

My name is Lucy Peckham, and my partner John Osnes and I have lived in south Anchorage in Zodiak Manor for eight years. We have chickens, a hen house, and enclosed coop in our backyard on our 17,000+ square foot lot.

We are just one of many families who own and cherish backyard pets. We are asking that when you go through the second draft you will add changes to the code that will allow us to keep our backyard pets safe in hen houses, coops, and hutches. The present code is causing great distress to many citizens of the municipality, and is out-dated by urban planning, zoning, and animal control standards nationwide.

I attended an animal control advisory board meeting last spring. The members of the board are sympathetic and feel that they have addressed this issue as best they can by allowing ownership and describing proper housing and humane standards under Title 17. The rest must be done by citizens such as myself who want to keep our chickens or other small animals on our residential property. We need zoning laws that accommodate backyard pets as already allowed by Title 17.

AMC 21.40.030.C.4 presently reads: "The outdoor harboring or keeping of dogs, animals and fowl in a manner consistent with the requirements of all other titles of this Code. Paddocks, stables or similar structures or enclosures which are utilized for the keeping of animals other than dogs shall be at least 100 feet from any lot line." This means in R1 zoned property in the Municipality of Anchorage, hen houses or chicken coops, rabbit hutches, or duck enclosures, cat enclosures, or outdoor ferret playrooms... are ALL ILLEGAL because of the excessive setback requirements. Yet there are no setbacks for dog houses. According to Mike Billmaier, Planning and Zoning's Enforcement officer, this is the second most commonly investigated violation of zoning law in the Municipality of Anchorage. Here it is against the law, while in cities around the US and Canada it is considered an otherwise entirely beneficial urban pastime. To quote from Seattle's long established City Chickens Program: "Why raise chickens in the city? Just a few generations ago, most backyards had a small coop with a resident flock providing fresh eggs and an occasional Sunday supper. Today's backyard flock still helps a family stay close to a source of fresh eggs, while providing a relaxing counterpoint and source of entertainment in city life." A brief internet search shows that chickens are legal in Seattle and Bellingham WA, Portland OR, Sonoma CA, Calgary Alberta Canada, New York NY, Boston MA, and St. Paul MN, to name a few of the many we found. At the Title 21 meeting on September 1 at the Loussac Library, I was told to make specific suggestions. Specifically, I think the 100' setback requirement should be eliminated. I will attach a PDF of Seattle's relevant code for the committee's perusal. I also have codes from the other cities listed above if folks are interested in seeing them. They all have slightly different ways of addressing the issue of urban backyard pets, but they all allow them.

To paraphrase Mayor Begich at the meeting September 1, the update of Title 21 is intended to "move it forward" referring to the city, offer a "quality lifestyle," and "protect and enhance the public health." On that same day, the Daily News published an article about the chef Alice Waters, and her installation of organic gardens and a chicken coop on the grounds of an elementary school in Berkeley, CA, to help

reestablish a relationship with healthful food sources. To quote from the article,

"(Kids) are moving, touching, smelling, getting an education of the senses. And when they do that, they open pathways into their minds." Kids in my neighborhood visit my hens, bring them melon rinds and seeds, lettuce scraps, and bread crusts. They ooh and aah as the banty, Amy comes right up to them, and wonder aloud why hens like to eat bugs, and how dirt baths help make the hens clean. They hold eggs warm from the nest, and then take them carefully home and eat fresh eggs for breakfast the next day. Then they bring back pictures they've drawn of the hens, or thank you notes. My girls are clearly a benefit to my neighborhood.

Indeed, they add a sense of neighborhood that we wouldn't otherwise have. In the next draft, please rid the code of the contradiction with Title 17, and write it so that we can keep our backyard pets safe in our hen houses, hutches and enclosures.

Thank you for your attention.

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Seattle Municipal Code

Title 23 - Land Use Code

Subtitle IV - Land Use Regulations

Division 2 - Authorized Uses and Development Standards

Chapter 23.44 - Residential, Single-Family

SMC 23.44.048 Keeping of animals.

The keeping of small **animals**, farm **animals**, **domestic** fowl and bees is permitted outright as an accessory use to any principal use permitted outright or to a permitted conditional use subject to the following standards:

A. **Small Animals.** Up to three (3) small **animals** per single-family residential structure may be kept in single-family zones; however, no more than one (1) may be a miniature potbelly pig (see subsection B of this section).

Four (4) small **animals** are permitted on lots of at least twenty thousand (20,000) square feet. One (1) additional small **animal** is permitted for each five thousand (5,000) square feet of lot area in excess of twenty thousand (20,000) square feet.

Accessory structures, including kennels, for four (4) or more **animals** must be at least ten (10) feet from any other residentially zoned lot.

B. **Miniature Potbelly Pigs.** That type of swine commonly known as the Vietnamese, Chinese, or Asian Potbelly Pig (*Sus scrofa bittatus*) may be kept as **domestic** pets as a small **animal**, provided that no swine may be kept in the City which is greater than twenty-two (22) inches in height at the shoulder or more than one hundred fifty (150) pounds in weight.

C. **Domestic Fowl.** Up to three (3) **domestic** fowl may be kept on any lot in addition to the small **animals** permitted in the preceding subsection. For each one thousand (1,000) square feet of lot area in excess of the minimum lot area required for the zone, one (1) additional **domestic** fowl may be kept.

D. **Farm Animals.** Cows, horses, sheep and other similar farm **animals** are permitted only on lots of at least twenty thousand (20,000) square feet. The keeping of swine is prohibited, except for miniature potbelly pigs allowed under subsection B of this section.

1. One (1) farm **animal** for every ten thousand (10,000) square feet of lot area is permitted.

2. Farm **animals** and structures housing them must be kept at least fifty (50) feet from any residentially zoned lot.

E. **Beekeeping.** Beekeeping is permitted outright as an accessory use, when registered with the State Department of Agriculture, provided that:

1. No more than four (4) hives, each with only one (1) swarm, shall be kept on lots of less than ten thousand (10,000) square feet.

2. Hives shall not be located within twenty-five (25) feet of any property line except when situated eight (8) feet or more above the grade immediately adjacent to the grade of the lot on which the hives are located or when situated less than eight (8) feet above the adjacent existing lot grade and behind a solid fence or hedge six (6) feet high parallel to any property line within twenty-five (25) feet of a hive and extending at least twenty (20) feet beyond the hive in both directions.

(Ord. 116694 Section 1, 1993; Ord. 110669 Sections 13(part), 32(part), 1982; Ord. 110381 Section 1(part), 1982.)

Definitions of terms used in Land Use Code.

Link to [Recent ordinances](#) passed since 9/30/03 which may amend this section. (Note: this feature is provided as an aid to users, but is not guaranteed to provide comprehensive information about related recent ordinances. For more information, contact the Seattle City Clerk's Office at 206-684-5175, or by e-mail at clerk@seattle.gov)

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