



## Riverdale chicken law fails to hatch as council lays egg

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Despite interest in allowing more property owners to have egg-producing chickens, the Borough Council could not get a second vote to adopt an amended zoning ordinance that would ease restrictions on hen ownership at the Aug. 26 meeting.

Without a second, the motion to adopt the amendment failed, and with it, so did the green light for each residential property to have up to three hens regardless of lot size.

At the meeting, Mayor William Budesheim asked the governing body to make a motion to adopt the ordinance, and Councilman Gary Mastrangelo provided it.

Councilman Garrett Astarita then questioned how many chickens would be permitted under the revised ordinance, which was explained by the mayor.

The mayor then asked for a second, and no one spoke up, which resulted in official defeat for the motion to adopt the revised ordinance.

But the council members appeared to be unaware that their failure to second the motion had just effectively killed the whole ordinance.

Later in the meeting, after hearing from resident Meg Sturm, who was not happy to see the ordinance fail, several from the governing body seemed surprised to learn they had not adopted the ordinance.

"Can I make the motion again?" asked Mastrangelo.

Borough Attorney James Bryce said according to the rules, the ordinance would have to be reintroduced later because its initial introduction had failed that evening.

Astarita said, "No, there was no vote on [the ordinance]."

Mastrangelo said, "No, I made a motion. We never had a second."

During the discussion, there was some confusion that Councilman Vincent Pellegrini had possibly seconded the motion, but that misconception was corrected.

Budesheim sought to find out from the Borough Council if it is in favor of the amended ordinance before the administration goes through the work of introducing it again. Everyone affirmed that they support the measure.

During the public hearing, residents expressed both support and opposition to the ordinance.

A letter written by resident Marcus Ciampi was read into the record. His letter stated that poultry would attract predators and rodents, create odors, lower property values, and pose financial, environmental and health concerns.

Ciampi, who was also in attendance at the meeting, spoke during the public portion.

"We have a small town," he said. "We have small lot sizes. We have backyards not barnyards so I just don't think that this would be applicable to our particular town and that's why I suggest we maintain the current [rules]."

Resident Brendan Maginnes said he agreed with Ciampi.

"We are very congested, and additional animals like chickens running around certainly wouldn't enhance the quality of life," said Maginnes.

Sturm spoke in favor of the ordinance.

Sturm said she originally proposed the ordinance change to the governing body, and was surprised it was not adopted. "It was my feeling that the council and the planning board over the past few months was basically on board with this. We had two complainers in the

audience and then there it went."

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