

My feathers are all ruffled.

Council members,

On Thursday the 15th I meet with our Mayor Tom Kneeland, who strongly suggested that I reach out to you in regards to changes in the Chapter 5 ordinance, Specifically 505.08.

Therefore, I wish to speak to you and have a chance to express my views in regards to my ability to keep my girls: Shara, Elise, and Moustache - my Chickens.

First, I would challenge that my chickens are not "farm animals" but pets. They are treated and cared for, as well as housed in a similar fashion as any dog, cat, or other loved pet could possibly be. I understand that they could be farm animals and raised and housed as such with production and efficiency that are characterized by an egg production farm. I beg you to see the difference between the production farm chickens and my girls, who are like a part of my family as much as a dog or cat becomes part of a loving family in most homes.

Second, I would bring to your attention that the current law needs rewriting. Currently it includes farm chickens, but does not limit having other animals such as ducks, rabbits and pigeons. (I checked with Shane W. Ewald, City Attorney). According to the current law, I could "replace" my chickens with ducks and be abiding by the City ordinance! A lot of teenagers own and care for small animals such as rabbits and hamsters that are considered as farm animals. Some people also have mini pigs instead of cats and dogs. Therefore does the Gahanna city law prohibit these?

Third, I would bring to your attention the disease and necessity for shots and medication. Ducks and geese are an attractive factor to Creek Side. The public gets in close contact with them to feed them, and these animals have access to zones where people dine, such as terrace restaurants. These in my view are a much greater concern and create a greater threat and exposure to diseases than my chickens who are kept within a secluded, gated part of my garden with no public contact. Finally, cat and dog owners aren't required by the city to register their pets or require health inspections, therefore I do not understand why the City of Gahanna should be "involved" in health inspections. Should they be, then in all fairness they should also be equally involved in making sure dogs, cats, and other pets are equally "registered" and inspected. I disagree with the facts brought forward and cited in your minutes that chickens pose a greater risk of disease than other pet animals. Cats and dogs - especially the cats that are allowed to roam free are equally if not more prone to spread diseases.

Finally, in regards to smell and noise nuisance. Most of my neighbors are unaware of me having chickens. Chickens make a lot less noise than dogs. There is no smell associated with them. I understand that may be different in a breeding or eggs facility where birds are kept in cages and in a farm set up.

Therefore I would ask you to reconsider your view on the situation, review the documents I submitted to you as well as my Petition and request for a variance or change in the law. I wish to speak to you and express my views and solicit your understanding. I believe my pets should be authorized as such instead of being considered as farm animals. They are not a nuisance in my opinion or my neighbors, as supported by their comments in these letters.

I am hoping to be allowed to keep my girls. I have listed them on craigslist, but it is the wrong season to relocate them, and by law I am not allowed to killed them either!

Sincerely,

Edouard Petit

Petition for my Girls

To whom it may concern,

I am writing this letter on behalf of my girls: The hens (chickens): **Elise, Shara, and Moustache**

I have spoken with several people at City Hall, and have followed and participated in the discussions regarding the proposal to approve chickens.

- But first a little of history; I live in Gahanna on Shull Ave.

I have had my chickens for over 3 years now. My girls are not just Chickens - they are pets and part of my family. They have names and respond (somewhat) to them and recognize me. They are not hidden; on the contrary they are quite liked by the walkers using the dead end of Walnut St that leads to Rocky Fork Park.

Prior to getting my girls, I checked and received approval from the Franklin County District. Their approval seemed sufficient at the time. I also checked and asked for permission from all my immediate neighbors. They all agreed and therefore I built a coop. The coop is located as far as possible from the street and not an eye sore. I raised my girls from baby chicks who were a few days old until now. One of my neighbors likes them so much that they volunteer to help feed them, love their eggs, and asked for our joining fence to be opened so the girls could roam in their yard as well!

With this letter I am including a letter from each of my direct neighbors.

- As of today:

I have received a notice of violation dated December 12th, 2016. This letter only gives me until December 27, 2016 to comply with a law that was not enforced or applied prior to now and that was unknown to me.

I was notified in October that a proposal to change the law was being worked on by the city. I participated in the survey and discussion and read the newspapers articles hoping for a change.

Sadly, I just discovered that the city did not change the old law. I therefore wish to ask for a variance.

I am opposed to quite a few arguments made against having chickens and the enforcement of the rule.

First, my chickens are not farm animals. They are not treated, cared, or housed as such; on the contrary they receive the loving attention and care that any dog, cat, or any other pet animal owner provides his pet. As far as I know they are no more a farm animal than the rabbits or

Petition for my Girls

hamsters that teenagers care for as their first pet. Would the city also prohibit owning rabbits (farms animal) by young citizens?

In regards to the question of diseases, I will bring up the fact that not far from my house is Creek Side. A lot of ducks and geese live there and are fed by the public. They are not monitored and nest and live in the City! As far as I know they are not receiving any shots to keep them free of disease, and as wild animals, this seems to me a greater concern and threat as a source of disease than animals like my chickens, which were inspected and treated as healthy birds. I would also add that these ducks and other geese, etc. nest and are often in very close contact to restaurants where people eat outside. This exposure appears to be of a greater concern than the potential of my chickens to transmit any disease to people who cannot have any contact with them unless they jump my fence!

In regards to the noise and smell. Chickens make a lot less noise than a dog! Most of my neighbors had no idea that I had chickens until I advised them... The same goes for the smell. While this is subjective, I think Chickens - unless in overpopulated breeding places do not smell. Their waste is odorless unlike dogs and cats. Furthermore, some cats are let free and poop wherever they wish like on other people's property, thus are a greater nuisance!

Finally, I would argue that the enforcement of the law is very unfair. I know of other Chicken owners (that even live on my own street) who have not received any letter, and would not according to the Code Enforcement Officer unless they receive a complaint! Therefore, those who have fences that keep people from observing the content of their yard can have chickens unnoticed and unbothered. I believe that people wanting or having chicken is very limited and therefore not a threat to the citizen or the city.

In conclusion, I want to abide with the law, and ask that my case be grandfathered in, or for me to file a variance allowing my chickens to survive and remain in my care. I would add that the time given to resolve my situation is too short and also a death sentence to the chickens. Chickens cannot be relocated easily, especially in the winter. They are used to their coop and location. Changing their environment in this cold weather is sentencing them to death - something I am really opposed to and hope you would understand.

I respectfully ask that either an exception or a trial case be made out of my situation to evaluate allowing chickens in the city and gather actual complaint data or support for them to make an educated decision for a change of the law.

Sincerely,

Edouard Petit

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