

ALERT

Get your cluck on: Caledonia OKs residential hen keeping

Rachel Kubik

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CALEDONIA — Those hoping to own chickens on residential property in Caledonia have hit a stroke of cluck.

Per the village's amended ordinance 2022-07, which relates to keeping of chickens in single-family residential districts, and which was approved Monday night at the Village Board meeting, Caledonia citizens living on zoned residential property four acres or less in size may keep up to five hens.

The approval came with a unanimous vote after much discussion between residents and the village throughout the past two decades or so. A push to get Caledonia to change its previous code in 2016 failed.

The former code stated that for residential properties, citizens must have five acres or more to keep chickens and they must be housed more than 150 feet from every residence not on that parcel. For agricultural properties, citizens must have two or more acres of zoned agricultural space to keep chickens.

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Now, the village allows hens, or female chickens, by permit on property zoned single family residential that also contains an occupied single-family dwelling. Roosters, or male chickens, are prohibited on property permitted for hens.

Slaughtering of chickens is prohibited except on properties properly zoned and approved for such use.

Hen coops are required to house the hens on a property. An accessory building permit is required for all hen coops. There additionally must be at least two nesting boxes per five hens.

No sales of eggs, chicks or chickens are to be made from any residential property.

“You better like eggs,” Trustee Dale Stillman said.

Discussion

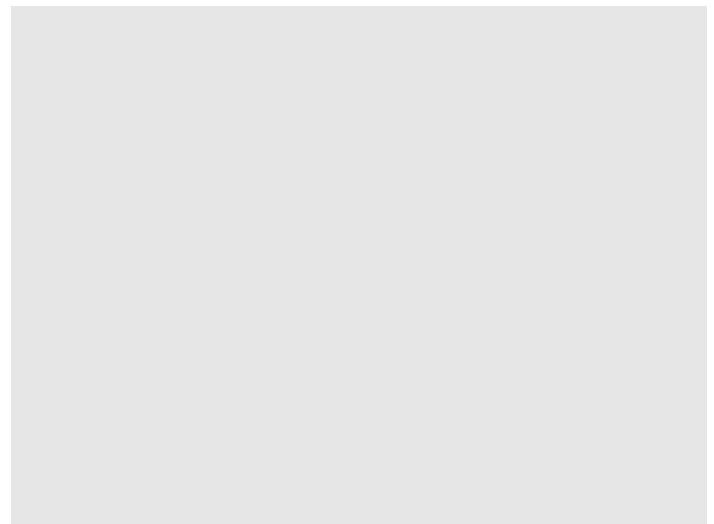
Trustees Holly McManus and Fran Martin got the **discussion rolling again last year**.

“I’m really excited,” McManus said, addressing the board. “We’re happy to get you guys on board with this.”

In the past, Trustees Kevin Wanggaard and Tom Weatherston expressed opposition to a loosened chicken ordinance, citing vermin and neighbor complaints as potential problems.

They have since both changed their minds.

Weatherston wrote in an email to The Journal Times that the amended ordinance is “no big deal, just that the original plan was unlimited hens on any size lot. Now there is some control.”



McManus

Wanggaard did not respond to request for comment on his change of mind.

Village President Jim Dobbs had suggested in August to put the topic before voters on the April ballot as a referendum.

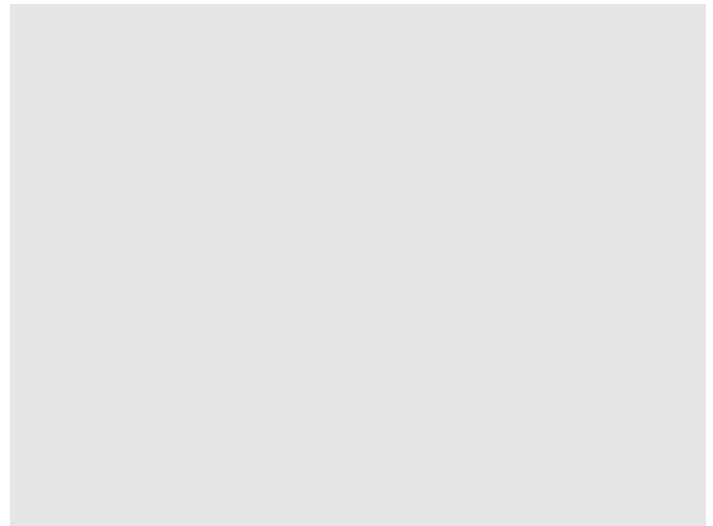
He sent the matter to the village's Legislative and Licensing Committee to determine how to handle it.

"They choose to work it out without suggesting a referendum," Dobbs wrote in an email.

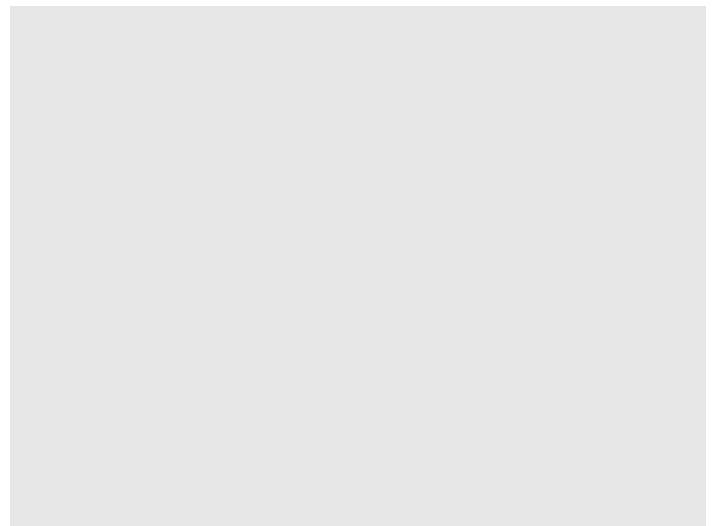
At a Legislative and Licensing Committee meeting, both residents and the committee had a more "intimate conversation" about chickens, McManus told The Journal Times.

She said the Village Board was able to make the ordinance work for citizens and address any worries, such as noise, containment and feces. Each of those concerns were addressed in the ordinance.

"I think overall, the board recognized this was something our citizens could benefit from while still maintaining some sort of enforcement of it," she said. "By comparing what other jurisdictions have done, there really haven't been too many problems. There shouldn't have been a reason why Caledonia was prohibiting residents from keeping chickens ... I think the majority of village residents will be responsible chicken owners."



Weatherston



Dobbs

