

**From:** [Quincy Markowitz](#)  
**To:** [All Alders](#); [Plan Commission Comments](#)  
**Subject:** Opposition increasing the number of chickens allowed in Madison  
**Date:** Thursday, March 23, 2023 5:21:44 PM

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Hello,

I am writing as the founder and executive director of Farm Bird Sanctuary, a non-profit rescue that focuses primarily on chickens.

My partner and I have rescued many dumped roosters from the Madison area along with stray hens, hens that have become disabled, and other circumstances where they require rescue. We are already against ordinances that allow hens but not roosters as this results in half of all hatched chickens being killed then and there, or sent as "hens" to purchasers.

Our sanctuary heeds over fifty emails a year from the Madison area alone to take in "oops roosters" - these roosters bought as hens that are illegal to keep. We cannot take in these birds as our home would be quickly overwhelmed. There are few people doing the work we do, and not nearly enough to help with even a fraction of the welfare concerns that arise from backyard chicken keeping.

The idea of increasing the number of allotted chickens "due to skyrocketing egg costs" is willfully ignoring why egg prices have increased and aiding in the progress of Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI). Farms are decimating millions of chickens since this outbreak - including in neighboring Jefferson County, where over three million hens were killed less than one year ago. Adding more birds to Madison while HPAI is still ongoing will only increase its prevalence.

The recommendation to stop the spread is to keep birds inside or otherwise completely protected from wild birds. This is not a step the majority of, if any, backyard chicken keepers are actually taking.

As someone that has been deeply involved in the chicken community in Madison for nearly a decade, I also do not believe that most people will choose to use this as an opportunity to keep their hens that have stopped laying and introduce new hens. It's a nice thought, but one I am not convinced is rooted in reality. As slaughtering hens is already illegal in Madison city limits, there should be no reason to not keep hens after their laying has decreased.

Every year, we see more dumped birds. We beg that you do not allow even more chickens to be exploited.

Farm Bird Sanctuary

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Quincy Markowitz  
They/Them/Theirs

**From:** [Jon Jon](#)  
**To:** [Plan Commission Comments](#)  
**Subject:** Fw: Council Agenda Item #4 - #75678 Backyard Chickens  
**Date:** Friday, March 17, 2023 4:40:58 PM

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I am writing in support of increasing the allowable number of chickens a household can have within the City of Madison.

In my opinion, increasing the number of birds from 4 to even 10 is very reasonable.

I do not own chickens but am familiar with their needs. I have an Agricultural Engineering-B.S. degree from the University of Wisconsin, Madison.

The following reasons support increasing the number of birds allowed:

- A larger flock would allow the rotation of egg layers through the flock without having to resort to culling older non-egg laying birds. Hens only lay eggs for a relatively short period of time.
- Space requirements going from 4 to 10 birds really isn't that much more. Four birds require about 6'x2' (12 S.F.) of space. On the other hand, 10 birds require 6'x5' (30 S.F.) of space (Ref: Midwest Plan Service Structures and Environment Handbook).
- Chickens are actually pretty quiet animals, especially without roosters. They are in fact quieter than many barking dogs in the neighborhood.
- Responsible owners tend not to let their birds free-range in their yards due to the possibility of predation (from dogs, cats, hawks, fox, coyotes, racoons, etc.).
- Use of proper feeding systems does not create food spillage which could attract mice and rats.
- As supply chain issues and bird flu cause egg prices to sky rocket, locally sourced eggs for home owner use should be encouraged, not discouraged.

Respectfully submitted,  
John Olson  
540 Caldys Pl

**From:** [Julie Banghart](#)  
**To:** [All Alders](#); [Plan Commission Comments](#)  
**Cc:** [Julie Banghart](#); [Mark Banghart](#)  
**Subject:** Agenda #4 75678 Support  
**Date:** Friday, March 17, 2023 10:56:14 AM  
**Attachments:** [Freezer.eml](#)  
[Run.eml](#)  
[Feeder 2.eml](#)

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We support the recommended action to adopt with Planning Commission condition to increase the number of backyard chickens to 8!

Since chickens lay eggs for about 4 years this allows to have a rotating flock to support the owners egg needs.

The concern John Hausbeck voiced about mice and rats being attracted is not a concern since chicken feed is kept in enclosed containers to stay fresh. Also, chickens are fed in their enclosed run feed. If they are in the backyard, they eat grass and bugs. Please view attached pictures of feeders and run.

Chicken owners are usually with their chickens when free ranging in the backyard, protecting their pets from hawks and other predators. Otherwise the chickens are in their protected run and coop.

The chickens have very low noise sounds and go to bed at twilight and get up at dawn in their coop. Unlike dogs that bark during the day and night.

Thank you for listening and please approve the amended ordinance to increase the number of backyard chickens to 8!

Mark and Julie Banghart  
[juliebanghart@outlook.com](mailto:juliebanghart@outlook.com)



Scot from my phone





Scat from my phone





**From:** [Courtney Bolinson](#)  
**To:** [Plan Commission Comments](#); [All Alders](#)  
**Subject:** Support for change to Madison chicken ordinance  
**Date:** Wednesday, March 15, 2023 4:04:16 PM

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Hello!

I'm writing in support of the change to the Madison chicken ordinance from 4 to 10 chickens. I wasn't able to attend Monday's meeting, but wanted to voice my support. Please let me know if there is another action I should take to make sure my opinion has been documented.

Thanks very much,  
Courtney

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Courtney Bolinson  
she/her/hers  
Evaluator | Systems Thinker | Facilitator  
[www.courtneybolinson.com](http://www.courtneybolinson.com)  
(c) +1 608-421-0298

**From:** [A Swartz](#)  
**To:** [Plan Commission Comments](#)  
**Subject:** agenda item #75678 - 10 chickens - support for increase  
**Date:** Tuesday, March 14, 2023 10:43:31 AM

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Hello,

My name is Andy and I kept chickens in the City of Madison from 2007 to 2022. While there are many reasons to allow more than 4 chickens per household, I will offer one that you may not hear of as often - namely, the introduction and retirement of laying hens while keeping a flock of sufficient size for needed egg production is just not possible at only 4 birds. Here is why:

When bringing chicks into the coop you have to bring them in more than solo so they have "family" and to help with the power balance between existing and newcomers. If a single chick is introduced to a flock with 3 mature birds, it is likely to be rejected and pecked upon. No one wants to get rid of a good laying hens just to bring chicks into the flock. Birds age out usually after 3 or more years so this is an ongoing need and process. In addition to the need to introduce chicks in larger numbers is the need to BUY them in large quantities - this is for mortality rate purposes. If I buy 2 chicks and one or more dies, now I don't have a viable cohort to add to my flock. Meanwhile I am down birds and thus laying capacity. So basic arithmetic to allow us to legally have 4 birds means that we need to either a) endure many time periods with fewer than 4 hens, or b) send away good hens in order to bring young chicks in. If the goal number to feed a family is, say, 4 actively laying hens, then having the ability to bring in multiple chicks as part of the flock until several months later they begin to lay, is key.

On the flip side there is hen retirement to manage. We cannot butcher in the City and there is generally a desire to keep pet chickens in the flock after their laying years until they die a natural death. This again is a problem for keep a flock of sufficient size of actively laying hens. By allowing some "retirees" to hang around while still bringing in young chicks and keeping active layers as well while staying under 5 birds is pretty impossible. So, 10 gives us the chance to have chicks, pullets, active layers, and also retirees while still having enough active layers to supply a family.

I strongly support the change from a limit of 4 hens to a limit of 10 hens in the City of Madison and I hope you will too.

Sincerely,

Andy Swartz  
2034 Yahara Pl  
Madison

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Andy Swartz



**From:** [eberly25@yahoo.com](mailto:eberly25@yahoo.com)  
**To:** [Plan Commission Comments](#)  
**Subject:** Chicken noise unacceptable March 13 2023 planning meeting.  
**Date:** Monday, March 13, 2023 5:40:01 PM

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To whom it may concern:

I am against increasing the number of chickens in the city of Madison. After my backyard neighbor housed chickens last year the noise is outrageous. I used to listen to cardinals and song birds, now I listen to essentially screams, have to keep my windows closed and do not use my backyard as much as I did previously. It has increased anxiety for me.

Thanks,  
Mike

**From:** [Brianna Stumpner](#)  
**To:** [Plan Commission Comments](#)  
**Subject:** Chicken Limit  
**Date:** Monday, March 13, 2023 4:21:57 PM

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Hello,  
I support the increase in the chicken limit!  
- Brianna

**From:** [Olivia Williams](#)  
**To:** [Plan Commission Comments](#); [All Alders](#)  
**Subject:** Please support the chicken ordinance  
**Date:** Monday, March 13, 2023 3:00:13 PM

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Hi Plan Commission and alders,

I fully support the ordinance proposal to increase the number of allowed chickens from 4 to 10.

Food security is a real and escalating issue, and growing food in our backyards, including chicken eggs, is a basic way to increase local food security and resilience in the face of climate shocks and food production/distribution challenges we are likely to continue to see more and more of in the coming decades.

I've worked on small farms with chickens and have friends with backyard chickens, and what I know is that a hen at the prime age for laying might produce 200 eggs per year, but will likely only produce that many eggs for 3-4 years, and then her egg production will decline and eventually stop, though she might still live to be 8 or 10 years old. For people like me who eat 2 eggs a day, 4 chickens is barely enough for 1 person, let alone a whole household. A family of four really needs about 12 chickens if they regularly eat eggs, and especially if they keep their older hens alive.

Most people do keep their older hens alive because chickens make great pets! They have such interesting and unique personalities, can be very friendly and sweet, and are great entertainment for kids. Unlike dogs, hens don't bark or bite, and being able to keep them outside means you don't have to worry about floor or furniture damage like with a cat or dog, so they can be really ideal pets for some families (plus you get eggs!) So if you love your chickens and keep them after they stop laying, you eventually get to a point where you would want to add more chickens to the flock in order to have eggs to eat. The current restriction on the number of chickens makes continuing to produce eggs quite difficult.

I really would support eliminating the restriction on the number of hens completely, as we have public health ordinances for maintaining sanitary residential areas, and once you have a pen and a backyard flock, the upkeep of a chicken pen is not much more work if you add more chickens. A household may need quite a few more than 10 chickens to really produce enough eggs for 4-8 people.

thanks for your time,  
Olivia

**From:** [Serena Wolfe](#)  
**To:** [Plan Commission Comments](#)  
**Subject:** Plan Commission – March 13, 2023  
**Date:** Monday, March 13, 2023 12:27:19 PM

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Hello,

I would like to provide a public comment with a request to amend the current chicken zoning proposal to allow ducks in addition to chickens (with the maximum allowable number of total birds being either 4, or 10 if the zoning text amendment goes through)

I've done a lot of research on the keeping of backyard ducks as compared to keeping backyard chickens and I think that there is excellent rationale for ducks as a backyard flock bird in Madison. There is additionally a precedent for this provision in several cities and towns in Wisconsin and Minnesota and from what I've been able to determine there has not been an increase in public complaint in areas where ducks have been allowed.

Here is a quick summary of the benefits of duck keeping, but I am also happy to answer any questions on the topic if called upon during the meeting.

- Domestic breeds are small and have only slightly larger space requirements than chickens
- Many breeds of ducks outlay chickens, and tend to produce larger eggs for a longer span of years
- Most domestic breeds are described as either quieter than or the same noise level as female chickens (excluding one breed: Call Ducks - could exclude this breed from the allowable list of birds though)
- They are more disease and pest resistant than chickens (body temp is higher and have more insulated feathers)
- They thrive in much lower temperatures than chickens, with most breeds of duck being comfortable walking around in the snow down to 20F
- Most domestic breeds cannot fly at all and can be contained with a 2 foot fence



- They are excellent foragers, excelling in controlling weeds, insects, and garden pests. Additionally, since they don't scratch they are less destructive to yard and garden than chickens.
- Their waste is not “hot” like chicken waste, and can be used (without composting first) as fertilizer in the garden without burning young plants and seedlings
- Like chickens, no specialized skills are require to keep ducks.

Thanks and please let me know if you have any questions!  
Serena

**From:** [jhirsch@chorus.net](mailto:jhirsch@chorus.net)  
**To:** [Plan Commission Comments](#)  
**Subject:** Chicken Ordinance - Agenda Item #4  
**Date:** Monday, March 13, 2023 11:03:15 AM

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Commissioners:

I have read the Staff Report on legistar regarding chickens. With the focus on increasing residential density, my question is about the use of adjacent property.

The report states "The code requires an enclosure that is at least 25 feet from any residential structure on an adjacent lot..." Does an existing chicken enclosure take precedence over the construction of a new ADU? In other words, would a homeowner be denied a new ADU in their yard when a neighbor has an existing chicken enclosure that is within 25' of the proposed ADU location?

Thank you for considering this during your discussion.

Janet

Janet Hirsch  
District 9

**From:** [Lindsey Shotwell](#)  
**To:** [Plan Commission Comments](#)  
**Subject:** 75678 Plan Commission Comment  
**Date:** Monday, March 13, 2023 10:39:27 AM

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Hello Plan Commission,  
Commenting in support of the proposed amendment to increase the amount of chickens allowed to be kept in the City of Madison. I am currently a registered and licensed chicken owner in Madison at 1918 Browning. I would love to add to our flock because my family eats more eggs than our current chickens can produce. I also agree with zoning staff that the number of 6 chickens feels appropriate to the scale of most residential lots in the city.

Thank you!

Lindsey Shotwell



**From:** [Erin Lemley](#)  
**To:** [Plan Commission Comments](#)  
**Subject:** Chicken Ordinance Update - Plan Commission  
**Date:** Sunday, March 12, 2023 8:09:25 PM

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Hey Madison Alders,

I'm writing to bring up an unintended consequence of the increase to the number of chickens allowed in a backyard flock. Already with the Madison ordinance prohibiting roosters, a large number of animals that were sexed as hens at the hatchery and then turn out to be roosters are either surrendered to the Humane Society or just dumped out in parks. Increasing the number of hens allowed without addressing this issue is likely going to increase the number of unwanted roosters around. The Humane Society already has a hard time adopting out all the roosters that are surrendered because nobody in Madison can have them. And it's a pretty big animal welfare concern to have large numbers of dumped pet roosters wandering around.

I assume the prohibition against roosters has to do with noise, but living in the city is already noisy--there are planes, sirens, squealing tires, shouting children, barking dogs--all of these things are a lot louder than roosters. Allowing people to keep roosters would be a big win for these animals which currently don't have anywhere to go--no hatchery sexes chickens 100% accurately and we are already facing a big problem of these animals getting dumped or surrendered.

I don't mind raising the chicken limit, but it should be accompanied by a lifting of the rooster ban.

Best,  
Erin Lemley  
1703 Rowland Ave #1  
Madison, WI 53704



**From:** [Keith Pollock](#)  
**To:** [Plan Commission Comments](#)  
**Subject:** Chickens 75678  
**Date:** Sunday, March 12, 2023 11:57:20 AM

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City council members

I want to express my support for raising the limit on the number of chickens residents can care for in the city of Madison.

Raising chickens is both an educational opportunity and a great way to increase food sustainability.

As a member of a family of five we often need to supplement our egg layers with additional eggs from the farmers market. Being allowed more chickens will not change our positive relationships with our neighbors surrounding our chickens but will enable us to raise more of our own organic food in our backyard.

Thank you

Keith Pollock  
406 north street  
Madison Wisconsin 53704

Sent from my iPhone

**From:** [Nola R.C](#)  
**To:** [Plan Commission Comments](#)  
**Subject:** Backyard chickens: in support of raising the limit from 4 to 10  
**Date:** Sunday, March 12, 2023 10:14:25 AM

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Caution: This email was sent from an external source. Avoid unknown links and attachments.

Hi, my name is Nola Risse-Connolly, a Madison resident, and I would like to comment in support of raising the limit of backyard chickens from 4 to 10.

When raising hens, to continually get a decent amount of eggs for family use, 4 may seem like a good number of hens. However, that is only when hens are actively laying and laying well, which occurs the most in younger hens. As hens age, their egg production falls off and they may only lay an egg once or twice a week. So if you have 4 hens that are 4 years old, the owner could potentially only be getting a handful of eggs each week. The temptation then is to get rid of these hens and get new ones, whether by rehoming elsewhere or killing the chicken. If the limit on hens is raised, then owners can more easily have mixed-age flocks that allow the family to have eggs, but also allow them to keep hens and let them live out their natural lifespan without having to find a rehoming situation or end the hen's life prematurely. A chicken's lifespan can be up to 10 years or more (but egg production past 3 years is often quite low). I often see re-homing requests on social media because a chicken keeper wants more eggs but has existing hens that aren't producing well.

Another way this change would help backyard chicken owners is with new chick introductions. There is a reason the term "pecking order" exists, and it's directly from chicken keeping. When adding to a flock it is frankly inhumane to add just one younger chicken because it is very difficult for her to defend herself from the older hens. Being able to add 2 or 3 to an existing flock of 3 helps the chickens get along and merge into a larger flock without any one hen becoming overly picked on.

Thank you for your consideration of this issue.

Nola Risse-Connolly  
4916 Turner Ave, Madison

**From:** [Leslie Schroeder](#)  
**To:** [Plan Commission Comments](#); [All Alders](#)  
**Subject:** Support Plan Commission agenda item #4 meeting 3/13/23  
**Date:** Saturday, March 11, 2023 3:17:39 PM

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To Alders and Plan Commission Members,

I am writing in support of agenda item #4, increase in allowed number of chickens.

The difference in impact from keeping four versus ten chickens in required coop structure, outdoor space, and potential for noise are all negligible. The benefits of doubling or more the access to marvelous healthy local eggs, is significant.

I urge you to please support increasing the number of allowed chickens to ten.

thank you for your consideration,  
Leslie Schroeder  
854 Jenifer Street

**From:** [Elizabeth First](#)  
**To:** [Plan Commission Comments](#); [All Alders](#)  
**Subject:** Increasing Chicken Limit from 4 to 10 in City of Madison  
**Date:** Saturday, March 11, 2023 12:20:02 PM

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Dear Members of Plan Commission and Alders,

I want to lend my support to raising the allowable number of chickens from 4 to 10. I would attend the meeting Monday night, but my husband is having surgery at UW Hospital on Tuesday, so I cannot be there.

I have been a backyard chicken owner for three years. I have a well maintained coop, enclosed run, and four healthy chickens.

We have a household of five but we still need to purchase eggs, because four chickens, especially hens that are three years old, do not lay enough eggs to meet my family's needs.

I would like to be able to have more than four chickens so I could introduce a few younger hens to my flock every few years without having to "cull" my older girls.

I use sand in my coop and run which makes cleaning up chicken poop as easy as cleaning a cat box. I compost the manure in my regular backyard compost enclosure and eventually use it in my gardens. I bury the droppings under the top layer of compost and there is no smell of manure and no flies.

In addition, I save approximately 10 pounds of compostable food scraps from going into the landfill each school DAY, as I bring home the school lunch scraps from the school at which I work. My hens love the bits of bread, fruits and veggies and really think they have won the lottery if they find pasta or a bit of meat. The children love contributing their scraps and ask lots of questions about the chickens.

I am happy to answer (try to answer) any questions you have about having backyard chickens.

Sincerely,

Elizabeth First

417 MINEAU PKWY

Madison

608-695-2015



**From:** [Elizabeth First](#)  
**To:** [Plan Commission Comments](#)  
**Subject:** Letter from Lane First, Gr 6, regarding chickens  
**Date:** Saturday, March 11, 2023 12:29:32 PM

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Lane R. First  
417 Mineau Pkwy  
Madison, Wisconsin 53711  
March 10, 2023

Dear Madison Common Council members,

My name is Lane First. I recently attended my first city meeting with Boy Scout Troop 16. I heard you were considering increasing the backyard chicken limit, so I'm writing to give you my opinion on the matter. My family owns four chickens so I think this legislation is a great idea, especially because right now we are in an egg shortage. You might not know this but after three or so years chickens stop laying eggs, so when that happens we need to get more, however, we keep the old ones, so increasing the limit would help us.

Sincerely,  
Lane First  
Grade 6

**From:** [Julie Banghart](#)  
**To:** [Plan Commission Comments](#)  
**Subject:** agenda #4 amendment to increase the number of chickens from 4 to 10!  
**Date:** Friday, March 10, 2023 12:40:18 PM

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Caution: This email was sent from an external source. Avoid unknown links and attachments.

The primary rationale in the drafter's analysis is to help people have a more viable egg-producing flock, since 4 chickens isn't really enough to produce eggs for a family. Given global food security concerns, this is important in thinking about creating resilient food systems.

I support to increase the number of chickens from 4 to 10 in Madison WI!

Mark Banghart  
Julie Banghart

Sent from [Mail](#) for Windows