

ZONING USE DETERMINATION – CITY OF DUNWOODY
Backyard Beekeeping

RE: Is “backyard bee keeping” a permitted use in the City of Dunwoody R-100 zoning district?

Applicable Facts:

- a) The City’s Zoning Ordinance makes no direct mention regarding the keeping of bees associated with residential activities or explicitly in any zoning district.
- b) Residential districts permit Community Gardens as do several commercial districts.
- c) The Zoning Ordinance does not define ‘livestock’.
- d) Section 27-116 of the Zoning Ordinance speaks to Agriculture and Transportation. This section describes the allowed use of Community Gardens.
- e) State Law in OCGA 2-14-41.1 addresses and supports the keeping of bees as an activity important to the State of Georgia and endorses this practice in lieu of zoning regulations restricting the practice.
- f) The trend in the State of Georgia appears to be toward cities and counties permitting backyard bee keeping as an acceptable incidental use in residential areas.

Analysis and Decision:

- a) The City of Dunwoody Zoning Ordinance does not explicitly prohibit the keeping of bees, thereby leaving the question of such use open to the discretion of the Community Development Director.
- b) Community Gardens are permitted within residential districts and could conceivably include bee hives.
- c) Bees are not considered livestock.
- d) The State of Georgia has determined that honeybees are an important interest to the State.

Based on the above and according to the procedures of Section 27-111 of the City of Dunwoody Zoning Ordinance, it is determined that the keeping of honeybees within the City of Dunwoody is considered an incidental and ancillary use to a residence and permitted as follows:

- Hives shall be considered an accessory use and observe all setback and location requirements applicable thereto. Hives shall be no closer than 10’ to any property line.
- There shall be no more than two hives per ¼ acre on a residential zoned lot, provided however, that at no time shall the number of hives cease to represent an incidental personal use to a single family residence.
- Backyard beekeeping shall not be operated in a manner that constitutes a nuisance under other City regulations.



Steve Foote, AICP
Community Development Director

October 30, 2015