



Albemarle County

Legislation Text

File #: 18-209, **Version:** 1

AGENDA DATE: 3/14/2018

TITLE:

Resolution of Intent to Amend the Zoning Ordinance to Allow Beekeeping in Residential Zoning Districts

SUBJECT/PROPOSAL/REQUEST: Resolution of Intent to amend the Zoning Ordinance to allow beekeeping as a by right use in the County's residential zoning districts

ITEM TYPE: Consent Action Item

STAFF CONTACT(S): Richardson, Walker, Kamptner, Blair, Graham, McCulley, Fritz

PRESENTER (S): N/A

LEGAL REVIEW: Yes

REVIEWED BY: Jeffrey B. Richardson

BACKGROUND: In recent years, some residents in the Development Areas have requested permission for community gardens and to raise chickens, pigs, goats, and bees on their property for agricultural production.

Local food production, with emphasis on food and products that are grown organically, locally, and sustainably is important to the County. It is addressed primarily in the Rural Areas Chapter of the Comprehensive Plan. Urban agriculture encompasses a wide variety of activities such as community gardens, henhouses for laying hens in a backyard, and beekeeping. It is currently not allowed in most places in the Development Areas.

STRATEGIC PLAN: Vision: Albemarle County envisions a community with abundant natural, rural, historic, and scenic resources, healthy ecosystems, active and vibrant Development Areas, a physical environment that supports healthy lifestyles, a thriving economy, and exceptional educational opportunity for present and future generations.

DISCUSSION: The Development Areas chapter of the Comprehensive Plan includes 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; and

Strategy 11a: Study ways to allow chickens, goats, bees, and other forms of agriculture in the Development Areas without harming the safety, welfare, and enjoyment of the property of adjoining owners.

Allowing many of the urban agricultural uses in the Development Areas will require extensive research and consideration regarding permits, setbacks, and animal waste disposal, as well as community engagement, education, and the creation and enforcement of minimum standards, including the designation of appropriate locations. Consideration will also be needed to determine whether the County should align its regulations with the City's. This will require a great deal of time and staff resources, both in preparing a zoning text amendment, and in enforcing new regulations.

Allowing beekeeping as a by right use in the County's residential zoning districts will require the creation of

minimum standards in the supplementary regulations (Section 5 of the Zoning Ordinance) that provide measures designed to protect the safety, welfare, and enjoyment of adjoining property owners, as well as the revision of other County Code sections related to residential zoning districts, and is expected to require less time and resources in research, community engagement, and enforcement than many of the other urban agriculture uses proposed for Development Areas.

BUDGET IMPACT: There is no expected budget impact related to the adoption of the Resolution of Intent.

RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends that the Board adopt the attached Resolution of Intent (Attachment A).

ATTACHMENTS:

A - Resolution of Intent