

Hello City Councilors!

I am reaching out as an urban homesteader who is often asked by friends about the rules and would encourage you to act to reduce restrictions on homesteading. Like many people, I am not entirely clear on the current rules, but I am wondering if you are all working on loosening restrictions at this time. If you are, I ask you to consider throwing the following ideas in the mix.

- Increase the number of chickens allowed to twelve in addition to other pets. Clarify rules on livestock.

- Exempt agricultural structures up to 150 square feet from lot coverage calculations or permitting requirements. This would include hoop houses, greenhouses, tool sheds and any garden structure. I would also suggest allowing smaller structures up to 100 square feet, such as chicken coops and hoop houses, in the front yard, and without a permit. Perhaps a registration form to inform the city. No green Z required, just a checklist to read through about requirements.

- Empower Parks and Recreation to designate CSA pick-up/drop-off zones that can be used by any farm.

- Empower Parks and Recreation to designate small, experimental, cooperative gardens in parks throughout the city where people are welcome to contribute their efforts to a shared garden, in socially distant manner, of course. I have heard from people who do not have a garden plot, and don't have a location they can access where they live. This would require redirection of existing P&R staff or a little funding to staff tending the lots on an as needed basis... i.e. to clean up gardening debris left behind, or water it if it looks neglected. These locations could also serve as a place where people could leave what they want to share and take what they need (i.e. seedlings, garden tools, pots, bags of soil, etc...).

- Designate small, self-serve farm-stands as an allowable

economic activity on any residential property. Along with that, allowable signage leading people to the farm-stand.

-Allow all gardening on green spaces and encouraging free gardens where people can pick what they need.

-Add fruiting trees and shrubs to the mix for all new tree plantings in all public parks. Redirect the flowering annuals planting budget to plantings that will yield food.

If you are worried about undesirable outcomes of any of these changes you could always enact the legislation with a sunset, establishing the day all the changes expire, reverting to old law. The council can then consider how it went, what to keep and what to improve. I believe you will find many enthusiastic volunteer stewards of several of the above efforts and that it will go very well.

We will continue to experience an extremely challenging economic period, and this is an opportunity for people to take steps to take care of their families and the people around them. That is already happening on so many levels and we can work to ensure the city is not hampering these efforts. I hope all is well in your personal lives and on the Council. Thank you all for your service!

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