

**STAFF CONTACT:** William D. Fritz, AICP  
**PLANNING COMMISSION:** June 26, 2018  
**BOARD OF SUPERVISORS:** TBD

**ZTA:** ZTA 2018-04 Beekeeping

**ORIGIN:**

The Board of Supervisors adopted a resolution of intent on March 3, 2018 to amend the zoning ordinance to allow beekeeping in residential districts.

**PROPOSAL:**

This amendment would establish allow beekeeping on residentially zoned property subject to performance standards. This amendment does not impact beekeeping in the Rural Areas zoning district.

**PUBLIC PURPOSE TO BE SERVED:**

Promotes implementation of the goals of the strategic plan. Specifically, “Natural Resources Stewardship: Thoughtfully protect and manage Albemarle County’s ecosystems and natural resources in both the rural and development areas to safeguard the quality of life of current and future generations”. The amendment also address a specific objective of the Comprehensive Plan.

**BACKGROUND:**

The Development Areas Chapter of the Albemarle County Comprehensive Plan includes as Objective 11:

Consider allowing for urban agriculture practices to increase access to healthy, local, and affordable foods and encourage the productive use of vacant land.

Strategy 11a of the Development Areas Chapter of the Albemarle County Comprehensive Plan states that the County will study ways to allow beekeeping and other forms of agriculture in the Development Areas without harming the safety, welfare, and enjoyment of adjoining property owners.

**STAFF COMMENT:**

The Comprehensive Plan recommended studying ways to allow a wide variety of agricultural activities in the Development Areas. Some types of agricultural activities have issues such as waste disposal, food storage, smell, sound and other issues. It was decided to separate beekeeping from other types of agricultural activities in the Development Areas because the impacts are fewer and because of the habits of bees, the impacts generated by beekeeping are easier to address.

Staff has reviewed ordinances from many jurisdictions and has found that they share many common elements. This reflects the predictable nature of beekeeping. Staff has used the ordinances of other localities to develop the proposed amendment.

The proposed ordinance includes the following provisions:

- Establishes setbacks from property lines and structures, including provisions for physical barriers to prevent impacts on adjacent property
- Establishes standards for orientation of hive entrances
- Prohibits hives from being located in front yards
- Requires signage to notify people of the presence of bees
- Prohibits improper storage of equipment
- Requires maintenance of hives
- Limits number of hives based on lot size

The City of Charlottesville allows beekeeping and does not have any of the regulations proposed by staff.

Staff has been unable to identify any issues that have occurred in the City.

This ordinance will be reviewed by the three (3) criteria previously established by the Board for amendments:

**Administration/Review Process:**

The standards are easy to apply and interpret. No permitting process is necessary.

**Housing Affordability:**

No impact on housing affordability.

**Implications to Staffing/Staffing Costs:**

There are no staffing or staffing costs impacts.

**RECOMMENDED ACTION:**

Staff recommends approval of ZTA 2018-04.

**ATTACHMENTS**

Attachment A – Resolution of Intent

Attachment B – Proposed Ordinance Language