

LEGISLATIVE #

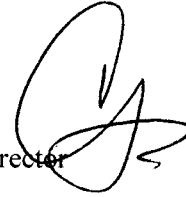
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TO: Community Development Committee

FROM: Erik A. Bredfeldt, Planning and Development Services Director
Ralph Hilliard, Planning Manager

DATE: June 7, 2012

SUBJECT: Agricultural Uses in Residential Districts



Recently staff has fielded a number of inquiries regarding the concept of urban agriculture as it relates to the number of chickens (and other types of animals) that a person can keep on their property and the types of on-site garden activities that are currently allowable.

Urban agriculture is the production of fruits, vegetables, the raising of animals and cultivation of fish for local sale and consumption within metropolitan areas. Urban agriculture is embedded in communities yet it is connected to the larger food system and is influenced and dependent on a variety of economic, environmental and social factors and resources. ¹

Recently, in communities across the country, inclusive of Gainesville as noted, there has been an interest in pursuing urban agriculture activities in residential settings for supplemental homeowner consumption as well as limited commercial activity.

Issues that need to be considered in devising a regulatory framework designed to facilitate these types of activities are: 1) risks associated with the cultivation and ingestion of consumables that may be tainted by contaminated soil, water or pesticides/fertilizers; and, 2) potential land use nuisance conflicts associated with noise and odor issues.

In terms of the current City regulatory regimen, keeping animals in the urban area of the City is regulated by Chapter 5 of the City Code of Ordinances. Chapter 5 is the animal control section of the code which states that no person shall keep or harbor any animal for use other than as a pet within any residential district, and that no person shall keep or harbor fowl or livestock within any residential district with the exception of no more than two chickens. In addition, a few years ago the City created a new zoning district RSF-R (Single-family rural residential) that allows for the ownership of fowl and livestock with limitation. However, that zoning district has not been applied as it was intended for future potentially annexed county properties of a rural nature.

A related matter is food production in urban areas of a communal nature and this has many forms with the most common being community gardens. The city has allowed community gardens on

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public lands for several years through the Parks and Recreation Department and the City does not regulate the growing of food on individual home sites for personal family consumption. In larger more urbanized communities staff finds that vacant privately own lots are being used for community gardens as well as rooftops of building.

.. Recommendation

Hear a brief presentation from staff about urban agriculture generally, the current City regulatory regimen and what some other communities are doing to implement these activities.

¹ Definition taken from APA Webinar titled Urban Agriculture & Food Systems Planning, March 14, 2012