

NEWS: Backyard chicken debate returns to city hall Monday

February 23, 2011

By Alishia Fox

Urban Chicken supporters plan a protest at upcoming council meeting



City Councillor Alan Halberstadt listens to delegations regarding urban chickens at city hall during council meeting Monday, Jan. 24. Supporters of backyard hens want council to form a committee to engage the public on the issue.

Despite Mayor Eddie Francis' wish to keep the chicken debate out of city hall, backyard egg-farming supporters are organizing a protest at the upcoming council meeting Monday.

The issue of urban chickens in Windsor was first introduced to City Council in November 2010. The recommendation at that time was to form a committee to review the pros and cons of allowing chickens within city limits. Councillors voted to defer the issue indefinitely with no further debate.

Edy Haddad is organizing the protest and has been a resident of Windsor since his immigration to Canada as a refugee from Lebanon in 1991. Haddad said he fled civil war in his country to enjoy the freedoms of democracy here and expressed his disappointment with City Council on the issue.

"If you don't fight for your rights at the grass roots level, you won't have democracy at any level," said Haddad. "Windsor has the highest rate of unemployment in Canada, at this point we need ways to help people sustain a healthy way of life. The cost of having a chicken and raising it is minimal

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and the fresh eggs have half the cholesterol of store bought eggs.”

City Councillor Alan Halberstadt said he would be in favour of looking at a bylaw that would permit egg-laying hens in the city.

“It’s not rocket science,” said Halberstadt. “Guelph has had a bylaw allowing chickens and ducks in the city since 1944. They have to be in a pen, it’s got to be 50 feet from any neighbouring house, the pen has to have a hard floor surface and the owners have to keep it clean.”

Drew Dilkens, councillor for ward one disagrees.

“I don’t think raising livestock in backyards of our city is a good idea. Plain and simple,” said Dilkens. “There are many cities who allow it and there are many more that have said no.”

Council will vote once more on Monday to decide if the city will form a committee that would engage the public and look at the issue from both sides.

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About Alishia Fox



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