

To: Middletown Township Board of Supervisors, Stephanie Teoli Kuhls (Interim Township Manager), and Jim Esposito, Esq. (Township Solicitor)

From: Jim Ennis, Director of Building and Zoning

Date: August 6, 2026

Subject: Zoning Text Amendment to Allow the Keeping and Raising of Chickens at Certain Residential Areas

May 11, 2026 Meeting

This matter was last presented as a policy discussion during the May 11, 2026 Board of Supervisors meeting. The recommended changes to the Zoning Ordinance that would allow for the keeping and raising of chickens on residential properties was discussed. The considerable outreach and public input involvement through the Township's website and social media in preparation for the May 11th meeting was part of the discussion. The amount of participants and where they stand on this matter was covered, with the majority of participants in favor of the keeping and raising of chickens at certain residential areas in the Township. As the discussions came to a close, it was agreed that this matter was ready to move on to the next step of getting the text amendments fully reviewed by the Township's Planning Commission. Dependent on their recommendation, the text amendments would be presented again for a vote to approve and adopt them to the Middletown Township Zoning Ordinance as a residential accessory use during a scheduled Board of Supervisors meeting.

June 3, 2026 Planning Commission Meeting

The text amendments were an agenda item for the Planning Commission's consideration during their June 3, 2026 meeting. The public comments given during that meeting were in favor of the amendments. The Planning Commission recommended approval of the text amendments with the condition there is an annual licensing fee and inspection. The Planning Commission's recommendation is:

Recommendation of approval for the proposed text changes to the Middletown Township Zoning Ordinance to allow the keeping and raising of chickens at RA1, RA2, RA3, R1, and R2 zoning districts. Recommendation is based on a May 28, 2026 memorandum from Jim Ennis, Director of Building & Zoning. Recommendation is based on the condition of the comments provided by the Bucks County Planning Commission be addressed and also by a requirement of an annual license and inspection be obtained by anyone interested owning chickens.

My May 28, 2026 memo to the Planning Commission that served as the basis of the Planning Commission's recommendation is attached.

July 1, 2026 Bucks County Planning Commission Review Letter

BCPC's review letter is attached. The BCPC recommended the proposed text amendments are adopted by the Township, because they are consistent with the land use policies of the Township's comprehensive plan and Zoning Ordinance.

Permit and Registration Application

A draft of the permit and registration application is attached. If the amendments are adopted and enacted to the Zoning Ordinance, this will be the application found on the Township's website and at the Building and Zoning Department's counter for those wishing to pursue the keeping and raising of chickens at certain residential areas.

Amendment to the Fee Schedule

A permit fee of \$150 with an annual registration fee of \$50 is proposed with the text amendments. The fee schedule change will also be approved if the text amendments are approved for adoption. The permit and registration fees are consistent with a neighboring community that allows for the keeping and raising of chickens.

Recommendation

I recommend approval is granted to the text amendments allowing for the keeping and raising of chickens at certain residential areas, as detailed in the attached Ordinance.

Recommended Motion

If the Board concurs, the recommended motion would be:

"I make a motion to grant approval to amend Chapter 500 of the Middletown Township Code of Ordinances to Regulate the Keeping of Chickens in Certain Residential Areas. Approval includes amending the Middletown Township Fee Schedule to include a \$150 permit fee with an annual registration fee of \$50 for the keeping of chickens in certain residential areas."

ORDINANCE NO. 26-6

AN ORDINANCE OF MIDDLETOWN TOWNSHIP, BUCKS COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA AMENDING CHAPTER 500 OF THE MIDDLETOWN TOWNSHIP CODE OF ORDINANCES TO REGULATE THE KEEPING OF CHICKENS IN CERTAIN RESIDENTIAL AREAS

WHEREAS, Section 66601 of the Pennsylvania Second Class Township Code, 53 P.S. §§ 65101, et seq., provides the Middletown Township Board of Supervisors (the “Board of Supervisors”) with the authority to adopt ordinances in which the general or specific powers of Middletown Township (the “Township”) may be exercised, and that, by the enactment of subsequent ordinances, it may amend, repeal, or revise existing ordinances;

WHEREAS, Sections 10601 and 10604 of the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code (the “MPC”), 53 P.S. §§ 10101, et seq., authorizes the Board of Supervisors to make and adopt ordinances necessary to provide for promote, protect, and facilitate the public health, safety, morals, and general welfare, preserve the natural, scenic and historic values in neighborhoods, and to prevent danger and congestion in travel and transportation within the Township;

WHEREAS, Section 66516 of the Pennsylvania Second Class Township Code provides that the corporate powers of the Board of Supervisors include the ability to plan for the development of the Township through Zoning, Subdivision, and Land Development Regulations under the Act of July 13, 1968 (P.L. 805, No. 247), known as the “Pennsylvania Municipalities Code,” 53 P.S. § 10101, et. seq.;

WHEREAS, the Board of Supervisors has determined that it is necessary to promote the public health, safety and welfare, and in the best interests of the municipality to amend the Middletown Township Zoning Ordinance to permit the raising of chickens in certain residential zoning districts and establish regulations for the raising and keeping of chickens; and

NOW THEREFORE, in consideration of the foregoing, be it **ENACTED** and **ORDAINED** by the Board of Supervisors of Middletown Township, Bucks County, Pennsylvania, that the Township’s Code of Ordinances is **AMENDED** as follows:

I. Chapter 500, Article II, Definitions, Section 500-202, Specific Terms, is hereby AMENDED by adding the following definitions, in alphabetical order, to the existing list of defined terms:

CHICKEN RUN OR PEN

A fenced or other type of enclosure that is mostly open to the elements, for the purpose of allowing chickens to leave the henhouse or coop while remaining in a predator-safe environment. The chicken run or pen is typically attached to the henhouse or chicken coop.

DOMESTICATED CHICKEN

A subspecies of the species *Gallus domesticus*.

HENHOUSE OR CHICKEN COOP

A structure providing shelter for chickens which is completely enclosed.

II. Chapter 500, Article IV, RA-1 Residence Agricultural District, Section 500-402.A, Use Regulations, is hereby AMENDED by amending and restating the opening sentence of 500-402. as follows:

- A. Agricultural uses, including tilling of soil, nursery, and the keeping or raising of livestock, birds, poultry, horses and bees, except for the requirements found under Section 500-2412, and provided that:

III. Chapter 500, Article XXIV, Accessory Uses and Structures, is hereby amended to add a new subsection 500-2412 Keeping of Chickens as follows:

Section 500-2412 Keeping of Chickens.

Chickens for personal use are permitted in the RA-1, RA-2, RA-3, R1, and R2 zoning districts.

A. No person may keep any chicken for personal use on a lot with an existing single family residence without first obtaining a permit.

B. A minimum lot size of 5,000 square feet is required.

C. A maximum of 4 chickens shall be kept. An additional chicken is allowed for every additional 5,000 square feet of lot area beyond the required minimum lot size of 5,000 square feet.

D. The keeping of roosters is prohibited.

E. Non-Commercial Use. The displaying, selling, offering for sale, bartering or giving away chickens, chicks, eggs, or manure from the property is prohibited.

F. It shall be unlawful for the owner or owners of any chickens to allow their chickens to run at large upon adjoining properties, any of the common thoroughfares, sidewalks, passageways, play areas, parks, streets, alleys, or public or private highways or any place where people congregate or walk, or upon public or private property in Middletown Township.

G. Location. Chickens must be confined at all times to a chicken coop or chicken run in compliance with the following:

- (1) Only one (1) chicken coop and one (1) chicken run shall be permitted on a property.
- (2) Chicken coops and chicken runs shall be located in rear or side yards only.
- (3) The chicken coops and chicken runs cannot be less than 15 feet from all property lines.

- (4) The maximum permitted height of chicken coops and chicken runs is 8 feet.
- (5) Chicken coops and runs shall not exceed 50 square feet. Chicken coops and runs must provide not less than 4 square feet for each chicken kept on the property.

H. Adequate food, shelter, water, and care shall be provided to all chickens at all time.

I. Sanitary Requirements for Housing of Chickens. All chickens, chicken coops and chicken runs must be maintained, housed and kept in a clean and sanitary condition and in a manner that does not cause a public or private nuisance from: odor, litter, droppings, feathers or other waste; excessive noise; predators, pests, rodents or other animals; or, favorable conditions that breed or attract flies, mosquitoes, maggots, other insects, pests or rodents. Any owner of chickens within the limits of the Municipality shall be required to house the chickens at all times under sanitary conditions so that the keeping of chickens shall not become either a public or private nuisance. The following provisions apply:

- (1) All chicken feces accumulated on private property shall be removed by using the approved sanitary method of double bagging and placed in the trash for collection unless composted.
- (2) Chicken feces on private property shall not be allowed to accumulate to the degree that it becomes a public health nuisance or hazard. In cases where chicken feces does accumulate on private property, An Enforcement Officer and/or other designated official representing Middletown Township may conduct an investigation, after which the accumulation may be declared a public health hazard or nuisance and the owner shall be ordered to remove and dispose of the accumulated feces in an approved manner. The order to remove such accumulated feces shall be hand-delivered to the owner or shall be sent by certified mail. The owner shall be given a period of 48 hours from the date and time of receipt of the order to clean the property and remove the accumulated feces.

J. All feed, water, and other items associated with the keeping of chickens must be kept in rodent-proof, water-proof containers and protected in a way that prevents infestation by rats, mice, other rodents or vectors. Failure to keep all feed, water, and other items associated with the keeping of chickens in a clean and sanitary condition constitutes a violation.

K. Watering troughs, tanks or other watering containers shall be equipped with adequate facilities for draining water overflow to prevent the breeding of flies, mosquitoes and other insects.

L. Slaughtering or Butchering. Slaughtering or butchering for personal consumption or religious practices shall be permitted provided it is done wholly indoors in the dwelling on the property where the chickens are kept and any waste is disposed of in a proper and sanitary way. Any processing of deceased chickens shall not occur in any area visible from public rights-of-way or from adjacent properties. Slaughtering or butchering for commercial use is prohibited.

M. Composting. It shall be unlawful for any person to spread or cause to be spread or deposited upon any ground or premises within Middletown Township any chicken manure. However, chicken manure may be composted on the property where the chickens are housed and the composted material then applied to gardens or yards.

IV. Partial Repealer.

All other provisions of the Ordinances of Middletown Township, as amended, shall remain in full force and effect. All other Ordinances or provisions of the Ordinances inconsistent herewith or in conflict with any of the terms hereof are, to the extent of said inconsistencies or conflicts, hereby specifically repealed.

V. Severability.

The provisions of this Ordinance are severable. If any section, clause, sentence, part or provision thereof shall be held illegal, invalid, or unconstitutional by a court of competent jurisdiction, such decision of the court shall not affect or impair any of the remaining sections, clauses, sentences, parts or provisions of this Ordinance. It is hereby declared to be the intent of the Board of Supervisors that this Ordinance would have been adopted if such illegal, invalid, or unconstitutional section, clause, sentence or part of a provision had not been included herein.

VI. Effective Date.

All provisions of this Ordinance shall be in full force and effect five (5) days after the approval and adoption.

{Enactment and Signatures on the Following Page}

ORDAINED AND ENACTED this _____ day of _____ 2026.

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS OF MIDDLETOWN
TOWNSHIP, BUCKS COUNTY,
PENNSYLVANIA

Bernadette Hannah, Chair

Attest:

Christian Gallardo, Secretary

I hereby certify that the foregoing is a true and correct copy of Ordinance No. 26-6, enacted by the Board of Supervisors of the Township of Middletown, County of Bucks, Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, on the _____ day of _____ 2026.

_____[SEAL]
Christian Gallardo, Secretary

To: Middletown Township Planning Commission and Jim Esposito and Andrew Griffin (Township Solicitors)

From: Jim Ennis, Director of Building and Zoning

Date: May 28, 2026

Subject: Keeping and Raising Chickens on Residential Properties

The following changes to the Zoning Ordinance are proposed for your consideration. These changes would allow for the keeping and raising of chickens on residential properties:

The following definitions will be added to Section 500-202

Chicken run or pen: A fenced or other type of enclosure that is mostly open to the elements, for the purpose of allowing chickens to leave the henhouse or coop while remaining in a predator-safe environment. The chicken run or pen is typically attached to the henhouse or chicken coop.

Domesticated chicken: A subspecies of the species *Gallus domesticus*.

Henhouse or chicken coop: A structure providing shelter for chickens which is completely enclosed.

The following text in bold will be added to Section 500-402.A

*Agricultural uses, including tilling of soil, nursery, and the keeping or raising of livestock, birds, poultry, horses and bees, **except for the requirements found under Section 500-2412, and provided that:***

The following proposed section will be added to Article XXIV Accessory Uses and Structures

Section 500-2412 Keeping of Chickens

Chickens for personal use are permitted in the RA-1, RA-2, RA-3, R1, and R2 zoning districts.

A. No person may keep any chicken for personal use on a lot with an existing single family residence without first obtaining a permit.

B. A minimum lot size of 5,000 square feet is required.

C. A maximum of 4 chickens shall be kept. An additional chicken is allowed for every additional 5,000 square feet of lot area beyond the required minimum lot size of 5,000 square feet.

D. The keeping of roosters is prohibited.

E. Non-Commercial Use. The displaying, selling, offering for sale, bartering or giving away chickens, chicks, eggs, or manure from the property is prohibited.

F. It shall be unlawful for the owner or owners of any chickens to allow their chickens to run at large upon adjoining properties, any of the common thoroughfares, sidewalks, passageways, play areas, parks, streets, alleys, or public or private highways or any place where people congregate or walk, or upon public or private property in Middletown Township.

G. Location. Chickens must be confined at all times to a chicken coop or chicken run in compliance with the following:

- 1) Only one (1) chicken coop and one (1) chicken run shall be permitted on a property.

- 2) Chicken coops and chicken runs shall be located in rear or side yards only.
- 3) The chicken coops and chicken runs cannot be less than 15 feet from all property lines.
- 4) The maximum permitted height of chicken coops and chicken runs is 8 feet.
- 5) Chicken coops and runs shall not exceed 50 square feet. Chicken coops and runs must provide not less than 4 square feet for each chicken kept on the property.

H. Adequate food, shelter, water, and care shall be provided to all chickens at all time.

I. Sanitary Requirements for Housing of Chickens. All chickens, chicken coops and chicken runs must be maintained, housed and kept in a clean and sanitary condition and in a manner that does not cause a public or private nuisance from: odor, litter, droppings, feathers or other waste; excessive noise; predators, pests, rodents or other animals; or, favorable conditions that breed or attract flies, mosquitoes, maggots, other insects, pests or rodents. Any owner of chickens within the limits of the Municipality shall be required to house the chickens at all times under sanitary conditions so that the keeping of chickens shall not become either a public or private nuisance. The following provisions apply:

1. All chicken feces accumulated on private property shall be removed by using the approved sanitary method of double bagging and placed in the trash for collection unless composted.
2. Chicken feces on private property shall not be allowed to accumulate to the degree that it becomes a public health nuisance or hazard. In cases where chicken feces does accumulate on private property, An Enforcement Officer and/or other designated official representing Middletown Township may conduct an investigation, after which the accumulation may be declared a public health hazard or nuisance and the owner shall be ordered to remove and dispose of the accumulated feces in an approved manner. The order to remove such accumulated feces shall be hand-delivered to the owner or shall be sent by certified mail. The owner shall be given a period of 48 hours from the date and time of receipt of the order to clean the property and remove the accumulated feces.

J. All feed, water, and other items associated with the keeping of chickens must be kept in rodent-proof, water-proof containers and protected in a way that prevents infestation by rats, mice, other rodents or vectors. Failure to keep all feed, water, and other items associated with the keeping of chickens in a clean and sanitary condition constitutes a violation.

K. Watering troughs, tanks or other watering containers shall be equipped with adequate facilities for draining water overflow to prevent the breeding of flies, mosquitoes and other insects.

L. Slaughtering or Butchering. Slaughtering or butchering for personal consumption or religious practices shall be permitted provided it is done wholly indoors in the dwelling on the property where the chickens are kept and any waste is disposed of in a proper and sanitary way. Any processing of deceased chickens shall not occur in any area visible from public rights-of-way or from adjacent properties. Slaughtering or butchering for commercial use is prohibited.

N. Composting. It shall be unlawful for any person to spread or cause to be spread or deposited upon any ground or premises within Middletown Township any chicken manure. However, chicken manure may be composted on the property where the chickens are housed and the composted material then applied to gardens or yards.



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PLANNING COMMISSION:
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Executive Director

MEMORANDUM

To: Middletown Township Board of Supervisors
Middletown Township Planning Commission

From: Bucks County Planning Commission

Date: July 1, 2026

Subject: BCPC #22-26-2
Proposal to Amend the Zoning Ordinance—Keeping and Raising Chickens
Applicant: Board of Supervisors
Date Received: June 18, 2026
Hearing Date: August 10, 2026

In accordance with the provisions of Sections 304 and 609 of the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code, this proposal was sent to the Bucks County Planning Commission for review. The following review has been prepared by the staff and endorsed by the Bucks County Planning Commission at a meeting held on July 1, 2026.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Proposed Action: Amend the zoning ordinance to add definitions and use regulations for Keeping of Chickens. The new use will be permitted by right in the RA-1 Residence Agricultural, RA-2 Residence Agricultural, RA-2 Residence Agricultural, R-1 Residence, and R-2 Residence districts.

Proposed Zoning Provisions:

Amend Section 500-202 to add definitions for chicken run or pen, domesticated chicken, and henhouse or chicken coop.

Amend the use regulations for Agricultural Uses in Section 500-402.A. to add the phrase “except for the requirements found under Section 500-2412” to clarify that the Keeping of Chickens use is exempt from the regulations applicable to Agricultural Uses.

Amend Article XXIV Accessory Uses and Structures to add use regulations for Keeping of Chickens including:

- Chickens for personal use are permitted by right as an accessory use in the RA-1, RA-2, RA-3, R-1, and R-2 zoning districts.
- A minimum lot size of 5,000 square feet is required with a maximum of 4 chickens per every 5,000 square feet.



- The keeping of roosters is prohibited.
- The displaying, offering for sale, bartering or giving away chickens, chicks, eggs or manure from the property is prohibited.
- It is unlawful for chickens to run at large upon adjoining properties or upon public or private property in the township.
- Chickens must be confined at all times to a chicken coop or chicken run. One chicken coop and one chicken run are permitted per property located in the rear or side yards only. Chicken coops and chicken runs must be setback at least 15 feet from all property lines, can be a maximum height of 8 feet, shall not exceed 50 square feet in area, and must provide not less than 4 square feet for each chicken.
- All chickens, chicken coops and chicken runs must be maintained, housed and kept in a clean and sanitary condition and in a manner that does not cause a public or private nuisance.
- All feed, water and other items associated with the keeping of chickens must be kept in rodent-proof and waterproof containers. Watering troughs, tanks or other watering containers shall be designed to prevent the breeding of insects.
- Slaughtering or butchering for personal consumption or religious practices shall be permitted indoors.
- Chicken manure may not be spread upon the ground but may be composted on the property.

COMMENT

We recommend that the township board of supervisors adopt the proposal as submitted, since it appears to be consistent with the requirements of the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code and the land use policies of the municipal comprehensive plan and zoning ordinance.

We would appreciate being notified of the board of supervisors' decision regarding this matter. If the amendment is adopted, please send a copy within 30 days as required by Section 609.(g) of the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code.

LYL:emh
26-0180

cc: Stephanie Teoli Kuhls, Interim Township Manager (via email)
Jim Ennis, AICP, Director of Building and Zoning (via email)
James J. Esposito, Esq., Curtin & Heefner, LLP, Township Solicitor (via email)
Andrew Griffin, Esq., Curtin & Heefner, LLP, Township Solicitor (via email)
Isaac Kessler, PE, Remington & Vernick Engineers, Township Engineer (via email)

ZONING APPLICATION FOR THE KEEPING OF CHICKENS
AND ANNUAL REGISTRATION

Applicant's Name: _____ **Property Owner's Name:** _____
Address: _____ **Tax Map#:** _____ **Zoning:** _____
Cell Phone: _____ **Email:** _____

1. Please indicate the number of chickens planned: ____ (maximum of 6 chickens/no roosters)

2. Please provide a detailed & accurate sketch of the site showing the following information:

Lot Area, Location of home, patios, sheds, garages & pools (including precise dimensions)

Side and Rear Yard Neighbors, Location of their home, structures, driveway & pool

(show distance from your property lines)

Location of chicken coop (size & height ____x____x____) & chicken run (size & height
____x____x____) Does it provide at least 4 s.f. per chicken: ____ Location of water source: ____
Located 20' from house ____ 20' from all property lines ____ 20' from pools & ponds ____

3. If an annual registration and re-inspection, please provide the following information:

Current # of chickens: _____

Any changes in location of coop or run? No ____ Yes ____ New site plan attached ____

Any changes in coop or run? No ____ Yes ____ New details & drawing attached ____

APPLICANT'S PLEDGE

I agree to operate and maintain the keeping of chickens, in accordance with Township Ordinances, to follow *Best Management Practices* that provide safe, and healthy living conditions for the chickens, to actively avoid nuisance impacts on surrounding properties and persons, and to protect the public health, safety and welfare. I further agree to comply at all times with all applicable standards and ordinance provisions for the keeping of chickens.

Sign here: _____

Date: _____

Sign here: _____

Date: _____

If the Applicant is not the property owner: I grant permission to _____to keep chickens on my property. I understand that I am responsible to ensure that all chickens and all structures are removed when the Applicant vacates the property.

Sign here: _____ Date: _____

Print Name: _____ Cell Phone: _____

Address: _____

Email Address: _____

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OFFICIAL USE ONLY

Application Complete: _____ Detailed Site Plan Attached: _____ Zoning Review: _____
Fee Paid: _____ Site Inspected: _____ Structures Inspected: _____
Requirements Met: _____ Paperwork & Inspections Fully Completed: _____

Building Permit (permanent structures/fencing) Needed: _____ Submitted: _____
Fee Paid: _____ Structures Inspected: _____ Requirements Met: _____
Paperwork Fully Completed: _____

ANNUAL REGISTRATION AND INSPECTION

Year _____	Registration Submitted: _____	Fee Paid: _____	Site Inspected: _____
Year _____	Registration Submitted: _____	Fee Paid: _____	Site Inspected: _____
Year _____	Registration Submitted: _____	Fee Paid: _____	Site Inspected: _____
Year _____	Registration Submitted: _____	Fee Paid: _____	Site Inspected: _____
Year _____	Registration Submitted: _____	Fee Paid: _____	Site Inspected: _____
Year _____	Registration Submitted: _____	Fee Paid: _____	Site Inspected: _____
Year _____	Registration Submitted: _____	Fee Paid: _____	Site Inspected: _____
Year _____	Registration Submitted: _____	Fee Paid: _____	Site Inspected: _____
Year _____	Registration Submitted: _____	Fee Paid: _____	Site Inspected: _____