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June 28, 2019

Dear Mayor McDonald and Members of the North Bay City Council:

The Nipissing and Area Food Roundtable is a collaborative group of community stakeholders and food champions, working to create a healthy and sustainable food system for the Nipissing area. Our group was formed to work toward achieving the vision of a healthy, sustainable food system that is outlined in the [Nipissing and Area Food Charter](#), which the City of North Bay formally endorsed in 2016.

Recently, we sent correspondence to you about the role of municipalities in addressing climate change from the food systems perspective, based on the recent motion that was passed confirming Council's support for initiatives related to mitigating climate change. One way that Council can take action in this area is by examining current zoning by-laws and considering expanding the areas in which the keeping of backyard hens is allowed.

In 2017, we sent correspondence to Council on our position about the keeping of backyard hens in urban areas, which we have attached again for your reference. This is a growing movement among municipalities across North America, and has come up at Council meetings in North Bay in the past. Expanding the areas in which the keeping of backyard hens in North Bay is allowed would align with the principles of the Nipissing and Area Food Charter in many ways, including:

- Food Literacy

Keeping hens offers valuable educational opportunities for children and adults to learn about the food system and responsible animal care. Raising hens to produce eggs promotes feelings of personal autonomy and independence of food choices, and a sense of self-sufficiency for families.

- Environment

Hens may reduce household food waste through consumption of table scraps and other organic solids, and they can help control garden pests and weeds. Foods grown and raised close to home reduces energy usage and greenhouse gas emissions associated with transporting food. Eggs have also been cited as the [animal protein with the lowest climate footprint](#).

- Health and Wellness

The keeping of hens has been compared to the keeping of other pets in terms of beneficial psychological and social effects. Hens are people-friendly, social, intelligent, affectionate, small, and quiet. Also, better tasting eggs are produced and this may improve enjoyment of food.

- Culture

Keeping backyard domestic fowl, including hens, is a tradition in many cultures. Allowing the opportunity to do so within a municipality can foster the keeping of those traditions, and bring them back to life as a way to preserve cultural food practices.

We have also created a factsheet on this issue called [Backyard Hens in North Bay: Frequently Asked Questions](#) which provides additional information. Thank you for taking the time to review this letter and the information we have provided. The Nipissing and Area Food Roundtable invites opportunities to work with the City of North Bay to develop policies that support local food production, including the keeping of backyard hens, and that enhance the health and sustainability of the food system in the Nipissing Area.

Sincerely,

The Nipissing and Area Food Roundtable  
[nipissingareafood@gmail.com](mailto:nipissingareafood@gmail.com)