

Safety Committee Meeting Minutes
April 6, 2021

Meeting was called into session at 6:00 pm.

In attendance:

David Phares - Chairman
Councilman Malta - Committee member
Councilwoman Bisbee - Committee member
Mayor Regovich - Safety Director
Stephanie Landgraf - Law Director
Brian Turner - Police Chief
Joe Tennyson - Fire Chief
Sean Brennan - Chief Housing and Zoning Inspector
Councilwoman Antosh
Councilwoman Koudela

Councilman Phares began the meeting with the first item on the agenda which was farm animals. Tonight's discussion will center around possibly creating an ordinance prohibiting farm animals in the city. He explained that there have been complaints around the city about chickens and roosters. Research he has done shows that Willowick has the smallest average lot size in Lake County. Other problems are the humane treatment of farm animals on small lots and the consideration of neighbors with the noise and the smell. The details of the proposed ordinance are as follows: The list includes swine, cattle, horses, goats, chickens, hens, llamas, alpacas, donkeys, mules, sheep, ducks, geese, turkeys and other similar farm animals. You will be required to have four acres of land to have farm animals, no farm animal can be kept within 75 feet of a dwelling other than the animal owner's dwelling. If you currently own a farm animal you will be grandfathered in but you will be required to fill out a permit and pay a \$10 fee. Upon the death, sale or disposal of the animal you will not be allowed to get another one and the permit is non-transferrable.

Councilman Malta wanted the list repeated by Chairman Phares. Councilman Malta has no problem with the list and he also feels that the lot sizes in Willowick are too small for farm animals but the four acres might be excessive. He asked how many homes in Willowick sit on four acres? Councilman Phares stated that the four acres are being used in case anyone combines properties. Councilwoman Antosh mentioned a few property owners who have 2 or 2.5 acres.

Councilwoman Bisbee stated that if we are going to ban farm animals altogether then why not just say that in the ordinance. She also asked since there are people that raise chickens for eggs, maybe just a set certain number of chickens allowed and specify how they need to be kept. Councilman Phares asked the Law Director about the difference between banning them outright and giving residents options to have them. She stated that the ordinance could be written either way.

Mayor Regovich's concern with allowing farm animals is that these types of animals attract rats. He also sees the problem of figuring out what the penalty is for violating an ordinance of this type and who enforces it. Many times it ends up being neighbor against neighbor and we have to make sure we are writing the proper ordinance to handle that type of situation. Because Willowick homes are so close together it makes it more likely for these types of problems to arise.

Councilman Malta asked if Chairman Phares has visited any of the homes that currently have chickens. He feels that even though we had one or two residents that had messy situations with chickens, we don't necessarily have to prohibit them. Councilman Phares stated that even though we may have some responsible residents, all it takes is one irresponsible chicken owner to cause problems.

Zoning Inspector Sean Brennan stated that he has visited a couple of the homes that have chickens and they tend to be messy with stuff all over the place. Mayor Regovich mentioned that people who put up chicken coops never get a permit for them either. Sean Brennan also stated that perhaps something about certain requirements for the chicken coop could be put in the ordinance such as type of wire, flooring etc. Councilman Malta agreed with stating a certain number of chickens allowed in the ordinance. Councilwoman Antosh asked Councilman Malta how we would keep track of how many chickens residents have and Councilman Malta answered with the same way we keep track of how many dogs residents have: If a resident complains to the Building Inspector then he will go there and if they are in violation of the ordinance then they will be cited.

Sean Brennan stated that there are four homes that he knows of that have chickens and Mayor Regovich said there is one more on Beechwood.

Councilwoman Bisbee agreed with Councilman Malta that we should put a number on how many chickens are allowed and violating the ordinance would mean a fine. Councilman Malta feels the number should be five.

Councilman Phares stated that since two of the committee members want to allow chickens but put limits on the number, then the ordinance will go back to the Law Director to have those revisions added. The Law Director asked if the other parts of the revised ordinance would remain and Councilman Phares stated that there would be a separate chicken ordinance and then an ordinance for all other farm animals. She asked if the acreage specification would remain and Councilwoman Bisbee stated that she knows some people she could reach out to and get information on that. The Law Director asked if roosters would be included in the chicken ordinance and it was decided that they would not be. Councilwoman Antosh feels that people will want to know if chickens are allowed then why can't they have pigs and other types of animals. She feels that we should ban all farm animals across the board.

Next on the agenda are exotic animals. Chairman Phares stated that this ordinance would be similar to the farm animal ordinance. Councilman Malta has no problem with it. Councilwoman Bisbee is fine with the ordinance banning them also.

The committee was in agreement that we would move the ordinance prohibiting exotic animals to the Law Director for final revisions. Police Chief Turner asked if there are any homes with exotic animals currently. He also questioned how will we know if someone replaced an animal with a new one? Everyone agreed that it will be a challenge to keep track of this but it will be a case by case basis. The Law Director felt that maybe we should have a minimum fine in the ordinance and it was agreed that that was a good idea. A fine of \$250 was mentioned and a maximum of \$500 was talked about also. It would also be good to make the fine per animal so no maximum would be needed.

The next item on the agenda was beekeeping. Beekeeping is currently not allowed in the city. Councilman Malta would like to hear what other residents have to say about beekeeping. He is in favor of allowing it in the city. He feels that more research needs to be done. Resident Doug Olp talked about how we should allow a specific number per lot and 1 in 3 foods comes from honeybees. Sean Brennan has only been on one complaint for bees. Councilwoman Bisbee agreed with Councilman Malta that more research needs to be done to see how to make beekeeping safe, if possible, in the city.

The committee decided to conduct more research into beekeeping and work to put together an ordinance to possibly allow beekeeping and then pass that information along to the Law Director.

Some new businesses for the committee. Mayor Regovich and Chief Turner met with a company that deals with traffic control and he would like the Safety Committee members to meet informally for a presentation from the company. A meeting date was discussed going forward.

Meeting ended at 6:45pm.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "David Phares". The signature is written in a cursive style.