



HOBBY BEEKEEPING POLICY & BEST PRACTICES

Purpose. It is the purpose and intent of this policy to allow for the keeping of honeybees as a hobby, subject to regulations and best practices contained hereinafter. It is recognized that the ability to cultivate one's own food is a sustainable activity that can also be a rewarding pastime, and that gentle (non-aggressive) strains of honeybees can be maintained within populated areas without causing a nuisance if carefully managed. It is also the purpose and intent of this policy to permit the keeping of bees in such ways that is not a nuisance or detrimental to public health, safety, or general welfare.

- A. License Requirement. No person shall keep, maintain, or otherwise care for bees within the City without first obtaining a beekeeping license. A license is required for the keeping of honeybees within the City of Lonsdale pursuant to City Code §90.01.
- B. License Fee. The fee for a beekeeping license shall be set forth in the Lonsdale Fee Schedule, City Code §32.01, as may be amended from time-to-time.
- C. Application. An application for a beekeeping license shall include, but not be limited to:
 - 1. The address of the subject property where the apiary will be kept.
 - 2. A scaled drawing showing the location, size, and dimensions of all hives located on the subject property, including distance from other structures on the parcel and neighboring property lines. It is recommended that a certificate of survey and/or a recent Rice County aerial photo be used as a base map for said drawing.
 - 3. Proof of completion of a valid beekeeping training course. The curriculum of valid beekeeping courses shall be similar to that of the beekeeping courses offered by University of Minnesota or Three Rivers Park District. In some cases, multiples years of beekeeping experience and/or informal training may suffice in lieu of said formal training if a waiver is signed by an applicable educational institution or certified master beekeeper.
 - 4. Proof of property/liability insurance shall be required.
- D. Notice. After determination by the City Administrator, or his/her designee, that an application has been submitted with accurate and complete information, mailed notice shall then be sent to all properties within 350 ft. of the applicant's property (subject property). Recipients of said notice letter shall have fourteen (14) days from the date of the letter to contact the City of Lonsdale with any questions, comments, concerns, or objections related to the beekeeping license application.

- E. Objection. Prior to the issuance of a beekeeping license, and within fourteen (14) days of the letter date, a person may file a written objection to the issuance of the beekeeping license. If an objection is filed, the City Administrator, or their designee, will conduct a hearing with the applicant and the person who objects to the issuance of the beekeeping license. The City Administrator, or his/her designee, shall be guided by the following general principles and criteria, when determining whether or not to issue or revoke a beekeeping license:
1. Each beekeeping application shall be evaluated on a case by case basis, recognizing its importance and benefit to the parties and analyzed from all perspectives.
 2. During the hearing which is held pursuant to a written objection to the beekeeping license, the City Administrator, or his/her designee, can mediate between the parties by suggesting such strategies as moving the hive location or utilizing any other suitable management techniques.
 3. Objections to the beekeeping license based on bee sting allergies (anaphylaxis) should be supported by medical documentation of such allergy.
- F. Nuisance. A beekeeping license may be revoked if the beekeeping activity can be shown to have become a habitual nuisance pursuant to Lonsdale City Code Chapter 91, but only after the City has requested in writing that the licensee rectify nuisance conditions or other violations of the terms of the beekeeping license.
- G. Duration. Beekeeping licenses shall be valid indefinitely so long as the hives are operated continuously. License may be revoked or denied by the City based on negligence or nuisance. In such event, the licensee shall be provided with an opportunity to be heard. Licenses shall expire upon lapse in use for a period exceeding two (2) years or upon a transfer of property ownership.
- H. Right of Entry for Inspection. City Staff or City approved consultants may enter and inspect any property for which a beekeeping license has been issued following notice to the property owner at any reasonable time for the purpose of ensuring compliance with this policy and best practices.

- I. Conditions and Restrictions. Residents living in owner-occupied (non-rental) homes which are located on low-density residential properties zoned as R-1, R-1A, or R-2 may be permitted to keep and raise honeybees under the following conditions and restrictions:
 1. Location. Hives shall only be located in rear yards. Hive openings shall face toward the interior of the subject property.
 2. Setbacks. Hives shall be setback at least ten (10) feet from all property lines and the subject home, and at least twenty-five (25) feet from any public park, trail, or walkway.
 3. Flyaway Barrier. A flyaway barrier shall shield any part of a property line that is within twenty (20) feet from a hive. The flyaway barrier shall be six (6) feet in height and shall consist of a wall, fence, dense vegetation, or combination thereof such that the bees will fly over, rather than through it to reach the hive.
 4. Hive Density. No person is permitted to keep more than the following numbers of colonies on any lot/parcel within the City, based upon size or configuration of the apiary lot/parcel:
 - a. Less than ½ acre: Max: 2 colonies.
 - b. ½ acre – 1 acre: Max: 4 colonies.
 - c. Larger than 1 acre: Max: 6 colonies.
 5. Water. A clean water source shall be available near the hives at all times that colonies remain active outside of the hive. An adjacent lake or pond shall not constitute an acceptable convenient source of water.
 6. Equipment.
 - a. Equipment shall be maintained in good condition, including keeping the hives painted, and securing unused equipment from weather, potential theft or vandalism, and occupancy by swarms. Hives should be painted earth-tone or natural colors to blend-in with the surrounding area.
 - b. Unused beekeeping equipment shall be properly disposed of or stored indoors. Honeybee colonies shall be kept in hives with removable frames, which shall be kept in sound and usable condition. Each hive structure shall not exceed twenty (20) cubic feet in volume.
 7. Best Practices. Along with the previously mentioned conditions and restrictions, the City of Lonsdale recognizes that other best practices for urban beekeeping may be referenced and/or required.

8. Scrapings. Each beekeeper shall ensure that no wax comb, scrapings, or other material that might encourage robbing by other bees, wasps, nuisance insects, or animals are left upon the grounds of the subject property. Such materials and scrapings, once removed from the site, shall be handled and stored in sealed containers, or placed within a building or other insect-proof container.
9. Swarms and Aggressive Behavior.
 - a. A beekeeper may receive temporary allowance for an additional hive in the event a swarm is collected and until a new home is found for the colony. In no event shall temporary allowance exceed six (6) months.
 - b. Hives shall be continuously managed to provide adequate living space for their resident honeybees to control and avoid swarming.
 - c. Beekeepers shall try to obtain a young queen bee of a gentle stock. Since various strains of bees can have more suitable behaviors for a given setting, beekeepers shall re-queen the colony if the hive tends to be overly defensive or aggressive.
 - d. In any instance in which a colony exhibits unusually aggressive behavior, it shall be the duty of the license holder to promptly take appropriate action to address the behavior.
10. Definitions. The following terms, as used in this policy, shall have the meanings stated in this section:

Apiary - means the assembly of one or more colonies of bees at a single location.

Beekeeper - means a person who owns or has charge of one or more colonies of bees.

Beekeeping equipment - means anything used in the operation of an apiary, such as hive bodies, supers, frames, top and bottom boards and extractors.

Colony - means an aggregate of bees consisting principally of workers, but having, when perfect, one queen and at times drones, brood, combs, and honey.

Hive - means the receptacle inhabited by a colony that is manufactured for that purpose.

Honey bee - means all life stages of the common domestic honey bee, *apis mellifera* species.