Zoning Amendment Proposal: Beekeeping

Planning Board Hearing – October 3rd, 2017
Urban Agriculture

The practice of cultivating food in and around the city
Benefits of Urban Agriculture

• Health
• Social
• Economic
• Ecological
Benefits of Urban Agriculture

• Health:
  • Access to healthy food
  • Raise nutritional awareness
  • Moderate physical activity
  • Culturally important foods
Benefits of Urban Agriculture

• Social:
  • Education
  • Youth development
  • Community life
Benefits of Urban Agriculture

• Economic:
  • Savings on food costs
  • Supplemental income
Benefits of Urban Agriculture

• Ecological:
  • Pollination contributes to ecological health
  • Environmental awareness
Urban Agriculture Task Force

• Composed of:
  • Cambridge Public Health Department staff
  • Community Development Department staff
  • Conservation Commission
  • CitySprouts
  • Community members

• Involved the cooperation of ISD, DPW, Animal Control
Urban Agriculture Task Force

Goals:

• Allow select agricultural activities in Cambridge within established guidelines
• Establish a clear permitting and enforcement process
• Support best practices and safe operations
• Being good neighbors
Outreach & Partners

Stakeholder Engagement

• Focus Groups with local experts (beekeepers, chicken keepers, gardeners, farmers, entrepreneurs, academics, epidemiologists, veterinarians, clinicians)
• Nonprofits and Community Organizations, e.g. Cambridge Community Center, City Sprouts, Shady Hill School
• Residents
• Neighborhood organizations, Tenants Association
• State agencies (MDAR, MDPH)
• Local municipal experts (Boston, Somerville, Arlington)
Focus Areas

• Beekeeping
• Henkeeping
• Commercial farming
• Sales
Policy Approach

Public Health Regulations

• Establish a permitting program and a set of standards to maintain safe and sanitary operations

Zoning

• Establish allowed districts, criteria and/or review processes for principal agricultural uses

Guidance Documents

• Best management practices
• Easy guide for community members to navigate permit process
Zoning for Beekeeping

Where does beekeeping fit within our ...

• ... land use framework? (Article 4)
• ... development standards? (Article 5)

What other standards are needed in zoning?
Zoning for Beekeeping

Land Use Framework (Article 4)

• Accessory use

• Allowed with residences, hotels, institutions (religious centers, schools), offices, stores, light industry
Zoning for Beekeeping

Development Standards (Article 5)

• If beehives are less than 6 feet tall and meet other standards, they don’t count against yard or open space requirements
Zoning for Beekeeping

Urban Agriculture Standards (New Article 23)

• Requires compliance with Cambridge Public Health Regulations, other laws & codes

• Beekeeping requires a permit from Cambridge Public Health Department

• Can include standards for other urban agriculture uses as they are developed
Zoning for Beekeeping

Beekeeping Standards (23.40)

• No more than 2 beehives on a lot (may be increased temporarily)
• Beehives no more than 20 cubic feet in volume
• Beehives no more than 6 feet tall
• Apiaries at-grade or elevated (roof, deck)
• Apiaries set back 5 feet from property lines unless a solid fence is provided
• Apiaries set back 6 feet from roof parapet
Zoning for Beekeeping

Beekeeping Standards (23.40)

• Flyway Barriers – to control direction of bees exiting hive

RECOMMEND MOVING TO PUBLIC HEALTH REGULATIONS

• Warning signage – to notify sensitive abutters and passersby
Other Regulations

Local public health jurisdiction:

• Inspectional Services Department:
  • Enforces MA Food Code
• Cambridge Public Health Department
  • Local health department with statutory authority under M.G.L. c.111 §31 to promulgate health regulations
  • Statutory authority under M.G.L. c.111 §122 to regulate public health nuisances and prevent disease conditions
Thank You!