

Durham HENS

raise hens • gather eggs • eat local

To Durham City/County Planning Commission and Staff:

We of course, heartily support the staff's work on the proposed ordinance allowing hens in Durham and thank you for your attention to this issue. There are several minor points that may deserve a second look, however, and we list them below.

1) **Re. A1b. "One small fee is better than two."**

The \$25 permit fee seems reasonable and we support that. The additional charge of \$40 for a building permit for a structure with a footprint comparable to a large doghouse (which do not require building permits), may create an undesirable incentive for people to avoid getting permitted at all. *Could the zoning inspectors handle the inspection of the coop as well as the site so that citizens are only charged the one fee?*

2) **Re. B5b. "Gardeners want to share their vegetables."**

We appreciate the desire to minimize the danger of pathogens. But we wonder if the restriction against giving away produce grown in gardens fertilized with manure may be a danger too small to justify the attempt to legislate it away. Other pro-hen cities do not legislate the sharing of produce from gardens (and—for the sake of context—do any legislate the sharing of food cooked in home kitchens that might harbor pathogens?) *Could we delete the last three words of that clause?*

3) **Re. B10b. "Two composters are better than one."**

The limit of one composter may complicate the management of compost. A practical composting system calls for at least 2 composters. While one is being filled with fresh kitchen scraps and/or garden waste and chicken manure, the second one is either composting or being accessed for finished compost. *Could we delete the last sentence of that clause?*

4) **Re. B7b. "Dig, baby, dig, but just do it somewhere else."**

The detailed specifications for the coop and pen are valuable. To keep predators from entering the pen, the proposal specifies fencing buried at least one foot deep. However, a pen big enough for the maximum of 10 hens (approximately 10' x 10') would require digging a trench one foot deep and 40' long. Such a trench would also complicate the effort of installing posts to support the pens' sides and roof. *Rather than extending the fencing vertically one foot down into the ground, could the ordinance instead allow the option of extending the fencing one foot horizontally outside the pen and laying on the surface (and covered by mulch, soil, grass, etc.) such that a predator that is stopped by the fence and attempting to dig under it, is immediately stopped and discouraged by the fencing on the ground?* This is a common construction detail for successfully keeping groundhogs and other digging animals out of gardens.

