



Legislation Text

File #: 13-0404, **Version:** 2

WITHDRAWN

~~Recommendation to declare ordinance amending the Long Beach Municipal Code by amending Section 6.16.010, Chapter 6.20, and Section 6.24.010, all relating to livestock and other animals, read and adopted as read. (Citywide)~~

The current Long Beach Municipal Code (Municipal Code) allows for residents to own and keep chickens, goats, and bees on their property with certain restrictions. For example, chickens must be kept at a minimum of 50 feet away from dwellings; goats are not allowed south of Anaheim Street and must be kept 100 feet away from dwellings; and beehives must be kept ten feet above the ground and 100 feet away from dwellings. There are a number of households in the City of Long Beach (City) interested in urban agriculture, and raising and producing their own food, such as eggs, honey, and goat's milk. Several residents approached the City Council's Environmental Committee (Committee) to ask for a change to the current laws to make it less restrictive and easier for people to own chickens, goats, and bees.

On March 13, 2012, the Committee directed the Office of Sustainability staff to develop proposed changes to the City's existing rules (contained in Title 6 of the Municipal Code) governing the keeping of chickens, goats, and bees, and to seek public input on the proposals. The Office of Sustainability drafted a set of general proposals based on extensive research on the policies of other large cities in California and in other states. Community meetings were held on Monday, June 11, 2012, at the Long Beach Community Action Partnership, 3012 Long Beach Boulevard; and on Thursday, June 14, 2012, at the Whaley Park Community Center, 5620 East Atherton Street. A total of 70 residents attended the two community meetings. At these meetings, a one-page handout detailing Long Beach's current rules and proposed changes was distributed and discussed.

The proposed changes, which are intended to ease current restrictions, mainly addressed the required minimum distances between the areas where the animals are being kept, i.e., coops, enclosures, or hives, and the neighboring dwelling(s), with all of the proposals recommending a reduction of that distance. A majority of the residents who attended the community meetings identified themselves as supporting changes that would be more permissive to the keeping of chickens, goats, and bees, but tempered by concerns for the need to balance animal welfare and humane treatment with the benefits of food production.

On November 27, 2012, the Committee directed City staff to develop proposed changes to Title 6 of the Municipal Code based on input from the public, and to provide the Committee with proposed revised Municipal Code changes at their next meeting in 2013.

The Department of Parks, Recreation and Marine, Animal Care Services Bureau, in coordination with the Office of Sustainability and the City Attorney's Office, drafted a set of proposed Title 6 Municipal Code changes after reviewing public feedback, mostly in favor of relaxing the restrictions for the

keeping of these animals, tempered with concerns for public safety and the welfare of keeping these types of animals in an urban environment. These proposed changes were presented to the Committee at their meeting on March 18, 2013, and approved with a few amendments, including reducing the distance to neighboring dwellings for goats and chickens from 20 feet to 10 feet, and increasing the number of beehives kept on any property from two to four.

The Ordinance detailing the proposed Municipal Code changes reflects a balance of relaxing the restrictions while taking into consideration and ensuring the humane treatment of these animals.

This matter was reviewed by Deputy City Attorney Linda Vu on April 25, 2013 and by Budget Management Officer Victoria Bell on April 29, 2013.

City Council action is requested on May 14, 2013, in order to implement the Ordinance in a timely manner.

There is no immediate fiscal impact associated with the recommended action. Additional workload associated with the implementation of this policy is expected to be minimal and absorbed within current budgeted resources. There is no impact to jobs associated with the recommended action.

Approve recommendation.

AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF LONG BEACH AMENDING THE LONG BEACH MUNICIPAL CODE BY AMENDING SECTION 6.16.010, CHAPTER 6.20, AND SECTION 6.24.010, ALL RELATING TO LIVESTOCK AND OTHER ANIMALS

GEORGE CHAPJIAN
DIRECTOR OF PARKS, RECREATION AND MARINE

APPROVED:

PATRICK H. WEST
CITY MANAGER