



Backyard Beekeeping and Animal Code Updates

January 6, 2020

Purpose

- Provide background information related to urban beekeeping, and address the common concerns and benefits from a health, environment, social, and economic standpoint.
- Review a model ordinance
- Obtain Council's direction on whether to draft an ordinance



Background

- Urban beekeeping introduces beneficial pollinators into gardens, thus increasing crop yield and providing more local fresh food for residents
 - 80% of US crops are estimated to be dependent on honeybees
- There are an estimated 115,000 – 125,000 beekeepers in the United States.
 - Most are hobbyists



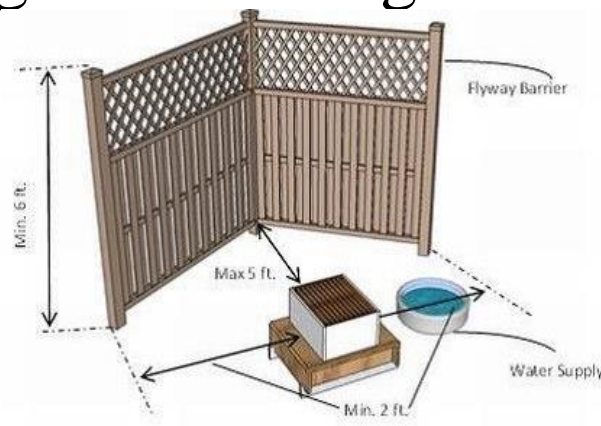
Evaluation

Domain	Benefit	Concern
Health	Increases easy access to nutritious food source Honey has health benefits	Allergies to bee stings
Environment	Increase in biodiversity Mitigates Colony Collapse Disorder	
Economic	Furnish keepers with honey, wax, and other products Increased pollination of food crops	Cost of permitting fee, setting up a hive, and obtaining proper equipment Jurisdiction cost for monitoring and addressing issues
Social	Increased awareness of the food cycle and connection to agriculture Positive activity	Fear of getting stung Gravitating to nearby shallow bodies of water



Safety Concerns

- Fear of getting stung/allergic to bee stings
 - Honeybees have been bred for traits like gentleness and reduced swarming
 - About 7.5% of people are allergic to honeybee stings, but allergies to yellow jackets and wasps are more common
 - Flyway barriers can be installed to force bees who are exiting the hive to gain altitude quickly:



Safety and Nuisance Concerns

- Six-foot flyway barriers would not be allowed in all residentially zoned areas
- Any honeybee colony could become “Africanized”
 - Dangerous hybrid breed that kills a colony’s queen and replaces her with an Africanized queen
 - The colony then becomes aggressive; some colonies have been known to chase people for more than a quarter of a mile
 - No killer bee incidents in Colorado since 2014
- One incident was reported where honeybees swarmed and attacked a neighbor’s dog in Colorado
 - In Nevada, a dog was killed by bees in September
- Across the Front Range, bee-related concerns generate fewer than five calls each year



Expertise and Cost Concerns

- Staff does not have the expertise or equipment necessary to properly handle inspections
- Cost of monitoring
 - Approval of an ordinance allowing beekeeping could lead to increased Animal Control/Code Enforcement calls for service.
 - Potential budgetary impacts depending on the level of mitigation efforts



Comparisons

Langstroth Hive



Top-bar Hive



Proper Protection



Improper Protection



Beekeeping in Colorado

- Colorado State Beekeepers Association has developed best management practices for urban and small-scale beekeeping
- Many Front Range communities have adopted ordinances to allow and reasonably restrict urban beekeeping including: Arvada, Aurora, Brighton, Denver, Littleton, Thornton, Westminster
- Common issues addressed in ordinances:
 - Species and hive restrictions (number and type)
 - Location on the lot (e.g. backyard)
 - Removal of beekeeping equipment and bee combs from apiary
 - Flyway barriers and setback distances
 - Source of fresh water
 - Re-queening an aggressive colony
 - Educational requirements (e.g. beginner beekeeping class)
 - Permit and fee process



Components of Thornton's Ordinance

- Beekeeper permitting requirements
- Species limitations – honeybees only
- Re-queening
- Allowed in areas zoned for agriculture, single-family use, and nonresidential in conjunction with a community garden
- Hive density maximums:
 - One-quarter acre or less: two hives
 - More than one-quarter acre but less than one-half acre: four hives
 - More than one-half acre but less than one acre: six hives
 - One acre or larger: eight hives
 - Regardless of lot or tract size, hives that are situated at least 200 feet in any direction from all property lines are not restricted
- Outlines sound beekeeping practices, including requirements for flyaway barriers water source
- Inspection requirements
- Hive destruction provision if beekeepers do not properly care for colony**
 - Legal has concerns with this



Discussion

- Does Council want Staff to draft an ordinance?

If yes:

- Does Council want the City to issue beekeeping permits?
- Does Council want the City to inspect hives regularly, or as potential complaints come in?
- Should the ordinance be written in conjunction with the dangerous animals ordinance?



Animal Code Update (1)

- Removal of pit bull ban/registration
 - “Vicious” and “Dangerous” designations
 - Clarifies violation for animal bite/attack
- Dangerous animal conditions (registration; enclosure; visible collar; insurance; etc.)
- Process clarifications for impoundment, disposition, and animal designation



Animal Code Update (2)

- Revision of “disturbance” section
 - Audible beyond premises > 10 minutes
 - Prior warning
 - Use of other evidence authorized
- Maximum number of household pets
 - 3 dogs/5 cats/1 litter (previously, 4 total)
- Other definition and language clarification



Discussion

- Does Council support the presented changes to the City's Animal Code?





Questions?

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