

Memorandum

To: Planning Commission

From: Lori Peckol, Policy Planning Manager, 425-556-2411
Kimberly Dietz, Senior Planner, 425-556-2415

Date: August 24, 2011

Subject: **Amendment to Small Animal Husbandry, Including Backyard Chickens Policies and Codes**

MEETING PURPOSE – AUGUST 24, 2011

The Planning Commission's briefing on August 24th will include a preliminary description of the amendment process regarding small animal husbandry and specifically backyard chickens. The purpose of this briefing is to provide a foundation of current policies and codes, propose a review schedule, and learn of the Commission's major issues and questions related to your upcoming review of the amendment.

COMMISSIONER PREPARATION

In preparation for the briefing, Commissioners are asked to review the current policies and codes that relate to small animal husbandry (*Attachment A*):

- Redmond Comprehensive Plan, portions of the Land Use Element;
- Redmond Zoning Code, portions of Chapter 21.08 regarding structures and shelters; and
- For the Commission's reference: Redmond Municipal Code, portions of Title 7 Animals.

The City's code regarding small animal husbandry is contained within the Redmond Municipal Code (RMC). The approach for this amendment will be different from amendments the Commission typically considers in that code updates will involve the RMC which the Commission has not reviewed previously but will consider as part of this amendment.

Staff will provide a presentation as part of the August 24th briefing and included draft slides for the Commission's review (*Attachment B*).

BACKGROUND

Review of policies and code related to small animal husbandry is one of many components of the 2010-2011 Periodic Update to Redmond's Comprehensive Plan. Redmond community members began discussing this item with City officials in 2010, asking for a reduced lot size

limitation to allow ownership of backyard chickens. In response, the City Council directed staff to include this topic in the Comprehensive Plan update process.

Currently, Redmond's Municipal Code addresses domestic animals and limits the ownership of small animals such as chickens to lots no smaller than ½ acre. Ownership of larger animals such as horses and cattle are limited to lots no smaller than one acre and larger based on the type of animal.

On August 3, 2011, staff met with community members for a conversation regarding small animal husbandry, including backyard chickens. Large animals were not specifically addressed. A total of 40 community members attended, in addition to members of City Council and Planning Commission. Staff promoted the meeting over a three week period using a wide variety of communication tools including the City's webpages, Facebook, and RCTV. The Redmond Reporter and Redmond Patch featured articles related to the community meeting as well as community perspectives.

In general, nearly all of the feedback from the meeting was in favor of increased support for small animal husbandry within Redmond. In particular, participants supported increased allowance for chickens on single-family properties. Participants discussed issues such as odor though those who attended did not express strong concerns. Furthermore, many recommended promoting healthy and compatible conditions through educational programs, public stewardship such as a local poultry expert, and a strong emphasis on best management practices. Other perspectives expressed by some participants at the August 3rd meeting included interest in partnerships with community gardens, chicken coop guidance and regulations, Redmond-based licensing and permitting, and a tiered-system to regulate the number of animals based on the respective lot size and open space.

Through August 20, 2011, community members are invited to share their perspective regarding small animal husbandry using an on-line questionnaire at <https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/redmondsmallanimalhusbandry2011>. The questionnaire asks the same seven questions that were discussed at the August 3rd community meeting. Staff plans to include the questionnaire results along with the August 3rd input in the Technical Report for this amendment.

In advance of the Commission's September 21st study session on this amendment, staff has invited additional input from community members regarding stewardship strategies similar to educational resources provided by Sustainable Redmond and services provided by Seattle Tilth.

PROPOSED SCHEDULE AND REVIEW APPROACH

To help make the best use of the Commission’s time, staff suggests organizing discussion of the amendment on the following dates as shown below:

Staff Proposed Small Animal Husbandry, Including Backyard Chickens Review Schedule and Approach	
• Briefing and discussion of amendment process	August 24
• First study session to discuss proposed amendments and identify major issues	September 21
• Public hearing and discussion of public input • Continued discussion and preliminary resolution of major issues	October 12
• Discussion of additional public input • Resolution of Small Animal Husbandry policies and codes	October 19
• Planning Commission report approval	November 2

The Commissioners are asked to identify those items that will be most helpful in review of the amendment to small animal husbandry, particularly chicken related policies and codes and to contact Kimberly Dietz, 425-556-2415 or kdietz@redmond.gov, with these requests for additional information and with questions.

Attachments

- A. Current Policies and Codes that Relate to Small Animal Husbandry
- B. Presentation Slides for Study Session