

## Fowl moves in Burnsville: Chickens lose outlaw status

By JOY POWELL, Star Tribune

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The outlaw chickens of Burnsville likely will become legal citizens in short order, thanks to 11-year-old Stefan Remund, who took on City Hall in a battle to keep his small brood.

The City Council agreed during a work session Tuesday to amend an animal ordinance so people may own up to four chickens if their backyard coops meet specifications and other conditions are met. That means Stefan will be able to keep raising his Plymouth Barred Rocks named Sha Kota, Rachel, Tilly and a Buff Orpington called Miss Marilyn Monroe.

"It feels great," a relieved Stefan said after the meeting as Mayor Elizabeth Kautz and others congratulated him. The council is expected to ratify its decision during an upcoming regular meeting.

"I'm totally shocked," said his mother, Jen Remund.

City Hall was peppered with e-mail from all over the country from people rooting for the boy after he and his family learned Burnsville did not allow the birds. A neighbor had complained about the boy's seven chickens, prompting an animal control officer to visit the Remund home in September. At a council meeting in October, Stefan pleaded with the council and soon became a chicken-owning celebrity. He gave interviews to newspapers and a radio station. And he gave three of his chickens to an Arden Hills girl whose chickens had been killed by a dog or other animal.

Tuesday night, the boy perched nervously on the edge of his chair as city leaders discussed changing the city ordinance to allow chickens.

They talked of lofts and coops, fences and a \$50 fee. Deputy City Manager Tom Hansen advised against allowing roosters in residential areas, because, he said, "they're reputed to have too much of a sound projection."

Council Member Dan Kealey said the reason for the city passing the ordinance a few years back had been fear of bird flu. But the nation has learned much about bird flu since then, he said, and he no longer sees backyard chickens as a threat. He noted that while some residents may prefer cats and dogs over chickens, "I think that's more about our culture and our fears."

Council Member Dan Gustafson found himself in a pickle over the animal ordinance when he learned people in Burnsville may own no more than two dogs without having a kennel license, which costs \$50, in addition to individual dog licenses. Gustafson owns a trio of teacup-sized dogs. The new ordinance also allows households to have three dogs without getting a kennel license.

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