Written by MARK JAEGER
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Despite Plan Commission vote, Village Board asks for public input on poultry plan

Twelve-year-old Trevor Krause may get his chance to raise chickens at his Village of Fredonia home after all.

The Fredonia Village Board ignored a recommendation from the Plan Commission last week, and called for a public hearing on an ordinance change that would clear the way for the youngster to raise chickens.

Krause approached the village, asking for permission to raise 10 chickens during the summer at his home in the Oakwood Forest subdivision.

To gain support for the plan, the youth gathered samples of ordinances used to regulate raising chickens in other communities and proposed a list of restrictions that could be incorporated in the local ordinance.

The preparatory work did little to convince the Plan Commission that a conditional-use permit should be created to accommodate the raising of chickens.

Krause and his family were out of town on vacation at the time of the April 9 commission meeting.

The atmosphere was markedly different when he appeared with his family before the Village Board last week.

The youngster noted that municipal ordinances have been created to allow chickens in Milwaukee, Sheboygan, Madison and Jefferson, as well as in such major metropolitan areas as New York, San Francisco and St. Louis.

No Ozaukee County municipality allows chickens, but Krause said they are allowed in Shorewood, Glendale and Sturgeon Bay.

Village President Chuck Lapicola, who also serves as chairman of the Plan Commission, said in virtually all of those cases the number of chickens allowed is sharply limited.

“Those communities set a limit of no more than six chickens, and in most cases they limit it to four,” Lapicola said.

He said most communities have involved inspection procedures when chickens are allowed, contending the village doesn’t have adequate staff to keep up with those demands if there are a lot of people who request permits.

Trustee Scott Ehaney said the village has restrictions on dog owners that pose little problem

with enforcement.

“If you are basing it on the number of restrictions, it would be fair to ask why do we even allow dogs? Two large dogs can be a lot more disruptive than 10 chickens,” Ehaney said.

“I don’t think this will be the last time this comes up.”

Trustee Don Dohrwardt lauded the initiative Krause showed in his request.

“This is a young man who wants to do a summer project and learn something,” Dohrwardt said, suggesting the opposition comes from people concerned by the unknown.

“We were the first local community to complete a Smart Growth plan, and the first community in the region to build a shared municipal building. I don’t know why we should be afraid of being the first.”

Trustees then voted to have a May 17 public hearing on amending the zoning ordinance to allow the raising of chickens as a conditional use.

Lapicola cast the only vote against holding the hearing.

On that same evening, a hearing will be held on amending the zoning code to allow the community garden to erect a temporary fence around the vacant lot where the garden will be located.

The code does not allow a fence on a lot without an existing house.