

VBH BOT FYI Zoning Rural

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West Dundee to revise backyard chicken rules By Larissa Chinwah | Daily Herald Staff
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West Dundee resident Brian Leith wants to raise chickens in his backyard to save money on the family's grocery bill and teach his children that, among other lessons, food doesn't have to come from the store.

But Leith told trustees this week that the village's fee for keeping chickens defeats the purpose. A \$25 per bird fee is too much, he said, and could be discouraging other residents from taking up the practice.

"I must say this seems a bit out of line with other household animals," Leith wrote in a letter to the village. "A dog is \$10 a year and I don't think there is a fee for a cat. Having this high of a fee seems more like a deterrent and gives off the wrong impressions when we all want to reduce, reuse and recycle."

Village board members agreed.

Now, village staff is working on changes to the animal control ordinance that would lower the annual fee, but also decrease the number of hens allowed per household. Roosters are prohibited.

Village Manager Joe Cavallaro said the village will consider a \$25 annual fee for a maximum of four birds. The old fee charged \$25 per bird per year and placed no limit on the number of birds allowed.

"This goes along with the sustainability guidelines and green efforts that the village is trying to adhere to," said Cavallaro, adding that the board supports backyard chickens. "The rationale for lowering the fee was that it's \$10 for a dog per year, so why \$25 for chickens?"

The village repealed its ban on farm animals in residential areas in 2004. The animal control ordinance enacted guidelines and fees to protect residential character and minimize noise and visual impacts.