

**MUNICIPALITY OF BETHEL PARK
ALLEGHENY COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA**

ORDINANCE NO. 4-13-26A

AN ORDINANCE OF THE MUNICIPALITY OF BETHEL PARK, ALLEGHENY COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA, REPEALING SECTION 69.35.4.7 OF THE CODE OF ORDINANCES OF THE MUNICIPALITY OF BETHEL PARK (“SPECIFIC STANDARDS FOR CHICKENS”) AND REPLACING IT WITH A NEW SECTION 69.35.4.7 (“SPECIFIC STANDARDS FOR KEEPING OF DOMESTIC CHICKENS AND DUCKS”) TO REGULATE THE KEEPING OF CHICKENS AND DUCKS IN THE MUNICIPALITY

WHEREAS, the Council of the Municipality of Bethel Park is desirous of permitting non-flying domesticated chickens and ducks as an accessory activity in R-1, R-2 and R-3 (One-Family) Zoning Districts and seeks to prescribe updated regulations intended to address nuisance concerns of odor, noise, and disease and providing requirements for the wellbeing of the birds.

NOW THEREFORE, be it ordained and enacted by Council of the Municipality of Bethel Park, in meeting assembled, and it is hereby ordained and enacted by and with the authority of the same, as follows:

SECTION 1:

Chapter 69, Zoning, Section 69.35.4.7 (“Specific Standards for Chickens”) of the Code of the Municipality of Bethel Park, is hereby repealed and replaced with a new Section 69.35.4.7 (“Specific Standards for Keeping of Domestic Chickens and Ducks”), to read as follows:

§69.35.4.7. Specific Standards for Keeping of Domestic Chickens and Ducks.

- a. Intent. The intent of this section is to establish regulations for the keeping of domestic chickens and ducks in R-1, R-2 and R-3 (One-Family) Zoning Districts in the Municipality. This section establishes standards and enforcement authority to ensure that domesticated chickens and/or ducks do not adversely impact the neighborhood surrounding the property on which the chickens and/or ducks are kept. These provisions shall not be construed to allow the keeping of game birds, swans, geese, pheasants, guinea fowl, or any other fowl/poultry.
- b. Definitions. The following words, terms and phrases, when used in this Section, shall have the meanings ascribed in this section unless the context of their usage clearly indicates another meaning:
 - i. **Chicken** - Common domestic fowl (*Gallus domesticus*) or its young.

- ii. **Chicken/Duck Coop** - Any fully enclosed and covered henhouse providing a predator-resistant shelter that is thoroughly ventilated, provides adequate sun and shade and all-season protection from the elements, designed to be easily accessed and cleaned where chickens or ducks live. A chicken/duck coop shall be considered an accessory structure and shall require a separate permit.
- iii. **Chicken/Duck run** - A covered, secure enclosure that allows chicken hens and ducks access to the outdoors. A securely fenced yard may also be permitted. Chickens and ducks are only permitted to access the chicken/duck run during daylight hours.
- iv. **Chicken/Duck tractor** - A movable fully enclosed structure commonly used for pastured chicken hens and ducks that graze on fresh grass daily. The chicken/duck tractor is moved every day or week as needed for the chicken hens and ducks to have fresh grass underneath them. Chicken/duck tractors can be used as permanent or temporary housing for chicken hens and ducks and are considered a type of chicken/duck coop.
- v. **Duck** - Any breed of domestic duck of the Anatidae family, excluding swans and geese.
- vi. **Hen** - A female adult chicken.
- vii. **Rooster** - A male adult chicken.
- viii. **Chicken/Duck runway** - means a fully enclosed, fenced area connected to the coop.

Water source – A clean supply of water in a pond, wading pool, tub or other container.
- ix. **Residential Chicken and Duck Permit** – A permit issued under the provisions of this section authorizing the keeping of domesticated chickens and/or ducks as accessory to the primary residential use of a property.

c. **Standards.** The keeping and raising of chickens and ducks shall be allowed on one-family properties located in the R-1 One-Family Residential, R-2 One-Family Residential, and R-3 One-Family Residential as a use accessory to a one-family dwelling where an applicant can establish compliance with the criteria and standards in this section. These regulations do not supersede restrictions or prohibitions within Homeowner’s Association (HOA) covenants.

- i. Normal “agriculture” and/or “farming” practices found in the

Conservation District or on a Farm shall be exempt from this section.

- ii. Chicken hens are permitted.
- iii. Roosters are prohibited to be kept or harbored in the Municipality.
- iv. Only non-flying domesticated duck species, such as but not limited to Pekins and Khaki Campbells, are permitted.
- v. Male and female ducks are permitted.
- vi. No chickens or ducks shall be allowed on townhouse, duplex, condominium, apartment, or manufactured housing park properties.
- vii. Number. The number of chickens and ducks authorized shall comply with the following:
 - 1. Chickens. For the first 3,000 square feet of a lot, up to four chickens. For each additional 1,000 square feet of a lot, one additional chicken up to a maximum of 15.
 - 2. Ducks. There may be no more than four (4) ducks on a lot.
 - 3. Chickens and ducks may be kept on the same lot, not to exceed a maximum number of fifteen (15) total birds per lot, with no more than four (4) ducks.
- viii. Chickens and ducks shall be confined at all times within a coop or chicken/duck run with access to an outside area.
- ix. The chicken and duck enclosures must be clean, dry, and kept in a neat and sanitary condition such that the facility, chickens or ducks, do not produce noise or odor that creates a nuisance for adjacent properties. The enclosures must provide adequate sun and shade, and be impermeable to rodents, wild birds, and predators, including dogs and cats. The enclosure must be covered with wire, aviary netting, solid roofing, or other acceptable building materials as approved by the Municipality which accomplish the above-stated goals.
- x. Waste storing and removal shall be compliant with the following requirements:
 - 1. A Manure Management Plan is to be developed and used in accordance with Chapter 91 of the Clean Streams Law and will be required to be submitted with the Chicken and Duck

Permit application. The Plan may be subject to the review of the Allegheny County Conservation District and shall include the following:

- a. The manure management plan shall include actions to be taken to reduce the attraction of predators and rodents and to prevent the infestation of insects and parasites.
- b. Stored manure, including coops, shall be at least 50 feet from streams and away from roads where nutrients can enter storm drains.
- c. All animal and byproducts that enter the Municipal storm sewer is considered an illicit discharge by the Municipal Stormwater Ordinance and the Municipal Separate Storm Sewer Systems (MS4) Permit.
- d. Under no circumstances shall chicken or duck manure be placed into the sanitary sewer system.

2. Manure disposal shall occur by one of the following methods:

- a. Discard with weekly trash collection, or
- b. Composting meeting the following requirements:
 - i. Backyard composting piles or bins must be located at least 5' from the property line.
 - ii. Compost piles must be aerated by turning at least once every other month.
 - iii. Compost piles must be maintained in a manner that mitigates obnoxious odors.
 - iv. No cooked food or animal products should be placed in the compost pile.
 - v. Compost piles must be constructed and maintained in a manner to prevent harborage for rodents and/or vermin.
 - vi. Compost piles must not be within 50' of a conveyance source to the waterways of the

Commonwealth or located within the FEMA designated floodplain.

- vii. Application of manure to vegetated areas to incorporate into the soil is not permissible without first being composted.
- xi. Chickens and ducks shall be kept for personal use only. No sales of eggs, chickens, chicks, ducklings, ducks, slaughtered ducks, chicks or chickens, or fertilizer are allowed.
- xii. Ducks must be provided with a clean water source large enough for the duck to fit its entire body and deep enough to submerge its head. No container shall have a depth greater than or equal to 24" and must remain at least 10 feet from all property lines.
- xiii. Chickens and ducks shall be within a coop during non-daylight hours. The structure shall be enclosed on all sides and shall have a roof and doors. Access doors must be able to be shut and locked at night. Opening windows and vents must be covered with predator and bird proof wire of less than one-inch openings. The coop must be watertight and well maintained.
- xiv. Coops, chicken/duck tractors, fenced areas or chicken/duck runs shall be calculated toward the allotment of allowed accessory structures as may be defined by this Chapter.
- xv. Setbacks.
 1. Chicken and duck coops, water sources, chicken/duck tractors, fenced areas or runs shall be not allowed within 10 feet of side or rear property lines and are not allowed in front yards.
 2. No accessory structure or manure source shall be located within 50' from the top of a stream bank or any watercourse.
- xvi. Only one installation, which can consist of a chicken or duck coop, fenced area and or run as a unit, shall be allowed on each property. A chicken/duck tractor may be temporarily relocated from the permanently installed unit. Provision must be made for the removal of chicken and duck waste.
- xvii. The minimum chicken and duck coop size is three square feet per chicken or duck. The maximum structure shall be 144 sq. ft.

- xviii. Chickens and ducks must be provided with access to feed and clean water at all times; such feed and water shall be unavailable to rodents and wild birds. All feed, water and other items associated with domestic fowl shall be protected from infestation by rodents, insects, wild birds and predators. Failure to keep water, feed and other items associated with domestic fowl in a clean and sanitary condition constitutes a violation of this section.
- xix. In addition, the chicken/duck coop, chicken/duck tractor, fenced area or run and surrounding area must be kept free from trash and accumulated droppings. Uneaten feed shall be removed in a timely manner.
- xx. It shall be unlawful for the owner or owners of any domestic fowl to let the same run at large upon any of the common thoroughfares, sidewalks, passageways, play areas, parks, streets alleys or public highways, or any place where people congregate or walk, or upon any public or private property. Any domestic fowl not contained in a coop shall be considered to be "at large."
- xxi. Municipal Council shall prescribe fees for Residential Chicken and Duck Permits by Resolution of Council.
- xxii. If a property owner abandons or vacates a chicken/duck coop, chicken/duck tractor, fenced area or run, the chicken/duck coop, chicken/duck tractor, fenced area or run shall be removed within 30 days.
- xxiii. Chickens or ducks not kept in compliance with this section shall be deemed a public nuisance.

SECTION 2:

This Ordinance shall become effective thirty (30) days after adoption by Council in accordance with the Home Rule Charter of the Municipality.

ORDAINED and ENACTED into law, this ____ day of _____, 2026.

ATTEST:

MUNICIPALITY OF BETHEL PARK

Secretary

BY _____
President of Council

EXAMINED AND APPROVED by me, this ____ day of _____, 2026.

Mayor