f) "double bagging", so that the process is known for what is done once the hen is double bagged.**

Updated section 5.4 (f) of the Hens Bylaw to state “*dispose of the carcass of a Hen deceased by natural causes, by double bagging and **placing it in the garbage collection or** bringing it to a veterinarian, farm, abattoir, or other operation that is lawfully permitted to dispose of Hens.*”

2. **Liability of cancelling a program and bylaw - gather a legal opinion on this.**

- Risk of liability to the City is very remote
- Recommended applicant sign a written statement acknowledging two-year pilot project, City can terminate the project at any time, and City is not responsible for any costs incurred by the participant.

Additional Clarity

3. Bring an update to Council regarding licence uptake after the Hen Program is in place one year.

Administration will bring an update to Council regarding the number of licences issued and other key measures of success and challenges in July 2025.

Timelines

- March - April: Finalize bylaw and program
- April - May: Communications Plan
- April 15: Program overview (Governance and Priorities Committee Meeting)
- May 27 and June 10: Bylaw and amendments to Council
- June 2024: Launch 2-year pilot program

Questions and Comments