



City News

From Councilwoman Jeanne Faatz

Contact us at:

Bear Valley Shopping Ctr.
3100 S. Sheridan Blvd.
Unit D
Denver, CO 80227

Phone: 303.763.8562
Fax: 303.763.8564

E-mail: Jeanne.Faatz@denvergov.org
Dana.Montano@denvergov.org

Backyard chicken issue may return in 2011

Residents of my council district made themselves perfectly clear in 2010 when I asked in my citizen survey how they felt about homeowners keeping chickens.

Of 2,099 responses, an overwhelming 79 percent said the city should continue to require a permit before residents could be allowed to keep hens. Respondents indicated it was important that neighbors have a say. About 21 percent of the survey respondents said permits shouldn't be required.

This year the issue may come up again if the individual who started Denver Backyard Farms has his way. This person told council he is collecting signatures for a ballot initiative that would allow up to six chickens per zone lot in all districts as a use by right. No permit would be required under his proposal, and the property owner could decide where to place the chicken coop – front yard, side yard or where ever.

If the proponent collects enough valid signatures, the Clerk and Recorder would put the question on the ballot, either in May or soon thereafter. City Council could support or oppose the measure in a proclamation, but the council couldn't keep it from the voters.

Those who support chickens say fresh eggs and urban farming are good for the community, and they argue that Denver should support this growing trend. Opponents say hens are noisy, smelly, and attract coyotes, foxes and other predators.

Some council members have said they may offer a zoning code amendment that would accomplish the same as the citizen initiative. If that happened, I would vote the way my citizen survey respondents indicated. But at least that amendment process would require a public hearing. That would give residents plenty of chances to speak for the issue or against it.