

# BACKYARD CHICKEN BYLAW STILL INCUBATING

## TOWN MOVES AHEAD WITH PUBLIC CONSULTATION

**BRYAN MYERS**  
bmyers@metroland.com

It's far too early to count chickens before they hatch, but Halton Hills residents will likely be able to raise chickens in their backyards in the near future.

At the March 22 Town of Halton Hills meeting, council directed staff to press on with the public consultation process to determine the appropriate requirements for a backyard chicken policy in Halton Hills.

The town first discussed allowing residents to raise backyard chickens in September 2019, with staff given the go-ahead to look at how communities with the

allowance had developed their policy.

A survey held in March and April of 2020 gathered responses from 725 residents, and for about a third of respondents it ruffled some feathers.

Of the 465 residents in favour of backyard birds, the majority cited the chickens were "part of a sustainable lifestyle," followed by economic and educational reasons.

Of the 254 who opposed the fowl, "attracts vermin and wildlife" was the most cited reason to refuse to allow the birds, followed by noise and sanitary concerns.

The majority of respondents believed coop keepers should be required to obtain a permit through the town to keep the birds.

Most respondent felt four to six birds should be



Jordan Snobelen/Metroland

It's not allowed yet, but Halton Hills is moving forward with public consultation to allow residents to keep chickens in their backyards.

the maximum allowable.

The second most popular response was: none.

"Raising animals can be an educational, rewarding and fun pastime," wrote

Christa Roettele, of the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food, and Rural Affairs (OMAFRA). "However, there are many things to consider in making this de-

cision."

Bird-tenders must maintain appropriate care for their flock and ensure their nutritional, housing and welfare needs are met.

"No one wants their animals or themselves to get sick," Roettele wrote, "so it is important that routine biosecurity practices are implemented and adhered to in order to prevent the introduction and spread of diseases in birds."

Concerns aside, several communities in southern Ontario have successfully implemented their own backyard chicken programs. In Guelph, where a bylaw for chickens has existed since 2018, keepers must complete a one-time registration to own chickens.

Guelph residents are prohibited from owning a rooster (also prohibited: whales, rhinos and elephants).

A limit of ten hens may be kept unless the birds are housed at all times in a pen with a solid floor. Hens, as with any domestic animal in Guelph, may not be killed on residential property, except by a licensed veterinarian.



**Mimi Keenan**  
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**C: 416.938.5158**

**O: 905.877.8262**

mimikeenan@royallepage.ca

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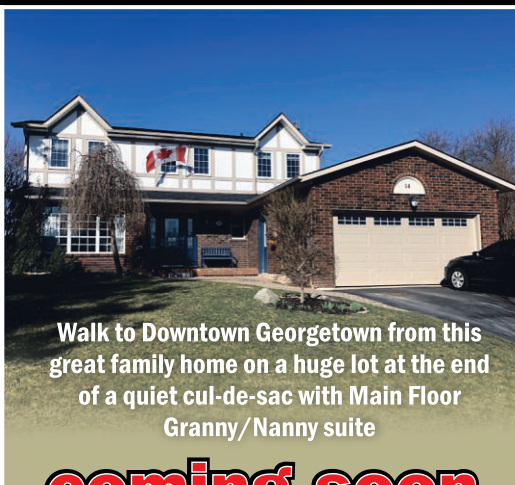
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