PROCEDURES FOR APPLICATIONS FOR HEN PERMIT

When a resident applies for a Keeping of Hens Permit in the City of Lawrence, the following course of events is set in motion.

Keeping of Hens Application Process Summary

1. Complete and submit attached Permit Application form and required documents to the Lawrence Health Department with a check for $25.00. Please make checks payable to City of Lawrence and remit to:
   
   Lawrence Health Department
   200 Common Street, Room 201
   Lawrence, MA 01840

2. Applicants shall provide the Board of Health with the following information:
   
   a. A letter to the Board of Health requesting a permit to keep hens that includes:
      i. A description/plan of the proposed henhouse and pen
      ii. A description of the property where the hens will be kept

3. Health Department reviews applications and conducts site walk.
4. Applicants shall submit a letter to Inspectional Services Department at least 10 days before the Board of Health Meeting. The Board meets on the third Tuesday of each month at 6 p.m. in City Council Chambers.
5. A meeting will be held of the Board of Health, decision will be made to approve or deny application based upon all requirements set forth in city regulations.
6. Upon approval by the Board, construction of the coop may begin. A final inspection will be conducted once coop has been constructed and prior to the keeping of hens.
7. An annual Keeping of Hens permit will be required through the Lawrence Board of Health, expiring June 30th of every year. A renewal permit must be obtained. Permit holders that fail to renew their Keeping of Hens permit prior to June 30th are subject to a $100 reinstatement fee. Additionally, an annual inspection will be conducted by the Board of Health. Failure to meet requirements set forth in the regulations will result in a re-inspection fee of $100 and may result in a hearing with the Board of Health to determine whether the permit should be revoked, suspended or subject to further conditions.

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Lawrence Board of Health Regulations for the Keeping of Hens

Definitions
The following words, terms and phrases, when used in this section shall have meaning ascribed to them in this section:

- “Abutters” shall mean owners of abutting land or property within one hundred (100) feet of the Applicant's property line.
- “Hen” shall mean a female chicken.
- “Henhouse” shall mean an enclosed structure for Hens.
- “Pen” shall mean the enclosed outdoor space for Hens.

Regulations
1. No person shall keep Hens on their premises without obtaining a permit from the Board of Health. Application fees are $25.00 with no modifications to the application or owner.
2. A maximum of six (6) Hens may be kept on a lot. Fees shall apply to existing Henhouses.
3. The applicant shall notify abutters in writing of the request to keep Hens on applicant’s property.
4. An enclosed Henhouse shall provide at least two (2) square feet per Hen, and an enclosed Pen shall provide at least four (4) square feet of previous surface per Hen kept on the property.
5. Structures shall meet all building code requirements. Structures exceeding one hundred twenty (120) square feet or ten (10) feet in height will require building permits and structures with electrical or plumbing shall require appropriate permits.
6. Henhouse structures will not interfere with any utility or other feature of the property that needs suitable access.
7. Henhouse structures will be located in a well-drained area that does not discharge on a public way or neighbor’s property.
8. All outdoor roaming areas for Hens shall be sufficiently enclosed and screened from the street and neighbor’s properties.
9. Hens shall not be kept within the living area of the residential structure.
10. Massachusetts Department of Public Health Food Protection Program states that farm-fresh eggs must be stored and maintained at 45°F (7.2°C).
11. Noise from Hens at the property boundary must conform to the City’s Noise Ordinance.
12. Odors from hens, Hen manure, or other Hen-related substance shall not be perceptible at the property boundaries.
13. Waste shall either be composted with carbonaceous material such as hay, bedding or leaves or stored in a sealed container until it is removed from the property.
14. Henhouses shall be cleaned on a weekly basis.
15. Hens shall be confined to the subject property and not allowed to wander onto other properties including City-owned land.
16. Hens’ feed must be stored in a rodent-proof container inside the primary structure.
17. Henhouse and attached Pen must be constructed securely so as to exclude predators and rodents.
18. The Board of Health may suspend, revoke or decline to renew a Hen permit for cause after reasonable notice to the licensee of the ground for the proposed action.
19. If the Board of Health, or its agent, determines that the Hen(s) causes disturbances on, or damage to neighboring property or public areas, the Board of Health or its agent may require that the Hens be immediately removed, at owner’s expense.

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City of Lawrence Board of Health Keeping of Hens Application

These guidelines are not final requirements. The Board of Health may require additional information based on the type and location of operation.

Application Fee: $25.00
For official use only: Date/time application received ______________________
Received by: __________________________________________________________
Board of Health meeting assigned: _______________________________________
Applicant Name: _____________________________________________________
Applicant Address: ____________________________________________________
Contact Telephone Number: ____________________________________________
Contact Email: _______________________________________________________

To complete this application the following must be provided:
- Copy of certified letter with copy of signed return receipt to each property abutter informing them of your application to keep hens or receipt showing notice was hand-delivered and received by abutters.
- If applicant is not the sole property owner, signed written statements from all property owners granting permission for keeping of hens.
- Written maintenance plan and description of henhouse/pen enclosure.

Hen Application Questionnaire
Circle/Answer the following questions

Is the applicant the sole owner of the property where the hens will be kept? Yes/No
If no, please provide signed written statements from all property owners granting permission the keeping of the hens.

What is the size of the property lot in square feet? _______________________

HENHOUSE/PEN
1. Location
   a. Will the henhouse/pen enclosure be in the rear yard of the property? Yes/No
   b. Will the henhouse/pen enclosure be at least five (5) feet from all property lines? Yes/No
   c. Will the henhouse/pen enclosure conform to all relevant property setbacks for accessory structures as specified in the Zoning bylaws? Yes/No
   d. Will the henhouse/pen enclosure interfere with any utility or other feature of the property that needs suitable access? Yes/No
   e. Will the henhouse/pen enclosure be located in a well-drained area that does not discharge to a public way or neighbor’s access? Yes/No

2. Construction
   a. Will the henhouse/pen enclosure provide a minimum interior floor surface of at least two (2) square feet per bird? Yes/No

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b. Will the henhouse/pen enclosure provide a minimum previous ground surface of at least four (4) square feet per bird? Yes/No

c. Will the henhouse/pen enclosure be securely constructed in a manner that excludes predators and pests, including those that fly, burrow and reach? Yes/No

d. Will the henhouse/pen enclosure have a predator and pest proof material across the top? Yes/No

e. Will the henhouse/pen enclosure provide protection from the elements as needed? Yes/No

f. Will the henhouse/pen enclosure be constructed in such a manner and with such materials that allow for effective weekly cleaning? Yes/No

g. Please provide a separate detailed description of the henhouse/pen enclosure, including square footages and photographs if possible.

3. Maintenance

a. Will the feed be securely stored in a rodent and pest-proof container? Yes/No

b. Will the feed leftover from feeding remain in an area accessible to rodents and pests past dusk? Yes/No

c. If the weather is too cold, or composting is otherwise not possible, will there be a sealable container for waste to be stored until disposal? Yes/No

d. If composting is possible, how and where will waste be composted with carbonaceous material such as hay, bedding or leaves? Please identify composting/manure storage location on the required certified plot plan.

Please provide a separate, detailed written maintenance plan describing the following: cleaning practices and schedule for the henhouse/pen enclosure and feed and water containers, which anti-bacterial/viral cleaning solution will be used, which bedding material will be used in the birdhouse and at which depth it will be provided, how frequently the bedding material will be composted, and any other appropriate nuisance (odor and noise) prevention measures that will be taken.

4. Health and Disease Control

a. Will the hens be vaccinated against any communicable diseases? Yes/No

b. Will newly acquired hens be isolated from healthy resident birds? Yes/No

If yes, where and for how long?

c. Will the hens be separated from wild migratory fowl at all times? Yes/No

d. What will be done with a bird if it dies?

I have read the city regulations and bylaws regarding the keeping of hens and understand the requirements as outlined. I understand failure to comply with the requirements of these regulations and failure to prevent a public health nuisance may result in revocation of my keeping of hens permit.

Signature: __________________________ Date: __________________________

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