



Council Meeting
March 23, 2026

Discussion: Backyard Chicken By-law

Recommendation

The Senior Municipal Law Enforcement Officer recommends:

- 1. That BLE Report No. 03-2026 be received;**
- 2. AND THAT Staff be authorized to initiate a public consultation and engagement process to solicit input from interested members of the community;**
- 3. AND THAT Staff return to the June 1, 2026, meeting with a follow up Report to Council.**

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report is to present to Council for consideration a proposed Backyard Chicken By-law for the purposes of discussion and, potentially next steps in the process.

2. Background

At the January 26, 2026, Council meeting, a Delegation was received from Ayr resident Amanda Nafziger, regarding a Backyard Chicken proposal. After listening to the Delegation, Council passed the following Resolution:

THAT the Delegation from Amanda Nafziger regarding Backyard Chickens be received;

AND THAT Staff be directed to prepare a report outlining options and analysis that could form a new Backyard Chickens By-law for Council's review and consideration.

This Report has been prepared as a follow-up to the direction that Staff received from Council arising from the January 26th meeting.

The Township had previously embarked upon a Pilot Project related to provision of Backyard Chickens. The Pilot Project lapsed and is not applicable in the current time period.

3. Options and Analysis

Staff undertook a literature review of By-laws and programs from surrounding and similar Municipalities (urban and rural). Arising from that review, Staff have drafted a proposed By-law for Backyard Chickens for the consideration by Council.

The *draft* By-law as it is written proposes the following:

1. No more than 4 chickens on a property under 2 acres and no more than 10 chickens on a property over 2 acres in a residential zone;
2. No roosters permitted;
3. Size regulations of the chicken coop and run;
4. Setback requirements from lot lines and residential buildings;
5. No sales of eggs, meat or manure;
6. Annual inspection and permit for each residence where a backyard chicken venture is advanced;
7. Only one coop and run per property;
8. No slaughter of chickens on the property; and,
9. Chickens are not permitted to run at large on residential property

Staff are proposing that an annual fee of \$80 to help offset the cost of inspection and administration time associated for each permit.

Staff are recommending to Council that before a decision is made on a new Backyard Chicken By-law, that an engagement / consultation program be embarked upon with the community.

The outcome of the consultation process would be included in a follow-up Report to Council which may assist within informing a preferred course of action that Council may wish to act upon. Staff are suggesting that the follow up Report would be presented for discussion on June 1, 2026.

4. Financial Implications

There are no financial implications on the 2026 Budget associated with the consideration of this Report.

5. Attachments

1. *Draft* Backyard Chicken By-law

For further information on the contents of this Report, please contact Justin Harris, Senior Municipal Law Enforcement Officer at 519-632-8800 ext. 107 or via email at jharris@northdumfries.ca

Report Prepared By:



Justin Harris,
Senior Municipal Law Enforcement Officer

Respectfully Submitted By:



Andrew McNeely,
Chief Administrative Officer



THE CORPORATION OF THE TOWNSHIP OF NORTH DUMFRIES

BY-LAW NUMBER _____

BEING A BY-LAW TO REGULATE THE KEEPING AND LICENSING OF BACKYARD CHICKENS IN THE TOWNSHIP OF NORTH DUMFRIES

Whereas *Section 8 of the Municipal Act, 2001, c.25* provides municipalities with the broad authority to govern affairs as it considers appropriate and to enhance the municipality's ability to respond to municipal issues;

And Whereas *Section 11 of the Municipal Act, 2001, c. 25* provides that a municipality may provide any services or thing that the municipality considers necessary or desirable for the public in respect to the economic, social and environmental well-being of the municipality and the health, safety and well-being of persons;

And Whereas *Section 10 (2) (9) of the Municipal Act, 2001, c.25* provides that a municipality may pass By-laws respecting matters within the following spheres of jurisdiction: animals;

And Whereas *Section 8(3) of the Municipal Act, 2001, c.25* provides that a municipality may pass By-laws providing for a system of licensing respecting matter;

And Whereas the Council of the Corporation of the Township of North Dumfries deems it necessary and in the public interest to regulate the keeping of backyard chickens for public health and safety and for nuisance and noise purposes;

Now Therefore the Council of The Corporation of the Township of North Dumfries enacts as follows:

Section 1 - General

1.1 Notwithstanding General Zoning By-law 689-83 which prohibits the keeping of livestock in accessory buildings and the Exotic Animals By-law 3281-21 which prohibits keeping of hens outside of areas in Agricultural zones, the keeping of hens is permitted on residential lots meeting the conditions as defined in this By-law. This By-law does not apply to properties Zoned Agricultural (Z1) in the General Zoning By-law 689-83.

Section 2 – Definitions

2.1 For the purposes of this By-law, all words shall have their normal and customary meaning save and except for those hereinafter defined;

- a) “Application” means a document of request.
- b) “Backyard Chickens/Hens” means female chickens that are raised for the purpose of providing companionship, eggs or as a meat source.
- c) “Coop” means a fully enclosed weatherproof and ventilated building where hens are kept and which the interior includes nest boxes for egg laying, perches for the hens to sleep on, and food and water containers.
- d) “Council” means the Council of The Corporation of the Township of North Dumfries.
- e) “Custodian” means a person who was responsible for the care of and have control over an animal that is Deadstock immediately before the animal died but does not include an operator as defined in Ontario Regulation 106/09 (Disposal of Dead Farm Animals) made under the Nutrient Management Act, 2002, with respect to an animal the operator is required to dispose of under that regulation.
- f) “Deadstock” means an animal that is specified in the regulations and that has died from a cause, other than slaughter. Specified animals includes Poultry.
- g) “Declaration” means a document that is a written statement in which the writer swears under penalty of perjury that the contents are true.
- h) “Dwelling” means one or more rooms in a building, designed as, or intended as, or capable of being used or occupied as a single independent housekeeping unit and containing living, sleeping, sanitary and food preparation facilities or facilities for the installation of kitchen equipment and has an independent entrance. For the purpose of this By-law a dwelling unit does not include any commercial accommodation or a recreational trailer.
- i) “Officer” means a Municipal Law Enforcement Officer for the Township, a person appointed or designated by Council to enforce this By-law, a member of the Humane Society or a police officer.
- j) “Outdoor run” means an area enclosed by wire screen intended for permitting a hen or hens to be outdoors.

- k) "Person" means a human being or a corporation treated as having the rights and obligations.
- l) "Permit" means a permit that is issued by the Township that allows the Permit holder to raise Backyard Chickens at the address identified in the Permit.
- m) "Property" means a parcel of land and any buildings or other structures on the land.
- n) "Property Owner" means the registered owner(s) of a property within the Township of North Dumfries
- o) "Rooster/Cock" means an adult male chicken.
- p) "Sanitary Condition" means a condition that is not offensive to the senses, not injurious to the health of any Person and conditions that prevent the spread of communicable diseases and protect the public health and welfare.
- q) "Slaughtering" means the killing of livestock for purposes that include the use of meat for food.
- r) "Tenant" means a person who rents or leases a dwelling from a Property Owner.
- s) "Township" means The Corporation of the Township of North Dumfries.
- t) "Zoning By-law" means the Corporation of North Dumfries General Zoning By-law No. 689-83.

Section 3 – General Requirements

3.1 Persons who are wishing to raise Backyard Chickens in a Zone other than Agricultural (Z1) within the Township shall obtain a Permit from the Township prior to having Backyard Chickens on their Property. The ability to raise Backyard Chickens shall be limited to a Residential Zone classification as established in General Zoning Bylaw 689-83 and must comply with the applicable provisions and regulations as set out in this Bylaw.

3.2 To obtain a Permit to raise Backyard Chickens the applicant must;

- a) complete an Application and provide a sketch as set out in Schedule (A)
- b) complete a Declaration as set out in Schedule (B)
- c) pay the required Permit fee

d) pass a site inspection by a Municipal Law Enforcement Officer of the Township

3.3 Every owner of Hens and every owner of property on which Hens are kept shall ensure that:

- a) No more than 4 Hens are kept on a residentially zones property with less than a lot size of 0.8 ha (2 acres) and no more than 10 Hens on properties larger than 0.8 ha (2 acres);
- b) The owner of the Hens resides at the Property, or the tenant has written permission from the owner;
- c) The Hens are kept in fully enclosed Coop or Run in a manner that contains the Hens on the Property and prevents their escape from such Coop or Run;
- d) The Coop and any Run are within the rear yard or interior side yard of the property
- e) Coops shall not exceed a maximum height of 4.5 metres (14.75 feet);
- f) Coops and Runs shall not be located within 3 metres (9.8 feet) of any dwelling or within 1 metre (3.9 feet) of any property line;
- g) Coops and Runs must always be kept in clean and Sanitary Condition and, in good repair and condition;
- h) Coops and Runs are maintained to ensure that odours do not cause a nuisance to residents of any neighbouring property or any residents of the Township;
- i) Coops must have a ground floor area of no larger than 9.3 square metres (100 sq. ft.);
- j) A maximum of one chicken coop shall be permitted per residential property;
- k) Coops and Runs must be fully enclosed and Coops shall be weatherproof with flooring that is resistant to moisture, mold and retains heat;
- l) Coop floors are lined with shaving, straw, or other appropriate materials to absorb manure and facilitate cleaning;
- m) Coops are deep cleaned at least two times yearly including disinfecting of troughs, perches and nests;
- n) Feeders and water containers are provided and are cleaned and disinfected regularly;
- o) All stored feed is kept in rodent proof containers and secured at all times to prevent rodents and other animals from accessing it;
- p) Feeding of hens is done in a manner that minimizes the attraction of rodents or other animals;
- q) Manure and droppings are cleaned out daily and stored in a secured container or composter in accordance with compost regulations until disposed of in accordance with all applicable law and regulations;

- r) Hens have access to an enclosed outdoor run area;
- s) Deceased hens are disposed of at a livestock disposal facility, through the services of a veterinarian, chicken exchange program, or through a facility as approved by the Ministry of Agriculture, Food, and Agribusiness and are disposed of in accordance with all applicable laws and regulations;
- t) There is no sale of eggs, manure or other products associated with the keeping of hens;
- u) No slaughtering or butchering of hens is done on the property;
- v) Hens are kept in accordance with all other laws including the Township's by-laws respecting noise, clean yards, property standards, and animals as well as provincial legislation respecting the keeping of animals;

Section 4 – Prohibitions

4.1 No Person shall

- a) raise Backyard Chickens/Hens without first having obtained a Permit;
- b) raise more than 4 Hens on a Property less than 0.8 ha (2 acres) or more than 10 Hens on a property larger than 0.8 ha (2 acres) in a Residential Zone;
- c) dispose of Deadstock in a manner not consistent with regulations of the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Agribusiness;
- d) slaughter Backyard Chickens on their Property;
- e) sell products (eggs, meat, manure) that are derived from the raising of Backyard Chickens;
- f) raise Backyard Chickens without providing appropriate food and water;
- g) raise Backyard Chickens without providing sanitary shelter and living environment
- h) shall locate a Coop and Outdoor Run in a manner that is not consistent with the provisions identified in section 3.3 of this By-law;
- i) shall have a Coop that is built in a manner that is not consistent with section 3.3 of this By-law;
- j) shall allow Backyard Chickens to run at large;
- k) have a Rooster on a residentially zoned property;
- l) hinder or obstruct an Officer from entering onto a Property to inspect a Coop or Outdoor Run

Section 5 – Offence and Penalty

5.1 Every Person who contravenes any of the provisions of this By-law shall be guilty of an offence and upon conviction, is liable to a fine pursuant to the Provincial Offences Act, R.S.O. 1990, c.P. 33, as amended.

5.2 This By-law shall be enforced by Municipal Law Enforcement Officers appointed by the Township with the duty of enforcing the provisions of the By-laws of the Corporation and any member of the Waterloo Regional Police.

5.3 If this By-law is contravened and a conviction entered, the court in which the conviction was entered or any court of competent jurisdiction may, in addition to any other remedy and to any penalty that is imposed, make an order prohibiting the continuance or repetition of the offence by the person convicted.

Section 6 – Severability

6.1 It is hereby declared that notwithstanding any part of this By-law, or parts thereof, may be found by any Court of law to be invalid or beyond the power of Council to enact such section or sections or parts thereof shall be deemed to be severable and that all other sections or parts of this By-law are separate and independent there from and enacted as such.

Section 7 – Administration

7.1 This By-law shall take force and effect on _____, 2026

7.2 This By-law may be referred to as the Backyard Chicken By-law

Susan Foxtton, Mayor

Ashley Good, Clerk