



Office of the
City Manager

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Memorandum

TO: Lee D. Garrity, City Manager
FROM: Gregory M. Turner, Assistant City Manager
DATE: August 8, 2017
SUBJECT: Bee Friendly Community

Recently Council Member MacIntosh requested that the City look into any ordinances or policies that may be detrimental to urban bee management. This was in response to concerns he has about the problem of bee colony collapse across the country. Agencies such as “Bee Downtown” and “Bee City USA” have encouraged the support of urban bees to reduce the impact of rural bee colony collapses. Bee Downtown (beetown.org) which has a presence in Durham, NC has a goal of building healthy sustainable honey bee communities around the world. Its director notes that urban bees have a more diverse and healthier food source than rural bees that typically have only one food source. The organization’s website says that in 2015 the U.S. lost 44% of the beehives in the country which is the largest one year decline in 10 years.

Bee City USA (BeeCityUSA.org) which is based in Asheville, NC has a program for cities to be certified as bee friendly. Bee City USA member cities in North Carolina include Durham, Asheville, Wilmington, and Raleigh. Bee City cities also track bee friendly activities of their City and report annually to a committee charged by that City with reviewing such activity and reporting annually to Bee City USA. A copy of the model resolution to apply to this organization as well as the application instructions is attached for information.

N.C. State Statutes allow cities to regulate beehive placement and quantity. The statutes also allow for the removal of hives that have been abandoned or are a health/safety risk. The City of Winston-Salem has not chosen to regulate urban beehives unless they are in large commercial production quantities. If the City chose to regulate hives, the State Statutes mandate that up to five hives be allowed on a single parcel.

If the City Council would be interested in getting involved in this issue, it has several options it could consider:

1. Adopting City ordinances that explicitly authorize urban beehives.
2. Joining an organization such as Bee City USA and implementing its review and reporting requirements.
3. Joining an organization such as Bee Downtown which encourages urban beekeeping.
4. Passing a general resolution of support and encouragement for beekeepers.

If Council is interested in any of these options, staff will be happy to prepare the appropriate documents.