

Comment for the Environmental Committee: Urban Agriculture

kathleen

to:

gloria.harper

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Cc:

"Robert Garcia", larry.rich, "Lena Gonzalez", broc.coward, mayor, suja.lowenthal, james.johnson, Patrick.ODonnell, "Rick Berry", "Denise Devereaux", "Amy Peters", "Emily Tanaka", "Jana Shields", "Jim Danno", mmuniz717, "Patty Lund"

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"Sustainability is vital to Long Beach's future. A green, clean Long Beach is essential to the quality of life, economic development, culture and public and environmental health of our citizens, businesses and neighborhoods.

This Sustainable City Action Plan includes initiatives, goals and actions that will move Long Beach toward becoming a sustainable city. Recognizing the interconnectedness of our environment and our place in it, the initiatives in this plan are interconnected as well. This plan is meant to guide our decisions, expand our thinking and inspire us to strive toward a truly sustainable Long Beach."

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing in support of changing the City of Long Beach regulations on urban agriculture, specifically the keeping of bees, chickens and goats. Certainly on all of our new small, urban farms, such as Farm Lot 59, as well as in appropriate home locations, these animals should be encouraged. I would actually like to see miniature sheep for wool and milk included on urban farms.

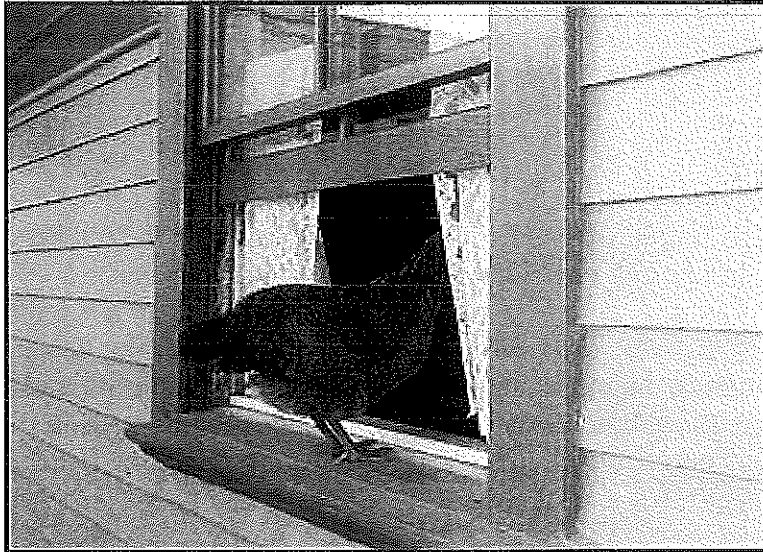
In these uncertain economic times, with so many people concerned about how their food is raised, a forward thinking city like Long Beach needs to consider the advantages to its population by easing regulations on urban agriculture. The keeping of food animals and bees is in keeping with the City of Long Beach Sustainable City Action Plan. Although it emphasizes community gardens, having a small garden at home, for those who have the space, is preferable - requiring less energy use for transportation and purchase of food, a means of recycling food and yard waste, and in the sharing of excess produce, honey, eggs and milk, a community builder. Unlike a dog, at least with a chicken you can fertilize your garden with its poop and get eggs in exchange for that overly expensive organic feed you give it!

I understand that, as with all animals, in an urban environment, there need to be rules about how and where animals are kept. And, as a long time landscaper, teacher and gardener, I realize that it is difficult for some to overcome their fear of bees. I am horrified by the number of stray cats and dogs that go to the animal shelter. Just as with the Pot-bellied Pig craze, initially the shelter will end up with an abundance of unwanted roosters, hens and goats. That being said, just because there will always be irresponsible pet owners, the City doesn't regulate whether or not you can own an animal - and so, a large dog in a small apartment is perfectly legal. Until proven guilty, it seems that the responsible owning of any animal (well, of COURSE not endangered ones!) as a pet or for food production, should be allowed. Easing

the urban agriculture regulations would result in a tremendous opportunity for educating the public about "green" living, sustainability and organic growing practices, as well as giving people more control over the food they eat.

Thank you for your support.

Kathleen Irvine



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When one tugs at a single thing in nature, he finds it attached to the rest of the world. ~John Muir