

ORD-19
CORRESPONDENCE - KAREN HIGHBERGER

July 14, 2013

Dear Mayor Foster and Council Members,

I am writing to voice my opposition to the proposed changes in the rules for keeping chickens, goats and bees. The current ordinance has served the City well in the past. The proposed changes will pose problems for the neighboring properties of the urban farmers. There is the possibility of noise, odor and the attraction of vermin and predators. This will negatively impact the quality of life for neighboring properties who opt not to raise their own farm animals. These potential problems will also impact neighboring properties financially. In speaking to a Realtor regarding the changes, living next door to chickens, goats, etc. is not appealing to most people and property values will be affected. Many parts of the City battle coyotes and residents are asked to keep pet food and small pets inside at night. It seems somewhat counter-intuitive to invite coyotes, rats, etc. with an outside food source readily available 24 hours a day. The potential for harm to the animals is also a big concern. If animal owners do not follow the guidelines for keeping pens clean and provide the proper food, water and secure shelter for them, injury and death will occur.

I also find it hard to believe that there will be not negative fiscal impact from these changes. Complaints about unsanitary conditions, vermin, noise, etc. will need to be answered and that costs money. Also, the animal shelters will need to deal with abused, lost or abandoned animals. This also costs money. The existing ordinance regarding the number of dogs and cats is not adequately enforced, so I worry about any enforcement of the new ordinance regarding farm animals. Already, I have neighbors keeping bee hives within one foot of property line without the required barrier. I think the relaxing of the setbacks and requirements is a bad idea and will only cause a host of problems on a variety of levels. Long Beach has it's share of challenges and has become a crowded, parking impacted city over the years. To add more goats, chickens and bees to the mix seems ill-advised. The Council needs to consider the quality of life of all the residents, not just a select group.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

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