

# City of West Columbia, SC

## Public Meeting on Proposed Ordinance for Urban Chicken Farming

April 7, 2015 at 6 p.m.

### Members Present:

Joe Owens, Mayor  
Casey Jordan Hallman, Mayor Pro-Tem  
Eric L. Fowler  
L. Dale Harley  
Temus C. "Tem" Miles, Jr.  
Tommy G. Parler  
B.J. Unthank  
Teddy Wingard

### Members Absent:

None

### Others Present:

Jenny Cunningham, City Administrator  
Brian Carter, Assistant City Administrator  
Stuart Jones, Building Official  
Donna Smith, Director of Economic Development  
Sid Varn, Director of Planning and Engineering  
Mardi Valentino, Director of Human Resources  
Jamie Hook, Sanitation/Streets/Parks Superintendent  
Marquis Solomon, Fire Battalion Chief  
Members of the Public and Press

Wyatt Coleman, Fire Chief  
Anna Huffman, IT Systems Administrator  
Dennis Tyndall, Police Chief  
Scott Morrison, PIO/West Columbia PD  
Justin Black, Treasurer  
Rick Hodge, Financial Consultant  
Kelli Brazell, City Clerk  
Kenneth Ebener, Municipal Judge

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### Agenda Item I – Call to Order

Chairperson Unthank called the public meeting to order at 6 p.m. and noted a quorum was present. *The State, Free Times, Lexington County Chronicle, Cayce-West Columbia News, The Columbia Star* and radio and television stations were notified of the public meeting by e-mail on April 2, 2015.

### Agenda Item II – Opening Remarks

Chairperson Unthank stated some West Columbia citizens have requested Council to reconsider an ordinance to amend the animal control portion of the West Columbia Code of Ordinances, to allow residents to engage in urban chicken farming. He explained the purpose of the public meeting was to gather input from citizens on allowing chickens in residential areas.

Chairperson Unthank introduced Brian Carter, Assistant City Administrator, to discuss the ordinance introduced in 2013 on urban chicken farming. The ordinance has not been amended since 2013. Keeping chickens on residential property, inside the city limits of West Columbia, requires a two-step approval process. The first step would require a permit from the Zoning Department for a coop and run. The second step would be an on-site inspection by West Columbia Animal Services to make sure the coop and run comply with the standards outlined in the ordinance. The ordinance would only allow keeping chickens on single-family residential properties. Commercial, duplex/tri-plex, or group residential housing properties would not be permitted. Citizens may not sell the eggs that are raised. The ordinance allows only four chickens per single-family dwelling. Roosters are prohibited. There are also specific elements of the ordinance that deal with unpleasant odors and unsightliness. Coops and runs must be fully enclosed, located in the back yard, and screened from road-ways. Additional screening is required if the coop and run is located within 30 feet of a property line. There is a mandatory 25 foot set-back from property lines and may require a six foot privacy screen.

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### Agenda Item II – Opening Remarks- continued

This ordinance also requires anyone living in a neighborhood subject to homeowner's association (HOA) rules and restrictions, to provide approval from the HOA before the city would issue zoning permit. The city has approximately 66 neighborhoods within the city limits, of which, 18 prohibit the keeping of chickens.

### Agenda Item III – Public Comments

Chairperson Unthank asked if members of the public had comments or questions about the proposed ordinance.

Chairperson Unthank recognized Mr. Frank Barron who has lived at 800 State Street for 10 years. Mr. Barron stated that he has raised chickens since he was nine years old. He wanted to inform the public that chickens could be kept in a sanitary manner. He has helped a young boy set up a chicken house at 2910 Augusta Road, and invited everyone to stop by and look at it. Half of the chicken house is on a sled so that it may be moved around to allow the droppings to fertilize the grass. Mr. Barron believes that raising chickens inside the city should not cause a problem if the coops are properly kept.

Chairperson Unthank recognized Mrs. Wendy Wells who stated that she lives in Bridgepointe Condominiums. Mrs. Wells has a disease called Presumed Ocular Histoplasmosis Syndrome. Histoplasmosis is a disease caused by a fungus that is fertilized by bird droppings, from chickens and black starlings. This disease has affected her sight.

Mrs. Wells first contracted the disease when she was 38 years old and 600 people a year died from it at that time. Mrs. Wells urged Council to look into the disease before allowing chickens to be added next to anyone's home.

Chairperson Unthank asked if any other members of the public wanted to speak during the comment portion of the public meeting and received no response. He thanked the residents for coming to express their views on urban chicken farming.

### Agenda Item IV – Adjourn

Chairperson Unthank declared the public meeting on urban chicken farming to be closed. The council adjourned the public meeting at 6:12 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kelli Brazell  
City Clerk