

**ITEM # 75**

**Dutton, Greg**

**From:** Bruce Evans [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, October 16, 2013 5:51 PM  
**To:** Dutton, Greg  
**Subject:** Urban Farm Code Amendment

*Late Backup*

Dear Mr. Dutton:

Please forward to the Austin City Council.

My name is Bruce Evans. My wife, Ana Christina de Irureta Goyena, and I are developing an Urban Farm in South Austin near South Lamar & Bluebonnet. We have 2 acres that contain 44 mature pecan trees of the Desirable variety that were grafted in the 50s & 60s. This grove is one of a handful of surviving urban pecan orchards in the state. We are also developing an under canopy of fruit trees which, thus far, includes peaches, pears, plums, persimmon, and apples. Additionally, we have planted a large vegetable garden. It is our hope that we can produce and sell food on site to serve the explosive development in the neighborhood.

As you can imagine, the cost of water is a huge hurdle for us. Because we pay residential rates which are set to deter water usage, we are punished in our attempts to further our neighborhood farm. Additionally, we are charged for waste water that we don't discharge into the sewers.

To help provide a level playing field, we ask that you amend the Urban Farm Code to give urban farmers relief from the graduated scale of residential water rates.

We appreciate your consideration in this matter.

Sincerely,

Bruce Evans

**Dutton, Greg**

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**From:** Austin 311  
**Sent:** Thursday, October 10, 2013 1:23 PM  
**To:** Gill, Andrew  
**Subject:** FW: Email from austintexas.gov: Urban Farms Ordinance

Mr. Gill,

Please review the following email that we received at Austin 311 regarding the Urban Farms Ordinance. We are forwarding this to you as you are the contact person listed on the Sustainable Food Policy website.

If you should have any other questions or concerns, please feel free to email us back or contact us at 311 or 974-2000.

Thanks again for your assistance,

Perry

Austin 3-1-1

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**From:** Rebecca Rivera [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Thursday, October 10, 2013 12:49 PM  
**To:** Austin 311  
**Subject:** Email from austintexas.gov: Urban Farms Ordinance

This message is from Rebecca Rivera. [REDACTED]

I do not support the NEW Urban Farms Ordinance in its current draft form. Farmers should not be allowed to SLAUGHTER and COMPOST chickens, rabbits, fish or other animals in residential areas. We like the peacefulness of our residential neighborhoods. COMMERCIALIZATION of SINGLE FAMILY ZONED LAND should not be allowed.

OUTSIDE PRODUCTS belonging to other businesses such as Milk, cheese, bison, lamb, books, chocolate, yogurt ect should not be allowed to be sold out of "Urban Farms" or "Market Farms" located within RESIDENTIAL areas. There is no monitoring of HEALTH and SAFETY requirements listed in the draft ordinance. PUBLIC HEALTH will be at risk. Can you say "E. COLI"

Music venues, weddings, parties, fundraisers, temporary restaurants, ect should NOT be allowed more than once a month on "Urban Farms or Market Farms". Farmers should not be given WAIVERS to NOT PAY for permits that ALL OTHER TAXPAYERS have to PAY. I do not want the ordinance passed. The city needs to have an outside entity rewrite ordinance with inclusion of stakeholders. The staff that wrote the current draft is biased. I ask you to NOT PASS the ordinance. POSTPONE the vote

**Dutton, Greg**

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**From:** Austin 311  
**Sent:** Thursday, October 10, 2013 1:38 PM  
**To:** Gill, Andrew  
**Subject:** FW: Email from austintexas.gov: Urban Farms Ordinance

Mr. Gill,

Please review the following email that we received at Austin 311 regarding the Urban Farms Ordinance. We are forwarding this to you as you are the contact person listed on the Sustainable Food Policy website.

If you should have any other questions or concerns, please feel free to email us back or contact us at 311 or 974-2000.

Thanks for your assistance,

Shawna  
Austin 3-1-1

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**From:** regina Castillo [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Thursday, October 10, 2013 1:27 PM  
**To:** Austin 311  
**Subject:** Email from austintexas.gov: Urban Farms Ordinance

This message is from regina Castillo. [REDACTED]

I do not support the NEW Urban Farms Ordinance in its current draft form. Farmers should not be allowed to SLAUGHTER and COMPOST chickens, rabbits, fish or other animals in residential areas. We like the peacefulness of our residential neighborhoods. COMMERCIALIZATION of SINGLE FAMILY ZONED LAND should not be allowed. OUTSIDE PRODUCTS belonging to other businesses such as Milk, cheese, bison, lamb, books, chocolate, yogurt ect should not be allowed to be sold out of "Urban Farms" or "Market Farms" located within RESIDENTIAL areas. There is no monitoring of HEALTH and SAFETY requirements listed in the draft ordinance. PUBLIC HEALTH will be at risk. Can you say "E. COLI"

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**Dutton, Greg**

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**From:** Austin 311  
**Sent:** Thursday, October 10, 2013 2:09 PM  
**To:** Gill, Andrew  
**Subject:** farm ordinance

Mr. Gill,

Please review the following email that we received at Austin 311 regarding the Urban Farms Ordinance. We are forwarding this to you as you are the contact person listed on the Sustainable Food Policy website.

If you should have any other questions or concerns, please feel free to email us back or contact us at 311 or 974-2000.

Thanks for your assistance,

Annette  
Austin 3-1-1  
196311

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Email from austin texas.gov: Urban Farms Ordinance

This message is from cynthia rodriguez. [REDACTED]

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## **Why Austin Should Care About Urban Farms**

*Marla Camp is a founding member of the Sustainable Food Policy Board—a citizen advisory board to the City of Austin and Travis County, and is the publisher of Edible Austin magazine.*

“Eating is an agricultural act,” says Wendell Berry, the much-respected poet, author and agrarian, in his 1989 essay, “The Pleasures of Eating.” Every time we lift our fork we are supporting a farm somewhere and increasingly, thanks to urban farms, we are supporting farms in our own community. These farms grow healthy food, create jobs and serve as community hubs.

Protecting and cultivating our urban farms is key to creating a positive economic environment in Austin. Earlier this year, the City began a process to update the Code Ordinance for our urban farms.

The process was conducted over eight months of well-publicized and documented city-wide public hearings and input-gathering. The update recently passed the City Planning Commission by a 6-1 vote and is now headed to the City Council. As with any thoughtful and well-considered process, it brought multiple stakeholders to the table and compromises were made by all parties to accommodate multi-faceted concerns of both farmers and neighborhood groups.

**Why revise the existing code?** The existing Urban Farm Code Ordinance was in need of updating to provide more specificity and to codify some existing uses and practices so that compliance can be monitored and understood by all.

Contrary to what’s been mistakenly reported as fact, there was no revision in the code ordinance for poultry-house setbacks. It always has been and will remain 50 feet from the property line. Processing (including harvesting) and composting of fowl is already allowed by code—the only revision is to include rabbits (currently allowed under state law) and to allow aquaponics, an environmentally sound method of raising fish. This aspect of farming provides trusted access to safe and well-raised meats and proteins.

The code revisions also call for no more than 1 animal per 1/10 of an acre per week can be harvested. This means that a farm like Hausbar, which is 1.8 acres, could process no more than 18 animals per week. Noise and odor ordinances are already in place to address potential complaints.

**Benefits to the community:** The Urban Farm Code Ordinance is a city-wide ordinance benefitting all of the residents in all of our neighborhoods in Austin. The following are just a few of the major benefits:

- **Long-term, stable neighbors:** Long-term land stewardship is essential for sustainably growing vegetables and small livestock. Austin’s urban farmers need

years to build soil fertility, provide healthy pasture and invest in infrastructure. Because no farmer can survive on sales of the fruits of their labors alone, urban farms may also bring vibrant and meaningful events to life such as farm dinners, canning and cooking classes, and weddings to provide additional revenue to support the farm, which in turn gives back to the community with farm tours providing educational outreach for schools and charity fundraisers, among other community-building assets.

- **Support for the local economy.** Urban farms hire locally and every dollar spent on a local farm stays in the community, as opposed to the 4-cents on the dollar when you buy your food from a big box store. As Austinites are influencing local restaurants to source more locally and sustainably grown food, this also drives money to our vibrant local—and nationally recognized—food scene.

- **Access to healthy food for all.** Small urban farms throughout the city can't solve all of our food access problems, but they can help—the smaller market garden designation provides an easier entry for more potential producers of diverse backgrounds and an additional source of income and food for families; non-code recommendations suggest that farm stands have the capacity to accept nutrition assistance benefits such as SNAP and WIC (and the city or nonprofits could double those incentives) and that the city leverage programs to help get land to more diverse producers.

**The payoff:** Supporting our urban farms by passing the update to the urban farm code will provide the residents of Austin access to fresh, healthy food and local jobs while cultivating good neighbors with a strong sense of place and interest in preserving not just the land but our neighborhoods.