

Chicken plan doesn't fly in village

Written by MARK JAEGER

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Officials balk at student's request to raise fowl in subdivision during summer

A lesson in biology turned into a lesson in civics for 12-year-old Trevor Krause who wants to raise chickens at his home in the Village of Fredonia's Oakwood Forest subdivision.

After appearing before the Village Board on April 5, Krause learned there is no easy route when governmental entanglements come into play.

Krause asked trustees for permission to raise 10 chickens over the summer at his home on Cedar Valley Road. The youth said he intends to raise the birds for meat rather than for eggs.

The problem is that village ordinances do not allow farm animals.

Krause told the trustees they could use his case as a trial for other residents who make similar requests.

After checking with other municipalities, he offered sample ordinances and suggested an annual permit be created to keep potential problems in check.

Krause even suggested conditions that could be required of applications for a permit — including a waste-removal plan, at least 1,000 square feet of lot space for each bird and that the birds be contained at all times.

In consideration to neighbors, he also suggested the village not allow roosters.

Before coming to the village, Krause also got his neighbors to sign off on the project.

While officials were generally supportive, Village President Chuck Lapicola raised some words of caution.

"If we approve your request, what is to prevent your neighbor from asking to raise a cow?" Lapicola asked.

"There are hoops that have to be jumped through before we can consider issuing a conditional-use permit. My concern is someone is going to come in and want to raise chickens for egg laying. If people end up watching their chickens as closely as they watch their dogs, they could end up all over the place."

Krause's father, Paul, said the chickens will reach maturity in about eight weeks, a period that would correspond with summer vacation.

He said his son got the idea for the project after raising emu chicks at school.

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"We thought emus would be a tough sell," Krause said.

Trustee Fritz Buchholz praised the youth for his thoughtful approach.

"I like the fact that you already got the approval of your neighbors," Buchholz said.

Krause's quest encountered a significant roadblock when it was presented to the Plan Commission last week.

Officials balked at accommodating the request, saying no other area municipalities allow the raising of chickens.

According to Lapicola, only four municipalities in the state allow chickens, and they limit flocks to no more than six birds.

He said commission members felt the recommended \$25 permit fee did not seem to be cost effective.