

Chickens banned in city, but a horse calls Scarborough home

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The city won't allow chickens in Riverdale and Forest Hill, but at least one horse can be found in a Scarborough backyard.

The city's licensing and standards committee decided Wednesday, Jan. 25, against even studying the issue of allowing backyard chicken farming. However, a city-owned property on Morningside Avenue in Guildwood is home to a paddock and a horse - or two.

Scarborough East Councillor Paul Ainslie wasn't sure how many horses could be found on the property, but he's aware of the unusual pet. And it's completely legal.

From monkeys to mongooses and bears to bats there's a whole list of prohibited animals resident's aren't allowed to keep as pets, including farm animals.

But, there are exceptions. There still remain properties in the "outlying areas" of Scarborough and Etobicoke where pigs, goats, chickens, and even horses are not nixed because these properties contain a designation from a more rural time.

"The only way someone would be able to have farm animals of that kind, they'd have to be zoned agricultural," said Elizabeth Glibbery, manager of animal services for the city.

"We're usually talking about properties that are fairly large."

Ainslie confirmed the horse homestead is a larger piece of property that has maintained its agricultural designation from days gone by. In fact, as part of the lease agreement the tenant is required to maintain that designation and in this case it's through the keeping of a horse.

"I don't think a lot of people know about them," he said.

It's become a part of the community with neighbourhood children stopping by to feed the creature not usually seen in the city, Ainslie said.

With Wednesday's decision by the licensing and standards committee, chickens remain in the outlawed category along with pigs, sloths, porcupines, alligators, tigers and bears. Also prohibited are hares, hyenas and horses. Flying foxes and flightless ratites - ostriches, emus and kiwis - are firmly on the forbidden list too. The full list can be found in chapter 349 of the municipal code.

Cases of contraband mammals, birds and reptiles are usually complaint driven, Glibbery said, with chickens and snakes topping the call-in list. Snakes are cool, just as long as they're not longer than three metres at full adult length - and they can't be venomous or poisonous (obviously).



Chickens banned in city, but a horse calls Scarborough home. According to Toronto Animal Services there are several animals residents can and cannot keep as pets, including a sugar glider (yes) and a goat (no). *Illustration/TCN*

Ainslie said as far as he knows there's never been a problem with the Guildwood horse.

"I've never had any complaints about noise or smell," he said.

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