



Sudbury East Building and By-law Services (SEBBS)

Report for the Consideration by Council

*Shared Services in the Municipalities of French River, Killarney, Markstay-Warren
and St.-Charles*

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| Meeting Date: April 16, 2025 | Report Date: April 10, 2025 |
| Reason Before Council: Policy Direction / Approval | Priority: Normal |
| Department: Protection to Persons & Property | Type of Meeting: Regular Meeting |

RE: Results of Backyard Hen Survey

RECOMMENDED RESOLUTION:

That Council direct staff to produce a draft By-Law for Backyard Hens that addresses the concerns brought forth in the public Backyard Hen Survey.

BACKGROUND:

SEBBS created a Backyard Hen Survey to collect public opinion about allowing hens on properties that are not zoned Rural. Currently, the Municipality's Zoning By-Law 2014-26 only allows livestock on properties with a Rural zoning. This excludes the ability to have hens on smaller properties that are zoned Residential Rural, Waterfront Residential, or Residential 1. The Backyard Hen Survey was available on the Municipal Website from October 2024 until the time of reporting. The survey was also included in the interim tax notices.

ANALYSIS:

The survey results are attached to this report, but the following are highlights for councils' consideration:

General Results

- Survey Participants: 82 respondents
- Support for Backyard Hens (Before Survey): 66.7% strongly support, 12% somewhat support (Page 3)
- Support for Backyard Hens (After Survey): 67.1% strongly support, 13.7% somewhat support (Page 14)

Farm vs Village Responses

- 26% of 23 respondents that live on properties larger than 5 acres **strongly or somewhat disagreed** with allowing backyard hens

- 19% of 52 respondents that live on properties sized less than 5 acres **strongly or somewhat disagreed** with allowing backyard hens

Comments

Common comments **against allowing backyard hens** included:

- allowing hens could open up discussion for allowing other animals
- worry that allowing hens will cause friction between neighbours creating By-Law calls
- worry about attracting predators
- worry about issues with smell and noise

Common comment **in support of allowing backyard hens** included:

- people should be allowed to be self sufficient, and eggs are a sustainable food source
- less compostable material would be diverted to the landfill
- this will help people cut food costs
- there is a therapeutic benefit to keeping hens

Of those respondents that had concerns about keeping backyard hens, odour, sanitation, and wildlife attraction were the biggest concerns, but comments focused on making sure that there was enforcement around setbacks, chickens running at large, sanitation and coop construction.

Other comments addressed neighbours respecting each other by keeping animals well cared for and ensuring that yards are well kept.

Zoning Preferences

- Residents strongly supported allowing hens in Residential Rural zones (Page 4) with slightly less support when houses were closer together.
- Village settings saw lower support especially on properties with multiple dwellings (Page 5). Support increased between houses that were more than 100' apart. Only 26.03% (Page 5) supported the allowance of hens when the respondents were asked if backyard hens should be allowed on properties with multiple dwellings but was overall supported when the question was asked if they should be allowed if there was more than one dwelling (Page 7).
- Allowing backyard hens on Waterfront property was also generally supported, but support dropped when houses were less than 100' away from each other (Page 6).

Number of hens per property

Residents agreed that there should be some limit to the number of hens depending on the size of a property (less than 5 acres in size) (Pages 8-13)

Overall recommendations to be considered by a draft By-Law if Council directs staff to create a By-Law:

- Allow backyard hens on residential zoned properties with property-size-based limits.
- Implement clear expectations on coop size and cleanliness.
- Address setbacks to keep hens away from houses to address noise and smell.

- Restrict hens in multi-unit dwellings unless agreements can be made between residents sharing a property.
- Address predator concerns by requiring proper enclosures.
- Provide educational resources to help residents properly care for hens.
- Ensure proper planning is in place for waste disposal.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

That Council accept the report and decide if they would like to direct staff to produce a draft By-Law for Backyard Hens that addresses the concerns brought forth in the public Backyard Hen survey.

Respectfully submitted by: Andrea Tarini, Director of SEBBS / CBO