

The Future of Urban Farming Meeting Minutes – Tuesday, January 11, 5:30 to 6:30pm at High Country Conservation Center in Frisco

Meeting was lead by Jennifer Santry, High Country Conservation Center

Kristin Dean, Summit County Planner, was present to answer questions

14 people total were present for meeting

“Urban Farming” or “Urban Agriculture” will be used to describe the process of keeping backyard chickens, goats, bees and gardens (i.e. community gardens, greenhouses, raised beds...).

- Resources on urban farming, chickens, bees, goats, and community gardens will be added to the High Country Conservation Center’s Sustainable Food page - http://www.highcountryconservation.org/sustainable_foods.htm#urbanfarming.
- There was a discussion on maximum number of chickens that ordinances should allow residences to have. It was decided that 4 chickens or less is a good start, regardless of age. There was a question about baby chicks, if they would count as an adult chicken (i.e. ordering chicks to replace older chickens and maximum number of chickens at one time). It was decided that 4 chickens would include chicks and hens. No roosters!
- There was a question on who will regulate the number of chickens per household. Will there be a supervising organization to offer permits for number of chickens?
- Chicken coop design was discussed – who would be available to build chicken coops and what are the regulations. Chicken tractors were mentioned as potential moveable chicken coops (<http://home.centurytel.net/thecitychicken/tractors.html> for examples). Kristin discussed set backs for chicken coops. There was also discussion about set backs for moveable chicken tractors versus static coops. Are chicken tractors permanent homes for chickens or something you move them to during the day and retire them in coops at night? For chicken coops, there will be regulations on size, structure, and predator proofing. Currently there are suggestions for guidelines on height of chicken coop but it was discussed that some people may build their coops on stilts to avoid snow buildup.
- There was a question about geese. It was decided that we will start simple with introducing chickens, bees, goats, and community gardens in this first round and explore other urban farming methods later.
- Commercial zoning was brought up as a potential issue. Currently the proposed regulations would not allow commercial zoning to keep chickens, goats, or bees. It was discussed that the next step after countywide presentation is to present code amendments to the local towns. The High Country Conservation Center (located in Town of Frisco) is interested in housing chickens, goats, and/or bees for educational purposes. Currently, the HC3 office is zoned for commercial use. We would need include recommendations for commercially zoned lots for these zoning amendments. It was discussed that individual towns may choose to adopt portions of the code and/or make their own amendments.
- It was asked if beekeeping is possible at this altitude and cold weather. Yes. It is possible. There are bees north of Silverthorne and at Twin Lakes. It was discussed that HC3 could potentially participate in a pilot project for housing bees in Summit.

- Natural deterrents for bears for beehives was also discussed. There is a CSU article that discusses bears and beehives - <http://icwdm.org/Publications/pdf/Bears/bearsbeehivesCoSU.pdf>.
- Labeling contact information on aviaries was also discussed – if there was a problem with swarming, neighbors should be able to find contact info to get a hold of beehive owners (in case of an emergency contact...). It was determined that neighbors should be informed of local beekeepers as part of the code amendments/possible permit process. This idea was to protect those that have serious bee allergies.
- High Country Conservation Center has agreed to act as a central educational organization to field questions and concerns about this process and potential code changes. In addition, HC3 will provide trainings and workshops for residences interested in urban farming opportunities.
- A petition was created in support of urban farming recommendations. You can find the petition online at <http://www.thepetitionsite.com/1/support-summit-urban-farming/>. Please sign the petition and pass it around to your friends and neighbors. We will also add the petition to the HC3 website and to Facebook, as well as other outreach opportunities.
- Please send all questions and comments to Jennifer Santry, jen@highcountryconservation.org.
- Please join us at the Summit's Future of Urban Farming forum on Wednesday, February 16, from 5:30 to 7:00pm at the Senior and Community Center in Frisco. The forum will discuss the potential code amendments while allowing the public to voice their agreements and disagreements. The intent is for the urban farming regulations to be reviewed by the Summit Countywide Planning Commission this spring.
- Just a reminder, the County has not made and will not make a definitive decision on these urban farming measures until they have approved the regulations through the formal process mentioned above. In addition, local towns will have to adopt their own individual guidelines for urban farming if they chose to.

Remember to tell your local friends, family members, neighbors, co-workers, and Facebook buddies about these urban farming measures. We need all the support we can get to make this possible.