

Item 24-1026: Animal Ordinance Memorandum

Board of Health

Wed, Aug 14, 2024 7:00AM

Cathy Spears (Board Chair) 03:12

24-1026 animal ordinance memorandum. I'm going to seek a motion now to get it on the table.

Aldersperson Nate Wolff (District 12) 03:22

Motion to approve.

Cathy Spears (Board Chair) 03:23

Okay, is there a second?

Deborah Werth (Board of Health) 03:25

Second.

Cathy Spears (Board Chair) 03:26

Second by Deb Werth. Okay. Dr. Sepers.

Health Officer Charles Sepers 03:33

Yeah. And this this particular ordinance request, is just a simple change to make it clear that licensed chickens do not count towards the total number of animals. So, as it currently stands, those that are licensed for chicken keeping are limited to six chickens, but that also counts against their total number of animals that that they can have. So, if someone owns a dog or a cat, they can only have five chickens, the way the language currently reads. And so, we were just looking to provide the clarification in that in that ordinance,

Cathy Spears (Board Chair) 04:19

Are there any other comments or questions? Aldersperson Jones.

Aldersperson Vaya Jones (District 10) 04:23

Quick question, is there somewhere in the language that talks about roosters?

Health Officer Charles Sepers 04:27

It does. Roosters are not allowed.

Aldersperson Vaya Jones (District 10) 04:29

Okay. But that is somewhere else? Thank you.

Health Officer Charles Sepers 04:32

It is somewhere else.

Cathy Spears (Board Chair) 04:33

In the actual original chicken policy. Any other comments or questions? And just for the record, Dr. Sepers, how many total animals can people have?

Health Officer Charles Sepers 04:47

People can have a total of six animals, and so that would include three dogs and two rabbits. One could also have six licensed chickens, and then our pigeon licensing, I believe, is capped at 40—40 pigeons. We have, my understanding—so we have one pigeon license, and I think that's been a single license holder for the last 30 years, so—or however long the licensure was put into effect.

Cathy Spears (Board Chair) 05:18

Aldersperson Wolff.

Aldersperson Nate Wolff (District 12) 05:20

Thank you, Chair. Does that apply to reptiles as well?

Health Officer Charles Sepers 05:26

There is language in the ordinance that sort of precludes caged animals, although I would I would defer to city—Assistant City Attorney Glad about some of the specificity, but in terms of that, it doesn't make it, you know, particularly clear in terms of like, how much those caged animals add to the total number of animals. I would, I would fault on the side of—or I would err on the side of, you know, caution on that, that it would count.

Aldersperson Nate Wolff (District 12) 06:10

Right.

Health Officer Charles Sepers 06:10

So, but your fish and gerbils and that kind of thing, but as you get into larger animals, I think the interpretation becomes a little bit less clear.

Cathy Spears (Board Chair) 06:22

Attorney Gladstone, do you have—15, what? Oh, I'm sorry. They—it wasn't on my list. So, thank you.

Darrin Glad (Assistant City Attorney) 06:31

Yeah, I think, as Dr. Sepers has described it is correct. So, we define animals, and then we have a subsection in our code for restricted animals. So certain animals just aren't allowed. But then you know, if you're not on that list and you're an animal, then it's six, unless otherwise specified, which is pigeons. And then we'll see where the chickens are, because I've been asked over the years for opinion on whether the chickens count. And my opinion is, yes, they're an animal. They're were limited to six. And I've been told on both those occasions that that wasn't the understanding of people when this was passed. So, it's—this might be a little bit on my request to let's just clarify this. Let's find out what Board of Health and Council want to do as far as defining the chickens.

Cathy Spears (Board Chair) 07:26

And then Mayor Woodford wanted to weigh in.

Mayor Jake Woodford 07:28

I was just going to say this this doesn't change the underlying policies or ordinances, other than clarifying that the chickens don't count against the total. So, all the other requirements remain in place, even if even if the board makes this change.

Cathy Spears (Board Chair) 07:47

Okay, any other comments or questions? I guess my concern is, and I'm going to support this today, but ultimately, someone could have 12 animals on a very small property within the city, and so it'll be the due

diligence of the neighbors and people like that to let us know if there's any things that aren't going on that are sanitary there. So, I will support this today, however reluctantly, because I'm thinking, I'm—I looked at some other ordinances, the current ones, and so we're very liberal in the city of Appleton. There's a lot of places that only allow you three animals, or three dogs, or one—two cats. And so, we're pretty liberal in our community. So hopefully all of our neighbors will keep their animals clean and well behaved. Any other comments, questions? All right, all in favor, say aye. Opposed? Abstentions? Passes.