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## Updated Rules for Chicken Owners

By Cathy Tyson



Photo Cathy Tyson

increased, with the vast majority of neighbors looking the other way.

John Keifer, affectionately known as "Papa John," and Wendy McClain did extensive research, figuring out best practices and insights; they also analyzed how other cities handle chickens. Together with Mark Robbins, Lafayette's former code enforcement officer, and city staffers Anthony Arrivas and Greg Wolff, the group collaborated to set standards that spell out the number of chickens allowed - ranging from four chickens to a maximum of 16 depending on lot size - to coop structure requirements and more.

Small livestock will now include chickens, rabbits and "other grain fed rodents" and the regulation prohibits loud species like roosters, waterfowl, peacocks and guinea hens. Casual egg sharing is allowed.

For the record, chickens will not be allowed to cross the road and must be kept within a structure or fenced area at all times, with access to a coop that is not more than 17 feet tall and meets minimum setback requirements. Concerns by planning commissioners included smell, a minimum roaming space, the potential for bad husbandry, and commercial egg sales.

It's true, chickens are not livestock. After a year of research and investigation, a volunteer dream team of poultry fans came together with city staff to craft a proposed Municipal Code regulation to accommodate backyard chickens and rabbits.

At a recent Lafayette Planning Commission meeting, after some discussion and a variety of poultry puns, commissioners unanimously agreed to send their recommendation for approval to the City Council, which will consider the new rules for small farming at its June 23 meeting.

Current regulations are geared toward large farm animals, like horses, cows and sheep, and tie chicken ownership to a home's zoning district, which excluded a large number of Lafayette residences from the chicken experience and of course, fresh organic eggs. Because of this, the number of off-the-record chicken owners has

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