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Date: March 22, 2016 at 8:19:18 PM CDT

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Subject: Proposed Urban Farming Ordinance

Stuart;

The ordinance under consideration allowing “Urban Farming” raises many questions related to residential businesses, neighborhood impacts, potential diseases, city inspections, permitting such usages & inspections for city compliance & county & federal health compliance.

I realize there is a major push with some to promote the greening of America & to live a healthier lifestyle. While pursuing such goals we should not ignore the impacts on neighborhoods, families and existing desirable lifestyles.

Thus a number of legitimate questions need to be answered.

First “The Neighborhoods”:

Who will manage and take timely action with unkept yards and recalcitrant urban farmers?
What would be the schedule for rectifying neighborhood sanitation issues?

Farm animals attract predators: Stray dogs, fox, & coyotes (all seen in the western subdivisions as we move into their habitat). Rodents are also attracted to poultry pens & feed areas due to the feed is in the open & on the ground.

How will allowing neighborhood retail sales of urban farming products be compatible with &/or change existing ordinances regarding businesses in neighborhoods?

Why allow retail sales in a quiet neighborhood? Why not restrict these sales to “Dailey Farmers Markets at churches, commercial parking lots, schools, designated city parks or city owned sites throughout the city versus residential neighborhoods?

What kind of sales displays will be allowed on Residential lots? A “road side shack” type display, or garage sale tables like a farmers market, or something restricted to inside the garage, or maybe just garage sale clutter displays? What condition/standard level must the displays be maintained? Something that at a minimum, doesn’t diminish the value of the neighborhood?

Will these new businesses be required to be licensed, especially due to health concerns? These are different from existing farmers that already know how to handle such issues.

How will allowing retail sales produce & meats from residences be managed & inspected? The best situation may be to not allow the sale of meats & fish of any type.

What about signage, in yards, along streets, subdivision entrances, etc?

How will increased traffic be addressed, especially as it relates to children playing within the neighborhoods?

How & where will the animals be kept? Who manages their well being? What are the allowable esthetics of the chicken coops & goat barns? Will the coops & housing facilities for the animals be required to be hidden from neighbors view? What kind of condition will they be required to be maintained?

What row crops will be allowed? How tall can they grow? How or will the size of crop plots be limited versus yard size?

Second “Health Concerns”:

The insurance industry has a category called “Attractive Nuisances”. These items increase the risk of injury or disease. I believe we all understand how a child is attracted to a small animal.

Chickens particularly are disease carriers as follows:

Chicken droppings like pigeon droppings are considered a health hazard.

Salmonella and Campylobacter are common public health hazards potentially associated with chicken contact. These bacteria are carried by healthy chickens and are communicable to people through direct contact, exposure to manure, or consumption of undercooked chicken and eggs.

Histoplasmosis can cause a respiratory disease with cough and shortness of breath. The fungal organism causing this disease is present throughout the Midwest but can be concentrated in areas with quantities of bird droppings. Persons acquire the disease by inhalation of the organism from the environment.

What about sanitation? Animal droppings can be full of diseases. Will the city require frequent cleaning of the chicken coops & goat barns to control manure runoff? Who inspects to ensure this is happening? These types of animals destroy turf. What is to keep the chicken & goat dung from running onto neighbors lots or into drains & waterways? In dry weather droppings & manure break down and can become airborne, this also makes them more susceptible to run off.

Many subdivisions have waterways or retention ponds on them and they can be contaminated by run off from adjacent sites. These ponds can become contaminated with phosphorus, and algae blooms. The pond in Oregon Trail is a city park which collects the surface run off from the subdivision.

How will the waste products of the slaughter of the livestock be disposed? Will there be special locations for disposal? Or do we just allow the blood, bones, feathers, fur/skin & entrails to be

thrown in the trash or go down the sink disposal? How long can these be maintained on site before bacteria, odors, etc become concerns? This is a concern even if the meat is only for family consumption.

We are allowing neighborhood “Micro Grocery Stores”. Who oversees the sanitation and federal meat quality standards with these retail stores? As that is what they are. There is a reason health & quality standards exist. Is the city going to accept responsibility for health issues related or will there be unregulated sales of meat products?

There are many reasons & much history why urban areas have existing rules against these farming activities within the city limits. I hope the city is not blinded by its exuberance for being “Green”, and considers all the issues surrounding these Urban Farms/Homesteads before allowing such activities.

Thank you for your attention to these matters.

David Reynolds

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