

MINUTES
PUBLIC MEETING
COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE - COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Monday, February 3, 2025, 6:00 PM
Corporation of The Township of Edwardsburgh Cardinal
Council Chambers, Spencerville Ontario

PRESENT: Councillor Chris Ward
Mayor Tory Deschamps
Deputy Mayor Stephen Dillabough
Councillor Joe Martelle
Councillor Waddy Smail

STAFF: Sean Nicholson, CAO
Tim Fisher, Planner
Wendy VanKeulen, Community Development Coordinator
Candise Newcombe, Deputy Clerk
Rachel Porter, Recreation Coordinator
Natalie Charette, Interim Clerk

1. Call Meeting to Order

The Chair called the meeting to order at 6:03 p.m. and requested that members of the public provide names and addresses on the sign-in sheet to record presence as part of the public meeting record. The Chair also extended a warm welcome to the new members of the Community Development Committee, Ms. Holly Howard and Mr. David Jansen.

2. Approval of Agenda

Moved by: T. Deschamps

Seconded by: W. Smail

That the agenda be moved as presented.

Carried

3. Disclosure of Pecuniary Interest or Conflict of Interest and the General Nature Thereof

Councillor Martelle noted he owns domestic fowl.

4. Process and Information

Staff highlighted that the public meeting was being held under the authority of Section 34 of the Planning Act and was advertised in accordance with the requirements of the Act.

Staff outlined the process to share written or verbal comments to Council; the appeal rights; and how to receive a notice of Council's decision for those in attendance. It was noted that the Committee may make a recommendation for Council consideration at a future meeting although there will be no Council decision made on the application during this meeting.

5. Proposed Zoning Bylaw Amendment: Domestic Fowl

a. Proposal Details

The public meeting is regarding a proposed amendment to the zoning bylaw to permit the keeping of domestic fowl coops more broadly within the Township, and in particular, within all settlement areas and to amend the current provisions to protect individual private water sources (wells), wellhead protection area, intake protection area's, distance to lot lines and any window or door openings on an adjacent lot and the minimum and maximum floor space per hen. A permitting system to establish a domestic fowl coop as well as changes to the definition of domestic fowl coop was discussed, which could limit the number of fowl to 3 per coop in settlement areas.

The Township planner provided additional details regarding the proposed amendment and noted constructive public feedback received at the open house meeting held on January 28.

b. Public Comment

The Chair opened the floor for any public comments.

Mr. Drew Lefebvre recommended revising the terminology from "egg-laying chickens" to "female chickens" and noted that the proposed limit on the number of fowl would hinder families' ability to rely on eggs as a consistent food source due to the limited supply. He suggested removing restrictions on the number of coops to accommodate the potential need to quarantine sick chickens, recommending a review of property zoning instead of imposing limits based on lot size. Mr. Lefebvre also proposed applying recommended setbacks to domestic fowl runs, rather than coops, as coops have floors that prevent waste contamination. Additionally, he recommended calculating square footage based on the combined size of coops and runs. He further suggested the Township adopt a model similar to the Township of Augusta, which permits up to 5 hens on properties of half an acre or less, 10 hens on properties of half an acre or more, and 25 hens on rural properties under 25 acres.

Mr. Brandon Pollard expressed concerns regarding potential legislative overreach in the proposed amendments. He recommended providing

clearer definitions, including maps to delineate the affected areas, and excluding agricultural land from the proposed changes.

Josh Reinhart expressed support for Mr. Lefebvre's comments and raised concerns about the lack of communication regarding the open house for the proposed zoning bylaw amendment held on January 28. He noted that the Township newsletter was a missed opportunity to promote the event. Additionally, he emphasized that the current proposed language of the bylaw is too vague and should be more specifically focused on settlement areas, omitting rural properties completely from any restrictions.

Mr. Bob Coville inquired about the method used to determine acreage for permitting rooster ownership and expressed concern that the proposed permitting system imposes too much of a financial burden on residents.

Patti Delmage expressed concerns about legislative overreach and the potential impact these restrictions could have on families' access to a cost-effective food source. She also raised issues with the permitting costs and the use of ratepayer funds for the zoning bylaw amendments proposed.

Dwayne Collard expressed his agreement with the comments made thus far and suggested that the Township review and reconsider the R1 and R2 property zones, maintaining the status quo for the rest of the zoning bylaw.

Karen Lavoie shared that she relocated to the Township to enjoy rural living and recommended increasing the permitted number of domestic fowl to better accommodate the needs of Township residents.

Alex Villemaire expressed concerns about any restrictions on potential food sources for residents.

Will and Rosanna Moulton joined the meeting virtually via Zoom and expressed their agreement with the statements made. They encouraged the Township to focus its review of domestic fowl restrictions solely on the settlement areas.

Madison Couture joined the meeting virtually via Zoom and expressed her agreement with the statements made. She highlighted that the current restrictions render the keeping of domestic fowl coops unviable.

Matthew Stephens joined virtually via Zoom with Jen Ryckman and stated that they had heard of the Zoom meeting via the Facebook group "What's happening Spencerville", and agreed that utilizing social media would help keep families involved in community decisions.

The Committee clarified its intent to reduce restrictions on the keeping of domestic fowl, outlined the steps being taken to improve communication with residents, and thanked the public for their valuable feedback.

c. Committee Discussion

The Committee clarified that the proposed zoning bylaw amendment aims to reduce restrictions on domestic fowl permissions. Members also discussed the need to bridge the communication gap between the Township and its residents, as well as further relax restrictions on domestic fowl in rural areas of the Township.

That Committee direct staff to review the comments received to date and draft wording for the amendments to Section 4.5(2) for domestic fowl coops in the zoning bylaw and investigate an application or licensing process, for review at a later public meeting date.

6. Next Steps

The Chair noted that Staff will take all comments heard into consideration prior to making a recommendation to the Committee of the Whole – Community Development. The changes are meant to include improvements to provisions in the Settlement area and the Rural area. The next meeting Committee meeting is scheduled for March 3. For those who wish to attend virtually, you can email our Clerk for a link before 4:30 p.m. on the day of the meeting. Committee and Council meetings and agendas are posted to the Council Calendar on the Township website: www.twpec.ca.

Committee will review any information and recommendations from staff and make a recommendation to Council. If Committee feels that more revisions are necessary, they will ask our Planner to make changes for another review.

When a decision is made by Council and notice of decision is mailed, there will be a 20-day appeal period.

The Chair noted that if individuals wished to be notified of the Council's decision, they must make a written request to the Township through the Community Development Coordinator.

7. Adjournment

Moved by: T. Deschamps

Seconded by: S. Dillabough

That Committee does now adjourn at 7:05 p.m.

Carried



Deputy Clerk