

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT

Topic: Amendment to Parkland County Animal Control Bylaw (2015-09): Should chickens be permitted on parcels less than 2 acres within Parkland County?

Introduction:

This report provides the context initiated by Public Input to Council requesting consideration of an amendment to Parkland County Animal Control Bylaw (2015-09) to allow County residents to have chickens on parcels less than 2 acres. Administration has completed a background and analytical review and has provided a recommendation to Council.

Background:

Parkland County Animal Control Bylaw (2015-09) does not permit any animals other than dogs and cats on parcels less than 2 acres. In 2015, a pilot project proposal to allow chickens on parcels less than 2 acres was presented to Council and it was defeated. In 2020, a resident came to Council requesting an amendment to the bylaw to allow for hens on parcels less than 2 acres. The reasons for considering the amendment at this time were presented in a report compiled by the resident. In summary, the report indicated that conditions have changed since the pilot project proposal was defeated in 2015. These changes include the shut down of a large chicken processing plant, which had sparked concerns of disease transmission, and the increasing need for food security, especially during the COVID pandemic. Council directed Administration to consult with the Agricultural Service Board and the Community Sustainability Committee to help determine whether Council should proceed with this initiative. An informal internal working committee was brought together to research the current situation in other municipalities.

Analysis:

The internal committee has done a jurisdictional scan of bylaws of Parkland County's urban and rural neighbors to gather information on current allowances for chickens on parcels less than 2 acres. As well, other municipalities that currently allow chickens on less than 2 acres have been contacted. These municipalities include the City of Grand Prairie, City of Edmonton and the City of Red Deer. Presentations were given to the Agricultural Service Board and Community Sustainability Committee and input was provided to the internal working committee. The Agricultural Service Board was not supportive of the amendment to the bylaw due to potential risks such as increased predation and risk of inappropriate disposal. There was no clear support of the amendment by the Community Sustainability Committee. Additionally, both committees determined that an amendment to the bylaw would require education of the public, as well as further research to assess the extent of resident support for the amendment.

Alternatives

Administration has identified the following options:

- a. Maintain the current Parkland County Animal Control Bylaw (2015-09) based on the feedback from the Agricultural Service Board and the Community Sustainability Committee. OR,
- b. Conduct targeted public engagement to gather broader input from residents to determine the need for amendments to the Parkland County Animal Control Bylaw (2015-09) and impact on County resources as a result of the amendment.

Conclusion/Summary:

In conclusion, administration recommends alternative b., therefore supporting a targeted public engagement process.

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