

Municipality of East Ferris

Report to Council

Report No.: PLAN-2022-02

Date: March 8, 2022

Originator: Greg Kirton, Director of Community Services

Subject: Animal Control By-law Public Consultation

BACKGROUND

On February 8, 2022, at the regular meeting of Council, amendments to the Animal Control By-law were presented based on the recommendation from the East Ferris Economic Development Committee. These recommendations were focused on increasing the opportunities for small scale business related activity associated with the keeping of fowl as an accessory use on a residential property.

During the discussion on the amendments, staff were directed to engage the community for feedback related to the proposed amendments. **Appendix A** to this report is a compilation of all comments that were received through the public consultation period. The public consultation period was open from February 11th to February 25th and comments were accepted in writing by email or at the municipal office.

The comments received cover a wide range of topics and viewpoints related to the by-law provisions but generally speaking, the key areas of discussion are focused on the following:

- 1) Number of fowl to be permitted.
- 2) The permission of roosters, specifically when fully matured.
- 3) Setbacks from property lines and location of the fowl.

Comments were also received from the public and from Council at the February 8th meeting related to the definition of fowl. The intention was for these amendments to specifically target chickens so the definition of fowl will be amended to reflect that when the updated by-law is brought to Council on March 22nd. Other types of fowl will remain at the current by-law numbers.

Respectfully Submitted,



Greg Kirton
Director of Community Services

I concur with this report,
and recommendation



Jason H. Trottier, HBBA, CPA, CMA
CAO/Treasurer

Appendix A – Public Consultation Comments

Name	Email/Contact Info	Comments
Kristina	kristina.vardyroy@gmail.com	I am grateful that you continue to support the keeping of backyard chickens. We do not currently have chickens, but I anxiously await the day when we have time to own and care for them, as they are very interesting creatures!
Crystal McLeod	creestal@hotmail.com 59 Catherine Dr 705-845-8844	Please, please, please do not allow roosters unless it's a farm. I live on Catherine Dr, and someone got a rooster a couple of years ago...they lived 2 streets over on Denise Dr, and we could hear it on Catherine Dr. 5 acre minimum is a start, but I don't think the 30m minimum from property line would be sufficient. That's less than 100'. If you think a rooster isn't disruptive 100' away, you've never lived near a rooster.
Michel Champagne	mhchampagne@vianet.ca	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Permitting vocal roosters will surely bring a flurry of constant noise related complaints. Even I cannot put up with it. Due to untold generations of chicks hatched in incubators most popular breeds of hens have lost the brooding instinct and will not hatch chicks. Heritage breeds are the exceptions. Those interested in heritage breeds can purchase fertilized eggs and hatch them in incubators. There is no way to keep a rooster quiet and they can be dangerous as they mature. Roosters get vocal around 10 weeks old. Meat birds are processed between 6 to 8 weeks so no issues there. Keep roosters to farms of 5 acres or more. A hornets nest will be created if roosters are permitted on properties less than 5 acres. • The dead fowl section is also problematic in my opinion. What will the animal control officer do with the carcass. I have a farm and surely do not want dead birds, we have no abattoir or mobile processing facilities in our area.... That leaves vets which would charge an exorbitant disposal fee. No one will pay to dispose of a chicken guaranteed. How will this be enforced? Why is this a concern if we do not legislate how pets should be disposed of. Why can't the carcass be buried. How is it different from laying Fido or Fluffy to rest in the backyard. I can guarantee if burial is not permitted you will find them along the roads where scavengers will make short work of them. Many landfills permit carcass disposal, no worse than fish offals in my opinion. Will you regulate what can be done with entrails from birds processed on site? Portable scalding and plucking equipment is easy to rent in our municipality. • The marketing boards limit the amount of layers or meat birds that can be raised without quota.. so rather than say unlimited number for farms simply state as per marketing board regulations. FYI. That is currently 99 layers, 300 meat birds, 75 turkeys without quota.

<p>Kailan Fish</p>	<p>kailan.fish@gmail.com</p> <p>Home - (705)752-5670 Cell - (705)845-0129</p>	<p>As a resident of Astorville I am well aware of who this supposed by-law is about (possible neighbours on Village Rd), and the recent Toronto immigrants who are making such complaints (On Catherine Dr).</p> <p>As ridiculous as this may sound, instead of enacting new bureaucratic by-laws to further limit freedoms enjoyed in this township, has anyone considered asking the family about the removal of the rooster in question??</p> <p>Are we so far beyond reproach that neighbours cannot communicate with one another and ask favors or engage in friendly conversation.</p> <p>I am awaiting the day when I will have a HOA (home owner association) move in and inform me that my breakfast or music choices do not suit the tastes of the neighbourhood.</p> <p>Now I don't enjoy a vocal rooster at 6AM as much as the next person, however I am for the idea of having the common courtesy of simply asking such person or persons to eliminate such nuisance. (If this problem exists in more than one neighbourhood).</p> <p>As a Village Rd resident with chickens of my own, one of my roosters became vocal at the point of maturity and the problem just seemed to vanish as the rooster also **vanished**. Common courtesy and common sense can rule the day without the need for a by-law as evidenced.</p> <p>Finally, this leads to my personal gripe with the by-law, which in my opinion should be allowed on your own personal property.</p> <p>5) No owner shall permit their fowl to run at large</p> <p>As someone who regularly lets my birds graze freely around my yard, I have yet to come across a situation where my free range chickens have become an issue for any other residents in the neighbourhood. My</p>
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		<p>chickens <u>remain solely on my own property</u>, contained within. Running free in the yard is beneficial to my garden and the diets and health of the chickens themselves. I do not believe I need to go into the benefits of free ranged vs coop chickens, however if you are looking for some reading material here is a quick link supporting the benefits of free range:</p> <p>https://www.motherearthnews.com/natural-health/free-range-eggs-zmaz09fmzraw#axzz2vtkPQEYD</p> <p>"Our previous tests found that eggs from hens raised on pasture — as compared to the official USDA data for factory-farm eggs — contain:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1/3 less cholesterol • 1/4 less saturated fat • 2/3 more vitamin A • Two times more omega-3 fatty acids • Three times more vitamin E • Seven times more beta carotene" <p>Leave the bureaucratic nonsense where it belongs, in Toronto. Appreciate you fine people taking the time to read my feelings on the matter.</p>
John Groom	johnhgroom@yahoo.ca	<p>I generally applaud the amendments proposed for this bylaw. It provides some much needed clarification.</p> <p>My only comments would be that,</p> <p>1-2) All enclosures for fowl require a setback of 10m from all property lines. Is to stringent and in fact unnecessary. I don't see a reason for a 10m set back. You have made sure the enclosure doesn't smell or attract vermin and follows good animal husbandry practices further on.</p> <p>Also, why not allow <1 acre to have a few hens?</p> <p>If you really need setbacks remove item 1-2 and change the table to the following:</p>

		<table><tr><th>Property Area (acres)</th><th>No. of Fowl Permitted</th><th>Set Back(m)</th><th></th></tr><tr><td>Less than 1</td><td>12</td><td>5</td><td></td></tr><tr><td>1</td><td>36</td><td>5</td><td></td></tr><tr><td>2</td><td>48</td><td>10</td><td></td></tr><tr><td>3</td><td>60</td><td>10</td><td></td></tr><tr><td>4</td><td>72</td><td>10</td><td></td></tr><tr><td>5+</td><td>No Limit</td><td>10</td><td></td></tr></table>	Property Area (acres)	No. of Fowl Permitted	Set Back(m)		Less than 1	12	5		1	36	5		2	48	10		3	60	10		4	72	10		5+	No Limit	10		
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		<p>What about chicken tractors'?</p> <p>Item 1-12. What is "the rear yard"? On a lake side property is the rear on the road side or lake? What if you have road on both sides? How does this apply to a large acreage? Maybe this should just apply to <1 acre or zones? Or, address the problem I think your trying to address directly and say something like: "the enclosure should no be situated as to present an eyesore to passersby's", although this maybe a little to vague. I can't find By-law 2021-60?</p>																													
Stephanie McMahon	steph.mcmahon6@gmail.com	<p>I'd just like to submit a few comments on the proposed animal control by-law that is currently out for public comment.</p> <p>I'd be interested to know where the number of chickens per acre of lot comes from? It seems like quite a large number if we take into consideration the coop and animal space each chicken should ideally have for a decent quality of life. Perhaps consider a difference between high volume commercial producers and backyard hobbyists. It seems like a lot of animals to have per acre of land if that land also has a house, etc. and liveable space. Maybe the very large lots make sense but the smaller the ones seem a bit high. My thought is maybe half of the 36? 15-16 birds on a one acre lot?..</p> <p>I'd also like to see some form of biosecurity plan and response requirement for disease - most pressing of which for bird caretakers at the moment is highly pathogenic avian influenza which is spreading through migratory bird flyways and posing a risk to domestic flock in North America and around the world (info link , info link). Unattended domestic flock infection could further impact our wild bird populations and disease spread. It would be nice to see all backyard flock owners</p>																													

		<p>be educated and have a plan in place in case of suspected contagious infections like HPAI. Particular attention should be paid to prevention, limiting contact with wild birds, infection response, proper dead flock disposal to avoid further infection to wild bird populations.</p> <p>I'd also be interested in seeing more information on where/how to secure and store animal waste (specifics on how it needs to be stored and properly disposed of similar to the information given in the by-law on dead birds).</p> <p>I know that I myself plan to have a small number of chickens on my property this year and am happy to see that changes and updates on the animal bylaws are a focus for our area.</p>
Lynn Gaudreault	lynn.conrad.gaudreault@gmail.com	We live in the country, there should be not by law in regard to the chickens.
Diane Gauthier	dianeisabelle@gmail.com	<p>I have concerns with increasing number of fowls on an acre lot and the number fowls being increased per acre after that. After two acres individuals should consider a small Hobby Farm, with more acreage.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • chickens should not be in same the category as Fowls, though they are part of the fowls "family". • with the increase in the numbers of fowls allowed, there will be an increase in noise, odours, manure, rodents, predators, that comes with it. • The neighbours/neighbourhood should be made aware of that and allowed to vote on the issue. • permit should be issued, easier to keep track and to ascertain that guidelines are met. • Maybe consider having a course (pre permit) for newcomers/first timer, on what it entails raising fowls/chickens. • Definitely no Roosters • Would property value decrease for the next door neighbours and the neighbourhood.
Jake Lacourse	jacquescraiglacourse@hotmail.ca	<p>I'm really glad to see us change the Fowl Bylaw to include roosters and new limits per acre.</p> <p>In committee, we didn't recommend a lot maximum before a rooster could be kept. While I can understand that avoiding noise complaints between neighbours would be important, I think the suggested 5 acres minimum is excessive. There are a couple of reasons why I would hope</p>

		<p>that council will adopt a lower size threshold.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • if we are raising meat birds, then males don't find their voice until they are already in the freezer. • we have several residents that I consulted with prior to committee that keep egg layers in order to subsidize their income. They were hoping that they would be able to self-perpetuate their flock with their own rooster and any egg farmers aren't going to keep any more than one, possibly two roosters in their flock. These folks live on properties that are under the proposed 5-acre minimum lot size in order to be permitted to have roosters.
Lynn Dubien	dreman360@gmail.com	<p>Here are a few comments I have on the proposed amendments to the Animal Control By-Law. I understand that the changes are primarily for residents who want to develop farming/home-based businesses with fowl, but I would like to bring to light some of the needs of the homesteaders in our community.</p> <p>First, it is important to understand that homesteaders and hobby farmers (home-based farming businesses) have similar needs but have very different end goals. While hobby farmers may seek to make a business out of their farming activities, homesteaders endeavour to fill their larders with homegrown, nutritionally dense food using traditional, ecological practices. However, certain homesteaders may also wish to sell some of the extras from their harvests.</p> <p>Most of the comments I have to offer focus mainly on the needs of homesteaders vs the amount of land the municipal by-laws require residents to own to homestead or farm. It may be surprising, but a 1-acre lot can easily accommodate a small homestead with a few gardens and a variety of livestock (smaller breeds) without looking crowded or dirty. I can point you to many farms that look clean and organized with very little land. It's only a matter of trusting that farmers/homesteaders on smaller lots don't want to lose any of their investments (animals, harvests, structures....) by not properly setting up and caring for their farms.</p> <p>For example, one of my favourite farms to follow on Youtube is <i>Weed'em and Reap</i>. They live on a 1-acre lot and keep several goats, pigs, and all sorts of fowl. They also have gardens and a natural</p>

		<p>pool/pond. In their front yard, they have several fruit trees. All of this on 1 acre and all of it looking clean, organized and beautifully maintained.</p> <p>I understand that those who are not inclined to farm may fear the noises and smells of country living. And I also understand the municipality's responsibility to those residents. However, I would like to point out that this is the country, not a suburb, and country noises and smells, which were normal not so long ago, should be somewhat expected. I would also like to assure you that most farm animals do not really smell. Smaller homesteads wouldn't have or want the number of animals it would take to actually have smells consistently carry over to their neighbours. It's easier for smaller homesteads to keep everything clean and maintained.</p> <p>Here are a few of the needs of homesteaders as well as my views on how homesteads with less than 5 acres can be efficient, neat and tidy. Maybe some of the new amendments can accommodate these needs.</p> <p>1- An old rule of thumb to calculate the number of egg-laying hens required to provide enough eggs for a family is usually 2 per member. A family of 5 would then need at least 10 hens with a few extra birds in case of losses due to predators or old age. Also, since some homesteaders believe in the natural laying cycle of lay hens (without artificial lighting to force a hen to lay all winter long), they would need those extra layers to provide eggs for their winter stores. (freezing, dehydrating and water glassing are methods of preserving eggs)</p> <p>According to the new amendments, if a 1-acre farm had 10-15 lay birds, it would only leave them with 21-26 meat birds. 26 meat birds aren't even enough to have a roasted chicken, duck or turkey per week. I would like to also point out that meat birds are only around 8-10 weeks out of the year. Three of those weeks are spent in a brooder before ever heading out on grass. If you research how small farms and homesteads raise meat birds, you will notice that they really don't take up that much space on a farm. Chicken tractors are used to move the birds around on grass, fertilizing it for next year. You can easily fit 20-25 birds in a 5ft x 8ft chicken tractor without them being crowded, and with more space than store-bought chickens have. A 1-acre homestead can</p>
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		<p>almost certainly handle either one big chicken tractor or 2 smaller tractors to raise 50 birds in one shot and almost have enough to eat one bird a week. (keeping in mind that the birds are only on grass 5-7 weeks/year)</p> <p>Turkeys are around longer but can be raised the same way; you would just put less of them per tractor. Ducks can be put in the same run as lay hens, in the same enclosure or their own static enclosure. There are many ways of raising meat birds, all of which can easily be done with greater numbers than the by-law allows, and without making the farm look crowded or over-run.</p> <p>2- Roosters are an essential part of safely maintaining a flock of lay hens; they are great defenders. A friend of mine once watched his rooster scare away a coyote. Also, since homesteaders seek to be as self-reliant as possible, roosters are needed to allow farmers to hatch the next generation of birds to supply them with eggs. Homesteaders can also use dual-purpose hens to provide meat and eggs without having to depend on hatcheries if they are permitted to have a rooster. Moreover, most 1-acre lots can comply with the <i>30m-from-all-property-lines</i> by-law for roosters, there is no need for the 5 acres required in the proposed amendments.</p> <p>3- The practice of free-ranging chickens is often a topic of discord among homesteaders. On the one side, free-ranging is the best way to get keep hens healthy and to get the most nutritious eggs possible. Free-roaming can also help offset the cost of feed during the warmer months, which is very helpful. On the other hand, free-ranging also means chickens likely getting into gardens and leaving their droppings where one may not want to fertilize (decks and driveways). I suppose if homesteaders can fence and gate their entire property, which is certainly more feasible with only a few acres, there shouldn't be any problems with chickens running at large. (Except for the wily ones who can get out of any enclosure).</p> <p>4- Most homesteaders require, along with their vegetables/herb gardens, a variety of livestock to provide for their families, not just fowl. Perhaps the amendments could also allow for farmers/homesteaders</p>
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		<p>who own smaller, but still serviceable lots, to keep pairs of smaller livestock breeds for meat and dairy production. At this moment, smaller farms can keep 1 domesticated swine (btw, there is a mistake in SCHEDULE “E” #10, should be swine, not fowl), but by not allowing both male and female on the farm, homesteaders must rely on others to get a feeder pig every spring, which hinders self-reliance. On top of that, it is easier to ensure the quality of life of an animal and the meat it will provide when it is raised on a homesteader’s own farm. Furthermore, breeding these animals, for the most part, wouldn’t actually require extra enclosures or space.</p> <p>There are a variety of smaller breeds of pigs, goats, and cows that would allow farmers/homesteaders to keep breeding pairs of animals on smaller lots. For example, Kune Kune pigs, Nigerian Dwarf goats and Miniature Holstein milk cows would all fit on smaller homesteads. I’m not sure, however, if a 1-acre homestead would be able to keep a mini milk cow and bull, but I’ve seen some farmers rent an acre or two from a neighbour for their cows to graze during the warmer months. 2-4 acre lots could accommodate a pair of a mini cow breed.</p> <p>5- Since most farmers are practical and strive to be as efficient as possible, placements of certain enclosures may end up being on the side of their houses for easy access, depending on the lot’s shape. I don’t understand the need to put everything in the back of the house. I have seen farms with over ten acres have their chickens closer and on the side of the homes, making it quaint and fun for neighbours to look at when walking in front of their property. Sometimes farmers match their coop with their house and it’s quite charming.</p> <p>6- I’m curious to know when the by-laws created to restrict and discourage homesteading practices came into effect and why. Was it to accommodate those not enjoying the “countryness” of their surroundings or maybe it was to regulate health risks that can sometimes accompany the raising of animals. Or perhaps both? I would, at present, like to address the latter. Modern homesteaders may seek to return to more traditional ways of farming and be the keepers of lost skills, but they all possess much greater knowledge and understanding of bacteria and other health risks related to farming than ever before. As I have mentioned above, no farmer/homesteader wants</p>
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Kelly Pawson	narley50@yahoo.ca	<p>ABSOLUTELY NOT!</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On a 1 acre parcel of land the smell of 36 chickens will be obvious for your neighbors and if council is unaware- chicken feces is disgustingly smelly!! • The rooster idea is absurd, the noise will not be diminished by setting them back from a neighbor's property line! • When I sit in my backyard during the summer I want to listen to kids playing, music, maybe someone cutting their grass.....I don't want to listen to 36 chickens clucking all day long. <p>This is a terrible idea and will cause much grief for neighbors and the township! Whoever the council member is that is pushing this idea needs to consider what it's going to be like with 36 chickens, ducks or turkeys living next door to you along with a rooster crowing at 530am in</p>

		the morning!
Melinda and Phil Koning	45 Treadlightly	<p>Following concerns:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There has been much discussion on social media in the past regarding the keeping of chickens. In spite of the level of general interest in the subject, this bylaw has received 1st and 2nd reading without any announcement on the East Ferris social media platforms that changes are being contemplated to the existing bylaw. • Third reading of this bylaw should be delayed until there has been an announcement on the East Ferris website and social media platforms that solicits input from the residents. • If the concern is about the ability to raise chickens, the bylaw amendment should be specific to chickens. There is quite a difference between 36 chickens and 36 turkeys. • The current limit of 10 chickens enables a family to be self sufficient in egg production and if a commercial operation is desired, it should be required to follow farming regulations.