

palisades preservation association

August 22, 2015

ITEM NO. 4

Los Angeles City Council
200 N. Spring Street,
Los Angeles, CA 90012



ITEM NO. 4

Re: CF 12-07085, CPC-2015-578-CA
Backyard Beekeeping Ordinance
Hearing Date: August 25, 2015

Dear Council members:

After careful consideration and research into the proposed Backyard Beekeeping Ordinance, our Executive Board voted unanimously to oppose the adoption of the ordinance. The keeping of bees in any residential area will pose a hazard to residents of any properties living near a bee hive as well as any workers nearby. On August 2 a worker died from a bee sting in Riverside.



We are mindful of the importance of honey bees to agriculture but there is no compelling reason to permit them in residential areas. While honey bees are not aggressive, they are defensive will sting if they perceive that a person or an animal is an immediate threat to them. It is too easy for a person, particularly a child to get stung by a bee. Step on one, sit on one or even try to get away from one that is buzzing around one can bring a painful sting which at the least requires first aid treatment. The stings not only are painful, they can be life threatening.

The reason a bee sting is painful (and dangerous) is not from the stinger but because the stinger is coated with a venom which causes swelling. Moreover, a bee can infect a person with tetanus. The sting may be painful for a few hours. The swelling and itching may persist for a week and if the person stung tetanus shots are not up to date with, it is recommended that the person stung get a tetanus shot which can be painful in itself.

A bee sting is painful and dangerous because the stinger is coated with venom.

In people with insect sting allergy, a bee sting may trigger a dangerous anaphylactic reaction that is potentially deadly. Honey bee stings release feromones that prompt other nearby bees to attack. Generally 5 to 10 percent of sting victims in the U. S. experience symptoms ranging from hives to wheezing and even anaphylaxis.

Although there are a number of cities that allow backyard beekeeping in residential areas, most do not. But as more cities do allow it, the number of bee sting cases and deaths will rise because there is far more opportunities in a densely populated urban area for bees to sting than in sparsely populated agricultural areas.

While advocates of backyard beekeeping advocate the safety of bees, they themselves wear protective equipment when handling bees.



Six foot high fences or hedges are not going to prevent bees from flying to neighboring properties. Bees go where the flowers are and also will visit neighboring properties looking for water, particularly during hot, dry summers. Bees often swarm in the Spring. Swarming is actually a natural act that happens when there are too many bees produced in the hive, and a portion of them leave with the original queen in search of a new home.

As stated in Time Magazine, backyard beekeeping will do little to fulfill the needs of agriculture for bees. "While hobbyists beekeepers in cities and elsewhere certainly help keep bee populations going, there simply aren't anywhere near enough of them to meet the enormous pollination needs of agriculture, should commercial bees keep dying. It takes billions of honeybees from around the U.S. to pollinate the spring's almond crop in California." (Emphasis added.)

Backyard bee keeping is only a hobby so why expose neighbors to bee stings for just a hobby?

People who are allergic to peanuts suffer similar symptoms to bee stings including anaphylactic shock which can be fatal if not treated promptly. Worldwide, 0.05-2% of the population is estimated to have anaphylaxis at some point in life, and rates appear to be increasing. Immediate first aid is to inject epinephrine but how many people have an epinephrine syringe available?



We take great measures to protect children who are allergic to peanuts. Shouldn't we do the same regarding bees?

We take great measures to protect children who are allergic to peanuts. Shouldn't we do the same regarding bees?

Most residential lots are too small for vegetable or fruit plots and there are sufficient wild bees available to pollinate these plots. Therefore, the only reason to have a backyard bee hive is to obtain honey, which can be purchased cheaply in any

market. In reality, backyard bee keeping is only a hobby so why expose neighbors to bee stings for just a hobby?

Therefore, the City Council is urged to reject the adoption of the Backyard Beekeeping Ordinance.

Respectfully yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jack Allen", written in a cursive style.

JACK ALLEN, President





Sharon Dickinson <sharon.dickinson@lacity.org>

Beekeeping – Single Family Residential Zones (Council File 12-0785)

2 messages

Melissa Stoller <melissa@stollerdesign.com>

Mon, Aug 24, 2015 at 9:38 AM

To: councilmember.huizar@lacity.org, councilmember.harris-dawson@lacity.org, councilmember.cedillo@lacity.org, councilmember.englander@lacity.org, councilmember.fuentes@lacity.org

Cc: Sharon.Dickinson@lacity.org

Greetings,

I am unable to attend Tuesday's PLUM Committee meeting to voice my support for the motion to permit beekeeping in R1 zones. I appreciate the efforts of the Council to date to bring urban beekeeping to Los Angeles and urge that you pass this motion as written.

Although I am a director on the Mar Vista Community Council and co-chair of its Green Committee, I am writing you today as a private Mar Vista resident. As an avid gardener with an extensive edible garden, I garden unharmed among a variety of bees visiting (and helping pollinate) my many flowering plants. Bees contribute to the beauty of our city's gardens and urban beekeeping can perhaps offer some refuge to bees from colony collapse. I also look forward to being able to purchase truly local honey and beeswax candles.

Thank you,

Melissa Stoller
11430 Kingsland Street
Los Angeles, CA 90066



Sharon Dickinson <sharon.dickinson@lacity.org>

RE: Bee keeping in Los Angeles

2 messages

wls <scheduling@gmail.com>

Mon, Aug 24, 2015 at 11:08 AM

To: Sharon.Dickinson@lacity.org, councilmember.huizar@lacity.org, councilmember.cedillo@lacity.org, councilmember.fuentes@lacity.org, councilmember.englander@lacity.org, councilmember.harris-dawson@lacity.org
Cc: LEN NGUYEN <len.nguyen@lacity.org>, councilmember.bonin@lacity.org, mike@11thdistrict.com

All,

I bought into this three years back as part of the beta test.

Honeybees are no more of a problem than wasps or other insects.
At least you cannot get Lyme disease from a bee!

With responsible beekeepers mentoring other "new-bees" they
are safe as a dog. Dogs bite and hurt people don't they? When not properly managed!

Please vote for and support bee keeping in Los Angeles, as written.
It's the good thing to do for our insect friends that pollinate 2/3 of the food we eat.
Like Apples, Almonds, Honey?

I am speaking as a member of the public and do not represent the official voice of MVCC.
Having said that, MVCC voted three years ago to support this amendment and
the motion before you.

Thank you for your support,

William L. Scheduling
Urban bee keeper and co-founder of Mar Vista Community Council.



Sharon Dickinson <sharon.dickinson@lacity.org>

Backyard Beekeeping Ordinance CF 12-0785 / Wolf in Bee's clothing? / Amendments Needed

2 messages

Barbara Broide <bbroide@hotmail.com>

Mon, Aug 24, 2015 at 7:03 PM

To: "Sharon.dickinson@lacity.org" <sharon.dickinson@lacity.org>, "Councilmember.Jose Huizar" <councilmember.huizar@lacity.org>, Councilmember Mitch Englander <councilmember.englander@lacity.org>, "councilmember.fuentes@lacity.org" <councilmember.fuentes@lacity.org>, "councilmember.harris-dawson@lacity.org" <councilmember.harris-dawson@lacity.org>, "gil.cedillo@lacity.org" <gil.cedillo@lacity.org>
Cc: "katherine.peterson@lacity.org" <katherine.peterson@lacity.org>, Shawn Bayliss - CD 5 Planning <shawn.bayliss@lacity.org>, "andy.shrader@lacity.org" <andy.shrader@lacity.org>, Paul Koretz - cd 5 <paul.koretz@lacity.org>

*RE: Opposition to CF 12-0785 as currently written
We seek amendments to the current proposed ordinance
Please initiate broader community discussion before any vote is taken*

Your PLUM Committee will consider the Backyard Beekeeping Ordinance at its Aug. 25th meeting. The purpose of this correspondence is to seek support for halting the progression of the Urban Beekeeping Ordinance at PLUM so that time can be taken for a broader community discussion and consideration of amendments. The staff report, issued in mid-June, is vastly different from the earlier conversations in which most neighborhood councils and community councils participated. At that time, we voted to support a PILOT PROGRAM for urban beekeeping as part of efforts and our support to de-criminalize beekeeping on R1 properties. (Letters in the Council File demonstrate this support for a pilot program.)

However, the current ordinance does not establish a pilot program. Rather, it establishes urban beekeeping as an accessory use BY RIGHT without any provisions requiring minimum distance from sensitive uses (such as schools), a public notification process (or notification to neighbors) of proposed or active hive presence. There is no maximum size of a hive (in the ordinance a hive is defined as "a structure for the housing of a bee population"), so that although there is a limit to the numbers of hives relative to lot size, there is still the possibility that large numbers of bees (and possible honey harvesting for sale?) could be located on a single R1 lot.

There is no relationship as to the community character (very urban, mostly paved vs. rural, hillsides, much open space, etc.) which directly influences the carrying capacity of a given community for bees. There is already a healthy bee population in the city with thousands of calls for bee removal received each year from residents and businesses in Los Angeles. Is there such a thing as "too much of a good thing" when it comes to bee populations? In the drought there are already locations where beekeepers are having to feed their hives honey in order to sustain them.

What happens when a beekeeper no longer wishes to tend his/her hive(s)? Should there be guidelines as to what to do or what NOT to do? What happens when a hive becomes Africanized? I have "hosted" bee hives in the outside walls of our home for over 25 years. When we purchased our stucco home, the sellers informed us when leaving that the bees were in the wall and would be no trouble at all.... that we would notice them only when the sun shined on the wall and the side yard filled with the aroma of honey. Well, while they did not bother us, they managed to frighten new neighbors that we had who promptly reported us to the city for operating an aviary. (Try to explain to the DBS inspector that the bees were there first and we had nothing to do with the establishment of any hive.) My experience with hosting hives and swarms is quite extensive for, you see, although one may have bees removed (always professionally and always with the intent to relocate the hive), I learned that in fact, bees can be unpredictable. Friendly hives can be rather suddenly taken over by hostile bees and one's friendly bee community can become anything but. It would seem important to establish, as part of the ordinance, a set of data to be collected to help to assess impacts that new urban beekeeping might have. Are there noticeable increases in requests for hive removal? Any significant increase in calls for bee-related

rescues to public safety responders (LAFD, LAPD)? Record of complaints filed with DBS? It would seem that such data is important not only to evaluate and fine tune the new pilot program but to be used as a possible basis for any future efforts to legalize beekeeping in other residential settings.

And, finally, how should the City balance the interests of beekeepers and future beekeepers against the rights of those who are or who have family members who are highly allergic to bee stings? Bee stings can be deadly. In July (7/7) a dog was killed by bees and on 8/4 a construction worker lost his life as a result of bee contact. There are thousands of LA City residents and people who pass through our city who have potentially life-threatening sensitivities to bee stings. Many of those individuals (and particularly children) are unaware of their medical condition until after having been sensitized by a sting.

A number of important points raised in opposition to the ordinance by the Bee Safe Alliance have not been adequately answered.

We have no doubt that those advocating for the new ordinance have only the best of intentions and a great deal of enthusiasm as well. Honeylove and their supporters are well organized and are pressing for passage of the ordinance. As you know, the City Planning Commission has already passed it while many in the community have been unaware of the changes made. It is great to see the enthusiasm that has grown in the city for urban agriculture and beekeeping and a "back to the basics" orientation. As part of that process, **it is critical that city policy makers weigh the benefits and the risks and attempt to seek balance.**

The overwhelming majority of letters from neighborhood and community councils were in support of a PILOT PROGRAM. Mar Vista Community Council stated, in their letter of 11/30/11: *"The MVCC Board therefore recommends the implementation of a Beekeeping Pilot Program in to test safety and develop best practices for future expansion."* NC's and CC's haven't had a chance to schedule discussion on the revisions made and the final report issued in mid June. We need time to have open discussions.

WHILE IT IS COMPLETELY REASONABLE TO REMOVE CRIMINAL PENALTIES FOR URBAN BEEKEEPING, HOW THAT IS DONE IS CRITICAL. WE NEED **NOT** GO FROM ONE SIDE OF THE PENDULUM (criminalization) TO THE OTHER (nearly anything goes).

We ask that you defer taking any vote on this measure and initiate a process to send the proposed ordinance to neighborhood and community councils for review and comment. We do not understand why a pilot program was not established. And, if this NOT to be a pilot program, there is all the more reason to take a deep breath and address concerns raised.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Barbara Broide
President
Westwood South of Santa Monica Blvd. Homeowners Association

http://ens.lacity.org/clk/committeeagend/clkcommitteeagend2697986_08252015.html



Sharon Dickinson <sharon.dickinson@lacity.org>

RE: Beekeeping Ordinance Council File 12-0785

2 messages

K King <k.e.king@live.com>

Mon, Aug 24, 2015 at 10:28 PM

To: "Sharon.dickinson@lacity.org" <sharon.dickinson@lacity.org>

Cc: Len Nguyen <len.nguyen@lacity.org>, Barbara Broide <bbroide@hotmail.com>, John Darnell <john.darnell@lacity.org>

To whom it may concern:

I applaud the Cities interest and forward thinking on this legislation, but the current legislation, as I have read it, should not be passed.

One sting from a Bee or Wasp can kill You!

We have all lived through the removal of Peanuts on our Airlines for this exact reason.

Minneapolis enacted beekeeping legislation in 2009 which is commonly referred to urban rooftop beekeeping. It has been updated over the years.

Bees fly up and out; they don't fly down when leaving the hive. When you have them on a single story roof, people contact on the ground is minimal; if you have them on a second story roof, people contact on the ground is non-existent.

Minneapolis requires 80% of neighbors within 100 foot radius to sign permission for the hives to exist on the ground or single story roof and no permission on a second story roof. I have attached to link for the Minneapolis Ordinance. Please notice their 20 foot setback and complete barrier requirements.

<http://www.minneapolismn.gov/www/groups/public/@citycoordinator/documents/webcontent/wcms1p-099320.pdf>

Before you pass this ordinance, you should look at other Cities, outside California, that have had a beekeeping ordinance for more than 5 years and have actually had people that are raising bees in their community.

I have witnessed the fear on a parents face when their child stops breathing from a bee sting. Although we can't eliminate this risk, we certainly don't want to increase it. By placing simple, proven "safeguards" in this legislation, you can rest assured that urban beekeeping can become a reality and work!

Thank you for your time,

Ken King
323-655-8140



Sharon Dickinson <sharon.dickinson@lacity.org>

beekeeping ordinance

3 messages

Ira Newlander <ira.newlander@gmail.com>

Tue, Aug 25, 2015 at 10:49 AM

To: "Sharon.dickinson@lacity.org" <Sharon.dickinson@lacity.org>

Cc: Jay Greenstein <jay.greenstein@lacity.org>, Philip Bennett <philip.bennett@lacity.org>

Has any consideration been given to neighbors who may be allergic to bees? LAFD is busy enough

Please think this through!

Ira lee Newlander,
LA 90064
CD5

Sent from my iPhone

Ira Newlander <ira.newlander@gmail.com>

Tue, Aug 25, 2015 at 10:51 AM

To: "Sharon.dickinson@lacity.org" <Sharon.dickinson@lacity.org>

Cc: Jay Greenstein <jay.greenstein@lacity.org>, Philip Bennett <philip.bennett@lacity.org>

Sorry. The reference is

Beekeeping Ordinance Council File 12-0785

Sent from my iPhone

On Aug 25, 2015, at 10:49 AM, Ira Newlander <ira.newlander@gmail.com> wrote:

Has any consideration been given to neighbors who may be allergic to bees? LAFD is busy enough

Please think this through!

Ira lee Newlander,
LA 90064
CD5

Sent from my iPhone

Philip Bennett <philip.bennett@lacity.org>

Tue, Aug 25, 2015 at 10:55 AM

To: Ira Newlander <ira.newlander@gmail.com>

Cc: "Sharon.dickinson@lacity.org" <Sharon.dickinson@lacity.org>, Jay Greenstein <jay.greenstein@lacity.org>

Hi Ira,

Thank you for your email. I have forwarded this to our legislative staff.



Sharon Dickinson <sharon.dickinson@lacity.org>

Beekeeping Ordinance Council File 12-0785

1 message

Victor Antola <vicantola@yahoo.com>

Tue, Aug 25, 2015 at 10:47 AM

Reply-To: Victor Antola <vicantola@yahoo.com>

To: "Sharon.dickinson@lacity.org" <Sharon.dickinson@lacity.org>

Cc: Mike Bonin <mike.bonin@lacity.org>

Dear Councilmember Jose Huizar;

I have been a resident of North Bundy Drive in Brentwood for almost forty years and I learned today of a proposed ordinance to allow beekeeping on single family residential lots.

I oppose this proposed ordinance on health and safety grounds. I am allergic to honey bee stings and twice have gone into anaphylactic shock as a result of stings. I have taken all available medical means to avoid problems, including venom immunotherapy.

Periodically we have bee infestations on our property and we engage a professional promptly to remove the hive or hives. Before the professional completes the task, because of the increased bee presence and chance of being stung, during the day I generally must stay indoors or go elsewhere. If a neighbor under the proposed ordinance kept hives in close proximity, there is no question my exposure to bees would be increased and my chances of being stung likewise would be increased. I am informed that many others suffer allergic reactions to bee stings and that deaths due to bee stings occur on a regular basis.

I respectfully submit that I and others should not be exposed to this health and safety concern caused by the proposed ordinance to allow bee hives to be kept in residential areas. The City of Los Angeles has not allowed backyard beekeeping in the past in residential areas and there is no reason now that citizens should be subjected to the dangers of such activity.

Thank you for your consideration.

Victor Antola