

CITY OF PORTAGE PLANNING COMMISSION

F I N A L A G E N D A

January 6, 2011

(7:00 p.m.)

Portage City Hall Council Chambers

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

December 16, 2010

SITE/FINAL PLANS:

PUBLIC HEARINGS:

1. Special Land Use Permit: Auto World of Portage, 7940 South Sprinkle Road
- * 2. Ordinance Amendment #10-A, Keeping of Hens and Other Animals

PLATS/RESIDENTIAL CONDOS:

OLD BUSINESS:

NEW BUSINESS:

STATEMENT OF CITIZENS:

ADJOURNMENT:

MATERIALS TRANSMITTED

Star (*) indicates printed material within the agenda packet.

RECEIVED

DEC 30 2010

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

December 28, 2010

Re: Meeting of 1/6/11 Regarding Proposed Backyard Chickens

Dear City Commission Members:

I am writing regarding the proposed backyard chicken ordinance. The citizens of Portage believe the *Planning Commission members will do their homework and not allow the raising of chickens in Portage. 17 people who spoke at the November hearing were in favor of allowing citizens to raise chickens in their own backyards. The thousands of other citizens that did not attend this meeting are counting on you to represent their voices on this matter.*

Here are a few thoughts to consider on this issue:

Yes, chicks are cute and cuddly but these little chicks need a proper shed and fencing with a heat source. Chickens, if I remember correctly, are fed some type of corn which is not cheap. The droppings smell like heck or something worse. Sheds must be cleaned regularly and feces disposed of. Chickens also have predators like hawks, weasels, and coyotes.

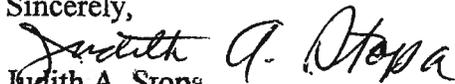
If it is decided to allow chickens to be raised, then a permit should be needed. Shed and fencing should be specified, the areas should be inspected and someone should be appointed to handle problems with cleanliness and noise issues that come up. It's only fair that surrounding neighbors be surveyed and asked if they have any objections. Many people have breathing issues and allergy issues.

A 1/4 acre lot or less is not a large lot. A setback for a coop of 10 feet from a property line and 30 feet from a neighboring home is crazy. The average man is 6 ft. tall. Unfortunately feathers and feces odor go a lot further than 30 feet.

Mr. Forth was quoted in the 12/17/10 issue of the Kalamazoo Gazette that he feels no permit should have to be obtained and he and his staff have no problem with allowing other animals that are raised as part of a 4-H project be allowed also. Pigs? Cows? Horses? Goats?

Thank you for taking the time to consider this letter. Yes, I was raised on a farm. Yes, we did try raising chickens. No, it wasn't a great idea and didn't last long. And I love city living.

Sincerely,



Judith A. Stopa
6118 Avon Street
Portage, MI 49024

CC: Portage City Council



HANSEN BUILDING
AND DESIGN CORPORATION

January 6, 2011

City of Portage Planning Commission
7900 S. Westnedge
Portage, Michigan 49002

RECEIVED
JAN 06 2011
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Dear Commissioners:

I, recently, read in the newspaper that the City is considering adopting an ordinance allowing chickens to be raised in residential neighborhoods. I cannot tell you what a bad idea that is.

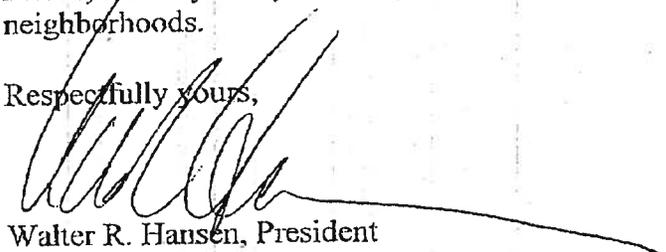
For over 35 years I have been involved in the real estate community and have developed numerous residential and commercial buildings thru-out Portage. The effect of having chickens will be devastating to property values. Can you imagine, where I live on Austin Lake, having a chicken coop next to my home and how it will affect potential purchasers of my home. The answer is most people would not want the noise, smell and unsightly chicken coop next door to their very expensive home. Will real estate values plummet on properties abutted by a chicken coop? You bet!

In addition to putting off potential home buyers, in an already precarious market, the City will have constant enforcement issues. No matter how you restrict chicken coop design you will have problems. Do you want to spend the money sending out your police officers for noise complaints or to control someone who has let their chicken droppings get out of hand? It will be costly to the City and for what? Just because some well meaning people want a few eggs. So everybody suffers. Property sales are affected, values drop and the City spends money enforcing an incredibly stupid ordinance.

I am sure you will have a plethora of egg eating advocates at your meetings and probably very few opponents. Most people who are not advocates of this ordinance probably do not know it is even being proposed. If I had not read the article in the newspaper and then called your Community Development Department, I would never have known about the proposal. When special interest groups are working on an ordinance to this type they organize and, in most cases, you will have a better turnout of their people, at your meetings than opponents.

Please, for very many reasons, do not allow chickens to be raised in residential neighborhoods.

Respectfully yours,



Walter R. Hansen, President
Hansen Building and Design Corporation