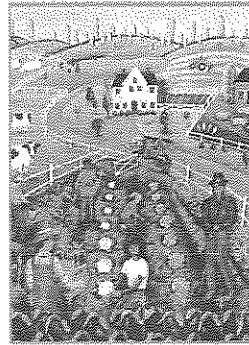


Long Beach Grows

June 25, 2012

Environmental Committee
City of Long Beach
333 W. Ocean Blvd.
Long Beach, CA 90802



City Farm Co-Ops

Food Security

Urban Ag

Join Us Today

www.LongBeachGrows.org

Dear Environmental Committee members:

Thank you for continuing to support the establishment of policies that enable and allow for urban agriculture practices, including small scale animal husbandry, in Long Beach. I support changing the code to allow chickens, goats, and bees for eggs, milk, and honey in Long Beach. Over 1600 people have signed our petition (with their name and physical address) asking for relaxed rules when it comes to the keeping of egg-laying fowl and goats at home for eggs and milk. A map of their addresses shows that they live throughout Long Beach, in all districts. Support at the recent public meetings was overwhelmingly in favor of change.



We appreciate the concerns of those who question the suitability of raising poultry and goats in the city, but would like to point out that we are animal lovers too, we care for the welfare of our animals just like other pet owners care for the welfare of their pets, our chickens and goats are raised with love and affection, actually like royalty in comparison to the animals that provide the majority of eggs and milk consumed by people in this country. We don't tell other people what they can or cannot eat, and not allowing individuals to raise our own eggs and milk equates to more factory farm animal abuse in commercial settings.

All pet owners use their animals for their own benefit, whether for companionship, or dogs for what they were bred for (hunting), cats for catching mice, chickens for eggs, goats for milk. All of these are domestic animals.

These animals are already allowed in Long Beach; our request is asking for equity, a fair code that doesn't needlessly discriminate based on one's property size, location, or distance from neighbors.

Since some people are allowed to have up to 4 great danes without any requirements like zoning, lot size, distance from neighbors, prior training, proof of adequate income, etc., it is prejudicial to prevent others from having egg-laying poultry and goats, especially since they pose far fewer public health concerns than dogs and cats.

Since Long Beach cares about the long-term sustainability of its local food system, and since Long Beach cares about its image of being a progressive, diverse, inclusive community, then there really is no choice other than to go in this direction.

I applaud the package put together by the Office of Sustainability; it is a step in the right direction, but there is still room for improvement. Most families in Long Beach have 3-4 people. A hen lays at most one egg a day, so the lower limit of hens allowed without a setback and permit requirement should be increased to 8 as is the case in Seattle. Concerning goats, I recommend increasing the limit from two to three like Seattle so that once the two mommas are in milk, the goat owner can keep both milk-producing adults and one of the offspring; this allows the goat owner to keep the goats when they are most useful (i.e. producing milk) plus one offspring to ensure a future milk supply. After all, miniature goats are smaller than many dogs. Plus, our goal was to make the rules less restrictive, not more; since egg-laying fowl including ducks, guinea fowl, and quail are already allowed, I hope this right is not taken away from us.

The benefits of urban agriculture far outweigh any misperceived drawbacks: local food security; improved animal welfare; food free of hormones, antibiotics, drugs, and other chemicals; fertilizer and chicken- and goat- powered composting of kitchen and yard waste for improved soil quality; wholesome entertainment and education of our youth; and much more. I hope that you will please allow egg-laying fowl, goats, and bees in Long Beach.

Yours sincerely,

Donna

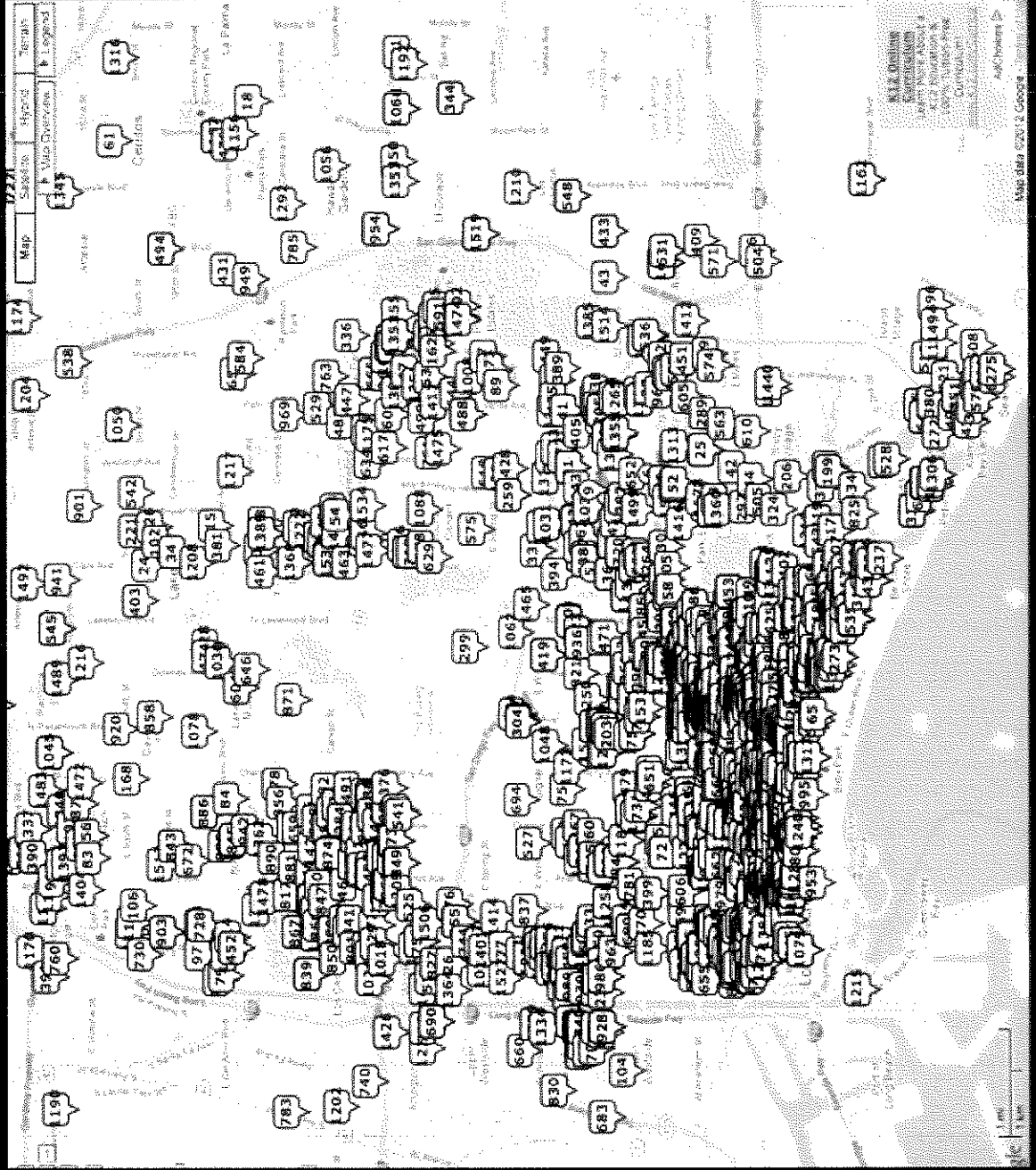
Donna L. Marykwas, Ph.D.

Founder & Executive Director, Long Beach Grows

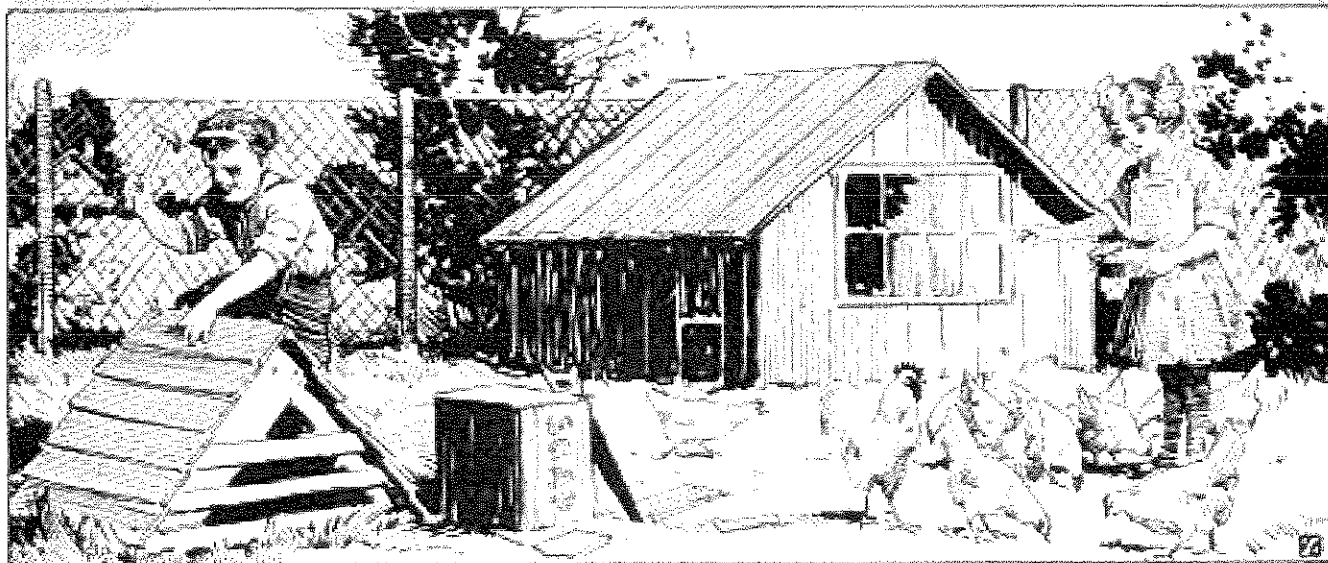
Growing a more sustainable future that includes food security through urban agriculture, including small scale animal husbandry

<http://www.linkedin.com/pub/donna-m/a/584/848>

Over 1600 people have signed
pro-urban agriculture petition.
This is where they live.



Uncle Sam Expects You To Keep Hens and Raise Chickens



Two Hens in the Back Yard for Each Person in the House Will Keep a Family In Fresh Eggs

EVEN the smallest back yard has room for a flock large enough to supply the house with eggs. The cost of maintaining such a flock is small. Table and kitchen waste provide much of the feed for the hens. They require little attention—only a few minutes a day.

An interested child, old enough to take a little responsibility, can care for a few fowls as well as a grown person.

Every back yard in the United States should contribute its share to a bumper crop of poultry and eggs in 1918.

In Time of Peace a Profitable Recreation

In Time of War a Patriotic Duty

For information about methods of Back-Yard Poultry Keeping suited to your location and conditions, write

Your State Agricultural College

or

**The United States Department of Agriculture
Washington, D. C.**



We are aware of a petition (two identical petitions) the opposition has started on Care2; most of the signatures on these petitions are from overseas.

As of Sunday 8:33 AM, 13 unique signatures (i.e. not including duplicates) are from California, an unknown number of these 13 are from Long Beach (of the 302 total), some are anonymous or use fictitious names, and none include a street address or zip code.

We do not believe these petitions demonstrate significant opposition from within Long Beach.

I hope the following rebuttal to the concerns raised in the opposition's petition lays to rest all of these misconceptions. The concerns are summarized in *italics*. Long Beach Grows' response is in **bold**.

1- More animal abandonment...

The problem is some cat-owners and dog-owners, not the chicken- and goat-owners. Chickens and goats are already here. Are we raining chickens and goats? Other cities that allow goats still only have a very very very small number of goats compared to the numbers of dogs and cats.

2- Tremendously burdening to Long Beach ACS...

In September of 2007, Seattle legalized the keeping of miniature goats by UNANIMOUS vote of Seattle's city council. Phyllis Shulman, the legislative assistant to Seattle's City Council president, assured me that she checked in with the departments that handle enforcement of complaints and animal control, and that there is very little impact to animal control officers and staff, as they put it, "miniscule."

3-Illegal breeding of chickens...

No roosters are allowed in Long Beach. You can't breed chickens without a rooster.

4-Sale of chickens and eggs...

Four chickens per backyard are not even enough to feed one family, let alone sell to others. This really isn't an issue. But Farm Lot 59 and the LBCAP Spring Street Farm sell eggs, so there must be a mechanism that allows this.

5-Attracting more coyotes...

What attracts the coyotes are the people who let their cats loose in the neighborhood, who feed stray cats, and who feed wildlife like raccoons.

6-Goats and chickens getting loose...

Chickens know where home is and who feeds them; they stick to their own yard; goats won't get loose from a properly fenced back yard.

7- Goats require attention...

All animals require attention from their owners. Goats are pretty low maintenance as far as animals go. They are NOT nervous. But they are social animals. Goat owners need to make sure they have two goats, not one.

8- Sale of goats milk and cheese...

The proposed changes are for personal use only.

9- Breeding of goats...

Two female goats can't breed. In-tact male goats will not be allowed. It doesn't take a special vet or even a vet degree to tell if the goat is male or female.

10- Chicken permits...

A hatchling chicken costs ~\$3. According to the city's website, the reason for the required annual permit of dogs is to make sure their vaccinations are current. What would be the rationale behind an annual permit for chickens other than to price the poor out of keeping this valuable source of inexpensive, high quality protein- eggs?

11- Odor...

All animals poop. Four great danes, even four chihuahuas, produce more offensive waste than a handful of chickens or two or three goats. The burden is on the owner to clean it up.

12- Animal care concerns...

Chickens in commercial settings get 2 square feet per bird. Every backyard chicken I know is treated like royalty in comparison. Likewise, most milk consumed in this country is from battery cows that are not treated with the interest of the cow in mind. Backyard milk goats are the same size as a backyard labrador. If it's good enough for the dog, it's good enough for the goat. Goat owners love their goats just like dog owners love their dogs. Everyone who truly cares about animal welfare should be for this change in the municipal code, not against it.

13- Required (pre-requisite) animal education program...

The opposition in attendance at the public meeting held June 14 (Kate Karp, Judy Crumpton) admitted to having no experience with chickens and goats, so should not be dictating best practices for handling these animals. Requiring a farm animal educational program is prejudicial, unless a similar course be required of the owners of dogs, cats, rabbits, snakes, turtles, lizards, parakeets, etc. In any event, Long Beach Grows holds occasional educational workshops at LBGROWS Unity Farm and at Center Space Admiral Kidd Park, and as soon as we can, we will offer workshops on small scale urban animal husbandry.

14- Goats and chickens can get sick...

The list of potential illnesses mentioned by the opposition is so over-the-top it is just a scare tactic. Every animal, be it human, dog, or cat, can get sick with a host of medical conditions, cat scratch fever, toxoplasmosis, etc. etc. These are hearty animals we are talking about; they are not especially prone to illness. If the animals need special veterinary care, the burden is on the owner, that is not a reason to disallow ownership. I had an uncle who travelled far to bring his sick beagle to a specialist. On the flip side are any potential public health concerns. Phyllis Shulman, the legislative assistant to Seattle's City Council president, assured me that comparing goats to dogs and cats, the health issues "are way less than cat feces or dog issues, it is important to keep perspective. For example, cat feces is a major polluter of our urban streams. Dogs attack people and often bark all night." The bottom line is it makes more sense to get rid of the dogs and cats in the city than to disallow chickens and goats, but we are not suggesting that because we love dogs and cats too.

15- Backyard slaughter..

There are already restrictions against slaughter built into the code.

**The benefits of urban agriculture far outweigh any misperceived drawbacks.
Any person who truly cared about animal welfare should be for this change in the
municipal code, not against it!**