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### Plan hatching to allow coops

By Kris Scheuer

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File Photo/Town Crier

The city may be gathering the pluck to allow residents to legally have chickens in their backyards.

The issue was raised in a staff report on urban agriculture at the June 16 Parks and Environment Committee meeting.

"While accessibility to a healthy and sustainable supply of eggs, increased soil fertility, pest and weed control are considered benefits of keeping urban chickens, the situation requires further examination," the report stated. "Staff will investigate the feasibility of raising chickens in an urban setting."

The truth is, chickens are already cooped up in the city.

As the Town Crier reported last summer, a midtown yard is home to three hens.

Their proud owner is now one step closer to being able to keep them.

"I feel it's definitely moving along," said the woman, who won't disclose her name. "There's an incredible momentum towards having backyard chickens."

On her website [www.torontochickens.com](http://www.torontochickens.com), she has gathered about 1,000 signatures in support of changing the bylaw and as of June 17, she's gathered about 250 signatures in person.

Eglinton-Lawrence councillor Karen Stintz is open to a day when backyard hens will be allowed.

"I think it's an idea worth exploring," said the parks committee vice chair. "We would want to set parameters on backyard chickens."

The chicken lady's local councillor Joe Mihevc is also on-side.

"I support us doing some experiments," said the St. Paul's councillor, who has met with the resident and her chickens. "I think we need to learn from a pilot test in two, three or four (Toronto) wards."

Mihevc just arrived home from Europe where small livestock is allowed in many cities.

"We are not re-inventing the wheel," he said. "We are re-inventing what's already done around the world."

"I am quite willing to offer my ward as a test pilot," added Mihevc, noting any trial would not involve large numbers of fowl but perhaps three to five.

Both councillors said issues such as fencing and noise from roosters would have to be included in any possible bylaw.

Stintz expects an updated city staff report on this issue to go to the parks committee this fall.

### **Two new chickens join Sally the hen**

Last summer "Toronto Chicken" — as the urban wrangler is known as — owned Sally, Clucky and Hybie.

Sally is the only remaining hen as the others were attacked by a wild animal in Orangeville, where the family vacations. The midtowner has since added two new hens to the group.

In the winter, the midtown family positioned their coop closer to the house and covered it with a clear bubble wrap to let light in but keep out the wind. The hens lay about one egg each daily, so the midtowner hasn't purchased store-bought eggs for two years.

According to her website, backyard chickens are legal in five Canadian cities including Niagara Falls, plus 86 American cities including Portland, Oregon that has neighbourhood chicken tours.

To read more on backyard chickens read Kris Scheuer's previous article [here](#)

<http://www.mytowncrier.ca/story-14651-1-1.html>

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