



FOX POINT FILES

By Douglas H. Frazer

Fox Point's Chicken Keepers

Why do people keep chickens? In *Annie Hall*, Woody Allen relates the joke about the guy who walks into the psychiatrist's office and says, "Hey doc, my brother is crazy. He thinks he's a chicken." "Why don't you turn him in?" the doctor asks. The guy responds, "I would, but I need the eggs."

In Fox Point our chickens, and eggs, are real.

On September 13, 2018, the Fox Point Village Board enacted an ordinance (creating Section 579-17.5) to permit residents to keep chickens, joining a growing number of Wisconsin municipalities.

After months of study, the board determined that keeping chickens could be a benefit to the health and welfare of the village residents and that, properly maintained and regulated, chickens should not cause adverse effects on surrounding properties.

Under the ordinance, the number of chickens (no roosters) is limited to four. Further, the enclosure (chicken coop) must be sited in the rear yard at least 30 feet away from any residential structure on another lot.

Fox Point has issued two chicken permits with a third pending. The two current chicken keepers are Julie and Lance Parve on Fox Dale Court, and a family on North Navajo Road.

I paid a visit to the Parve chicken operation. Civil engineer Lance Parve recently retired from the Department of Transportation and is now consulting. Julie is a nurse practitioner and a Concordia University nursing professor.

The Parves have four different kinds of chickens: an Ameraucan that lays blue eggs, a Black Copper Maran producing chocolate colored eggs, a Golden Comet laying brown eggs, and a rare Cream Legbar also laying blue eggs.

Chickens start laying eggs at four to eight months old. Each lays three to seven eggs per week making a very distinct squawking noise that lasts a few minutes when laying eggs. The Parves' chicken coop is a fully equipped and secured 8'x10' shed that cost under \$1000. The chickens eat chicken feed and scratch consisting of corn and

wheat. Popcorn is the chicken's special treat. The Parves provide water 24/7 from a dispenser.

Principal chicken predators are hawks and racoons. A semi-circular plastic shelter allows the chickens to crawl under to protect themselves from hawks. Wire mesh offers protection from racoons. The chickens sleep inside the coop at night. The Parves have mounted a flytrap in the corner of the chicken run that works for the entire space.

The Parves buy the chickens from Tractor Supply in Sheboygan. A day-old chick costs \$2.99. A specialty chicken may run up to \$20.

Next door neighbors Jason Fechner and Brittany Lewis love the chickens and the fresh eggs that the Parves share with them. They report that there is no smell, the chickens are not bothersome, and they hear them infrequently. The chickens are a highlight of visits from nieces and nephews.

We may not "need the eggs," but backyard chickens seem to be working out in the Village of Fox Point.

Douglas H. Frazer is a Fox Point resident and neighborhood contributor as well as the village president. The views expressed are his own and not necessarily those of the Village, the village board, other village board members, or Best Version Media, LLC.

