

ORDINANCE NO. 81325
GRATZ BOROUGH, DAUPHIN COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA

AN ORDINANCE OF GRATZ BOROUGH, COUNTY OF DAUPHIN, COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA, REGULATING THE KEEPING OF CHICKENS IN THE BOROUGH

WHEREAS, the raising and keeping of chickens on a non-commercial basis at a residential property, and their associated henhouses, coops and runs are appropriate accessory uses if certain conditions are met; and,

WHEREAS, the Borough desires to ensure that the raising and keeping of chickens and their associated structures are conducted in a way as to not adversely affect the safety and general welfare of the citizens of the Borough, and not create any public nuisance.

Part 2 Definitions, Section 202 Definition of Terms is Amended as Follows:

A. Chicken run or pen: A fenced or other type of enclosure that is mostly open to the elements, for the purpose of allowing chickens to leave the henhouse or coop while remaining in a predator-safe environment. The chicken run or pen is typically attached to the henhouse or chicken coop.

B. Domesticated chicken: A subspecies of the species Gallus domesticus.

C. Henhouse or chicken coop: A structure providing shelter for chickens which is completely enclosed.

Section 602, Part 2 E. Raising and Keeping of Chickens is added as Follows:

This section enables residents to keep chickens on a non-commercial basis as an accessory use to a residence, while limiting the adverse effects of the activity on surrounding properties. Such adverse effects can include noise, odors, unsanitary conditions, attraction of predators, chickens running at large, unsightly conditions, and similar adverse conditions.

The keeping of domesticated chickens is permitted as an accessory use to a single-family dwelling, and a zoning permit shall be required. The accessory use is not permitted for multi-dwelling properties. With cause, the Borough may periodically inspect the property where this accessory use is being conducted. And the following shall apply to all properties seeking this accessory use:

1. The keeping of and raising chickens shall be permitted in any zoning district where residential uses are permitted as an accessory use to the primary residential use of a property.
2. Chickens may be kept as an accessory use in single-family residential dwellings in all zoning districts for personal use and enjoyment only. The incidental sale of eggs is permitted, provided that it is done so in accordance with other sections of this ordinance.

3. No person shall engage in chicken breeding, egg production, or fertilizer production for commercial purposes.
4. The Maximum number of chickens allowed on a lot less than 0.5 acres is not to exceed 6 chickens. One additional chicken shall be permitted for each additional 1/4 acre, up to a maximum of 8 chickens per lot on lots less than 1 acre. For lots greater than 1 acre, one additional chicken shall be permitted for each additional 1/4 acre, up to a maximum of 30 chickens. Notwithstanding this subsection, there shall be a limit of 200 chickens on lots over 50 acres. These regulations do not apply to a CAFO or CAO.
5. Keeping of Roosters is strictly prohibited in residential zones unless conditional use approval is granted.
6. A chicken coop and enclosure (i.e. chicken run, exercise pen, etc) is required for the keeping of chickens. Chicken coops and enclosures shall be considered a residential accessory structure and require the issuance of a zoning permit. Any coop or enclosure must be covered, predator-proof and thoroughly ventilated. Chicken coops and enclosures must be maintained and kept clean at all times.
7. Chicken coops and enclosures shall be located a minimum of 15 feet from any side lot line and at least 15 feet from any rear lot line and shall not be located within any yard between the front building line and the front property line. They are required to be located a minimum of 25 feet from any dwellings, pools, decks or porches of neighboring properties not owned by the applicant at the time of application for a chicken coop and enclosure.
8. Any chicken manure must be stored a minimum of 15 feet from any property line and must be stored in an enclosed container.
9. All structures related to the housing of chickens must be size appropriate to the number of chickens owned and admit free movement. The minimum coop size shall be three (3) square feet per hen. An enclosure shall not be less than four (4) square feet per chicken.
10. Structures should be designed with the health and safety of the chicken in mind. Coops must be closed on all sides and shall have a roof and doors. Access doors must be able to be shut and locked at night. Openings, windows, and vents must be covered with vermin, predator and bird-proof protectant. During warmer months, they should provide shade. For colder months, they should provide a place to safely stay out of the elements such as rain or snow. All coops must be adequately ventilated.

11. The use of scrap, waste board, or similar material for creating a chicken coop or an enclosure is prohibited. The coop shall maintain visual harmony with the surrounding area. Chicken pens, henhouses and chicken coops shall be constructed of weather-resistant materials that can readily be cleaned and maintained and kept in good appearance. All chicken coops and enclosures shall be constructed of purpose made material or building construction materials.
12. External Illumination. Any illumination associated with keeping of chickens shall not cast off of the boundary of said property and shall not cause a nuisance to any adjoining property.
13. It is unlawful for chickens to run at large. All chickens must be kept in a chicken coop, an enclosure, or supervised within a fenced or secure area at all times. Chickens must not stray beyond the premises on which they are secured as identified within the zoning permit application and must be clean, dry, and odor-free, free from trash and accumulated droppings. Uneaten feed shall be removed in a timely manner.
14. The chicken coop and enclosure may be subject to inspection by the zoning officer upon application or during construction and operation or as a result of a complaint filed with the Borough.
15. Feed and Water. Chickens must be provided with access to feed and clean water at all times. All feed, water, and other such items associated with the keeping of chickens shall be properly stored in a sanitary manner in secured, rodent-proof containers and housed within an enclosed structure, so as not to attract rats, mice, or other rodents. Failure to keep all feed, water and other items associated with the keeping of chickens in a clean and sanitary condition shall constitute a violation of this ordinance.
16. All Non-Commercial Keeping of Livestock must comply with minimum standards of animal care as required by Pennsylvania law, Pa. Code Title 18, regarding animal cruelty provisions.
17. The raising of chickens for commercial use or profit in a residential zone is not permitted. The sale of eggs shall only occur on the occasional basis and shall only occur upon the property where the eggs were produced.
18. The conversion of non-commercial keeping of livestock to a commercial livestock operation shall not be permitted unless such use complies with all ordinances and permitting requirements in effect at the time of application and a zoning permit has been issued by the Borough.
19. The disposal of dead animals shall be in accordance with the Domestic Animal Law, 3 Pa. C.S. §2352. Dead animals shall be disposed of within 48 hours after death.

20. No person shall keep or harbor chickens in the Borough in a manner that creates an offensive odor, excessive noise (noise which escapes the property boundary at unreasonable levels, for unreasonable durations, or at unreasonable hours of the day or night), or unsanitary conditions, or disturbs neighboring residences or threatens public health.
21. An approved Manure Management Plan through the Dauphin County Conservation District must be implemented and followed by all chicken owners. A copy of the approved Manure Management Plan shall be kept on-site at all times and made readily available to the Borough upon request. All stored manure shall be covered by a fully enclosed container or compost bin. No more than one, 20-gallon container of manure shall be stored on any one property housing chickens. It is unlawful to spread or cause to be spread or deposited upon any ground of premises within the Borough any chicken manure and/or used bedding, with the exception where chicken manure and/or used bedding may be composted on the property where the Domestic Chickens are housed.
22. Slaughtering or butchering of chickens for personal consumption shall be permitted, provided that it is done wholly on the property where the chicken are kept and in a humane manner. Slaughtering or butchering shall be conducted only in an indoor location and any waste created from slaughtering or butchering shall be disposed of in a proper and sanitary manner. Commercial slaughtering or butchering is prohibited unless it is done under the operation of an approved facility for the slaughtering of animals as regulated by the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture.
23. Physical abuse or neglect of chickens is prohibited.

Violations.

Unlawful acts. It shall be unlawful for a *person*, firm or corporation to be in conflict with or in violation of any of the provisions of this ordinance.

Penalties:

Violation penalties. Any person who shall violate this Code shall be subject to one of the following enforcement proceedings as determined by the Code Official:

1. A civil enforcement proceeding with penalties not less than \$100.00 and not more than \$1,000.00 for each offense, together with the costs and attorney's fees; or

2. A summary proceeding with fines of not less than \$100.00 and not more than \$1,000.00 or imprisonment for a term not to exceed 30 days, or both, at the discretion of the Court.

In either type of proceeding, each day that a violation continues after notice has been served shall be deemed a separate offense.

Appeals:

Any person directly affected by a decision of the code official, or a notice or order, shall have the right to appeal to the Board of Appeals, provided that a written application for appeal is filed on a form provided by the code official with the Gratz Borough Secretary within 20 days after the day the decision, notice or order was served and shall pay all fees as established by Resolution of the Gratz Borough Council from time to time.

This Amendment shall take effect immediately upon its adoption.

The remaining sections of the Ordinance, as amended, shall remain the same unchanged, except as otherwise provided herein.

ENACTED AND ORDAINED by the Gratz Borough Council on this the 13th day of August, 2025.

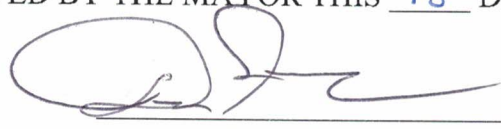
ATTEST:

GRATZ BOROUGH COUNCIL:


Cindy Shade, Secretary

By: 
William Reed, President

APPROVED BY THE MAYOR THIS 13th DAY OF August, 2025.


Hon. David Norris, Mayor