

Beekeeping and Chickens

Gwinnett County allows the keeping of chickens and bees in non-agricultural residential zoning districts to preserve homeowners' access to fresh eggs and honey. To safeguard the health, well-being, and safety of residents, chickens, honeybees, and the animals that interact with them, Gwinnett County has adopted ordinances to regulate their keeping.

Plan of Action

- Follow the detailed regulations outlined in the ordinances. For keeping chickens:
- Roosters are not allowed and are not needed for hens to lay / produce eggs.
- 3 birds are allowed per minimum lot size of 10,500 square feet (0.24 acres).
- Chickens must be kept in retaining areas, which must be cleaned regularly.
- Chickens cannot be raised for slaughter. For beehives or colonies:
- 2 hives or colonies, with only 2 swarms, are allowed per 0.23 acre lot size.
- Hives must be set back at least 10 feet from any property line.
- Mark hives to alert visitors of bees.

What does the ordinance say about beekeeping? Unified Development Ordinance (230-130.3.H):

In all non-agricultural residential zoning districts, beekeeping shall meet the following requirements:

1) Honeybees shall not be kept on lots containing less than 10,000 square feet. No more than 2 colonies or hives, with only 2 swarms, shall be allowed per 10,000 square feet; 2) Hives shall be marked or identified to notify visitors; 3) No hive shall exceed 20 cubic feet in volume; 4) No hive shall be located closer than 10 feet from any property line; 5) No hive shall be located closer than 50 feet from a public right-of-way or 25 feet from the principal building on an abutting lot; 6) A constant supply of water shall be provided for all hives; 7) A flyway barrier at least 6 feet in height shall shield any part of a property line that is within 25 feet of a hive. The flyway barrier shall consist of a wall, fence, dense vegetation or a combination thereof; 8) Any colony or hive which becomes a nuisance as defined by state law must be removed; 9) Abandoned colonies or hives and diseased bees shall be removed (this shall not prohibit the use of swarm traps).

What does the ordinance say about keeping chickens? Unified Development Ordinance (230-130.3.EE):

In non-agricultural residential zoning districts: the keeping of chickens for personal pleasure or utility on a parcel which contains the dwelling of the owner is permitted, subject to the following requirements: a) The minimum lot size for the keeping of chickens shall be 10,500 square feet; b) Chickens must be kept securely in an enclosed yard or 6-sided pen at all times; c) Minimum pen area for chickens shall be 10 square feet per chicken; d) Chickens must be housed at least 20 feet from any property line, and 50 feet from any residence other than the owner's; e) Any structure housing chickens must be located in the rear yard; f) The keeping of roosters is not allowed; g) The maximum number of chickens shall be as follows: Lots 10,500 square feet to 12,499 square feet: maximum of 3 chickens; lots 12,500 square feet to 24,999 square feet: maximum of 5 chickens; lots 25,000 square feet to 39,999 square feet: maximum of 8 chickens; lots of 40,000 square feet to 2.99 acres: maximum of 10 chickens; lots 3 acres or larger: no maximum; h) Each coop shall have at least 4 square feet of floor space per chicken over 4 months old; i) Chickens are only permitted as pets or for egg laying production; chickens cannot be kept for slaughter; j) Chickens must be kept under sanitary conditions and shall not be a public nuisance as defined by State law.

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