

**WEST CALN TOWNSHIP**  
**CHESTER COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA**

**ORDINANCE NO. \_\_\_\_ – 2025**

**AN ORDINANCE OF THE TOWNSHIP OF WEST CALN, CHESTER COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA, AMENDING THE WEST CALN TOWNSHIP CODE TO ADOPT A NEW ARTICLE II UNDER CHAPTER 98. ANIMALS TO SPECIFICALLY ALLOW FOR AND PROPERLY REGULATE DOMESTICATED CHICKENS WITHIN THE TOWNSHIP AND TO PROVIDE FOR SEVERABILITY, REPEALER AND EFFECTIVE DATE PROVISIONS.**

**WHEREAS**, the Board of Supervisors of West Caln Township have determined that new ordinance provisions should be adopted to address domestic chickens in the Township in a manner that properly allows such animals but also protects the public health, safety and welfare;

**BE IT ENACTED AND ORDAINED** by the Board of Supervisors of West Caln Township that Chapter 98 of the Township Code, as amended, is hereby further amended as follows:

**SECTION I.** A new Article II shall be added to Chapter 98 immediately following Article I. Animal Control and shall read as follows:

**“Article II - Domesticated Chickens**

**§ 98-15. Definitions.**

As used in this article, the following terms shall have the meanings indicated:

**CHICKEN PEN**

A fenced or other type enclosure for the purpose of allowing chickens to leave the henhouse while remaining in an enclosed, predator-safe environment.

**HENHOUSE or CHICKEN COOP**

A structure for the sheltering of female chickens.

**PUBLIC NUISANCE**

Any condition or usage whatsoever related to the keeping of chickens within the Township of West Caln which the Township shall find to adversely impact the properties surrounding the property on which the chickens are kept as a result of noise, odor, unsanitary animal living conditions, unsanitary waste storage and

removal, the attraction of predators, rodents, insects or parasites, nonconfined chickens leaving the property, and unsightly or dilapidated henhouse, chicken coop, enclosure or area where the chickens are kept, or other adverse impacts.

**§ 98-16. Purpose.**

The purpose of this article is to provide standards for the keeping of domesticated chickens. It is intended to enable residents to keep a small number of female chickens on a noncommercial basis while limiting the potential adverse impacts on the surrounding properties. The Township recognizes that adverse impacts may result from the keeping of domesticated chickens as a result of noise, odor, unsanitary animal living conditions, unsanitary waste storage and removal, the attraction of predators, rodents, insects or parasites, and nonconfined animals leaving the owner's property. This article is intended to create licensing standards and requirements that ensure that domesticated chickens do not adversely impact the properties surrounding the property on which the chickens are kept.

**§ 98-17. Zoning and building permits required.**

- A. A zoning permit shall be required for the construction of any chicken pen and/or any henhouse or chicken coop regardless of size. In addition to a required zoning permit, a building permit shall be required for the construction of a henhouse or chicken coop consisting of 500 square feet or greater. Zoning permit review will include a review for compliance with the required setbacks for accessory structures as set forth in the Zoning Ordinance.
- B. Failure to comply with the standards set forth in this article for the keeping of domesticated chickens may result in the revocation of the zoning permit as issued in addition to other enforcement actions allowed by law and set forth in this article.

**§98-18. Fees.**

The applicable zoning permit fee and building permit fee shall be as set forth in the annual fee schedule adopted by resolution by the Township.

**§98-19. Minimum lot size, maximum number and type of chickens allowed.**

- A. A minimum lot size of ¼ acre is required to raise chickens.
- B. 6 chickens are permitted on a lot between ¼ acre and ½ acres.
- C. 12 chickens are permitted on a lot between .5 and 1 acres.
- D. 18 chickens are permitted on a lot between 1 and 2 acres.
- E. There is no limit to the number of chickens on lots of two acres or larger.
- F. No roosters shall be permitted on lots less than five acres.
- G. There is no restriction on chicken species at any lot.

**§98-20. Noncommercial use only.**

Chickens shall be kept for personal use only; no person shall engage in chicken breeding or fertilizer production for commercial purposes. The slaughtering of chickens on a domesticated chicken-keeping property is prohibited.

**§98-21. Enclosures.**

- A. Chickens must be kept in an enclosure or fenced area at all times. During daylight hours, chickens may be allowed outside of their chicken pens in a securely fenced yard. Chickens shall be secured within the henhouse during non-daylight hours.
- B. Enclosures must be clean, dry and kept in a neat and sanitary condition at all times, in a manner that will not disturb the use or enjoyment of neighboring lots due to noise, odor or other adverse impact.
- C. The henhouse and chicken pen must provide adequate ventilation and must be impermeable to rodents, wild birds, and predators, including dogs and cats.
- D. Henhouses shall be considered accessory structures and must conform to the applicable zoning regulations for accessory structures.
- E. An enclosed chicken pen must be provided consisting of sturdy wire fencing buried at least 12 inches in the ground unless the fencing wraps around at the ground and becomes the flooring and extends to and continues up the opposing wall. The pen must be covered with wire or solid roofing.

**§98-22. Odor and noise impacts.**

- A. Odors from chickens, chicken manure, or other chicken-related substances shall not be perceptible at the property boundaries. Any odors perceptible at the property boundaries shall be considered a public nuisance.
- B. Perceptible noise from chickens shall not be loud enough at the property boundaries to disturb persons by creating a public nuisance.

**§98-23. Waste storage and removal.**

A written waste storage and removal plan must be submitted with each zoning permit application. Provisions must be made for the storage and removal of chicken manure. Manure and waste from chickens shall not be disposed of in the municipal waste system. All stored manure shall be covered by a fully enclosed structure with a roof or lid over the entire structure. No more than three cubic feet of manure shall be stored. All other manure not used for composting or fertilizing shall be removed. In addition, the henhouse, chicken pen and surrounding area must be kept free from trash and accumulated droppings.

**§98-24. Denial, suspension or revocation of permit.**

- A. The Township shall deny a zoning permit if the applicant has not demonstrated a plan to comply or compliance with all provisions of this article.

- B. A zoning permit associated with the keeping of domesticated chickens may be suspended or revoked by the Township where the Township finds that the keeping of the chickens creates a public nuisance as defined herein or where there is a risk to public health or safety or for any violation of or failure to comply with any of the provisions of this article or with the provisions of any other applicable ordinance or law.
- C. Any denial, revocation or suspension of a zoning permit shall be in writing and shall include notification of the right to and procedure for appeal.

**§98-25. Right to appeal.**

A person may appeal the issuance, denial, suspension or revocation of a zoning permit in the manner set forth in the Zoning Ordinance.

**§98-26. Violations and penalties.**

In addition to any other enforcement action which the Township may take pursuant to Zoning Ordinance, violation of any provision of this article may be treated as a summary offense, and a fine not exceeding \$1,000 may be imposed. Each day that a violation continues will be treated as a separate offense.

**§98-27. Removal of chickens.**

- A. In addition to the penalty stated above, any violation of the provisions of this article shall be grounds for an order from the Township to remove the chickens and the chicken-related structures. If the homeowner fails to remove the chickens and their related structures, the Township may enter the property and take whatever steps are necessary to remove the chickens and related structures at the homeowner's expense, and file a municipal lien against the property to recoup any costs incurred by the Township for such removal.
- B. The Chester County Health Inspector, Health Officer, or contracted animal control officer may also order the removal of the chickens upon determination that the chickens pose a health risk.
- C. If a chicken dies, it must be disposed of promptly in a sanitary manner.

**§98-28. Precedence.**

To the extent this article is inconsistent with any Keeping of Animals provisions in the Zoning Ordinance of the Code of West Caln Township, the provisions of this article shall take precedence.”

**SECTION 2. Severability.** If any sentence, clause, section or part of this Ordinance is for any reason found to be unconstitutional, illegal or invalid, such unconstitutionality, illegality or invalidity shall not affect or impair any of the remaining provisions, sentences, clauses, sections, or parts hereof. It is hereby declared as the intent of the Board of Supervisors that this Ordinance would have been adopted had such unconstitutional, illegal or invalid sentence, clause, section or part thereof not been

included herein.

**SECTION 3. Repealer.** All Ordinances or parts of Ordinances conflicting with any provision of this Ordinance are hereby repealed insofar as the same affects this Ordinance.

**SECTION 4. General Code.** General Code is hereby authorized to make whatever numbering and formatting changes are needed in order to properly codify this ordinance and properly incorporate this ordinance into the Township's online Code.

**SECTION 6. Effective Date.** This Ordinance shall be effective as provided by law.

**ENACTED AND ORDAINED** this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 2025.

**ATTEST:**

**BOARD OF SUPERVISORS OF  
WEST CALN TOWNSHIP**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Township Secretary

BY:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Nathan Sanet, Chairman

\_\_\_\_\_  
Joseph Hutton, III, Vice Chairman

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Allen R. Martin, Member