

July 13, 2026

Housing & Neighborhood Assistance

OFFERED BY: WILSON

ORDINANCE No. ____-2026 amending and/or supplementing Title 9, Chapter 92 “Animals,” Section 92.29 “Beekeeping” of the Akron Codified Ordinances in order to modify beekeeping standards; and declaring an emergency.

WHEREAS, the City of Akron recognizes the important role that pollinator species, such as the honey bee, play in maintaining a healthy ecosystem; and

WHEREAS, the Ohio Department of Agriculture maintains free registration of apiaries and annually inspects colonies across the State of Ohio; and

WHEREAS, the County of Summit employs an apiarist to inspect bee colonies and report to the Ohio Department of Agriculture; and

WHEREAS, According the Ohio Department of Agriculture Apiary Program, Summit County has 334 registered apiaries;

BE IT ENACTED by the Council of the City of Akron:

Section 1. That Title 9, Chapter 92 “Animals,” Section 92.29 “Beekeeping” of the Akron Codified Ordinances is hereby amended and/or supplemented as follows:

92.29 - Beekeeping.

A. ~~No person shall place or keep a beehive in the City of Akron without first obtaining a permit therefor from the Director of Neighborhood Assistance.~~ **ALL APIARIES SHALL BE REGISTERED WITH THE STATE OF OHIO DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE APIARY PROGRAM.**

~~1. Permit applications shall be accompanied by a nonrefundable annual fee of five dollars for each apiary to help defray the costs of processing the application.~~ **BEEKEEPERS SHALL TO THE BEST OF THEIR ABILITY FOLLOW OHIO DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE BEST PRACTICES FOR BEEKEEPING.**

2. COMPLAINTS REGARDING APIARIES MAY BE RECEIVED BY THE OHIO DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE. THE DIRECTOR OF NEIGHBORHOOD ASSISTANCE SHALL SHARE ALL NUISANCE COMPLAINTS FILED WITH THE DEPARTMENT OF NEIGHBORHOOD ASSISTANCE REGARDING APIARIES IN THE CITY OF AKRON WITH THE OFFICES OF THE STATE AND SUMMIT COUNTY APIARY INSPECTION OFFICIALS.

3. BEEKEEPERS SHALL POST A COPY OF THEIR OHIO DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE REGISTRATION CERTIFICATE ON OR NEAR THE HIVES.

B. The Director of Neighborhood Assistance shall ~~issue a permit for an apiary if he finds that~~ **COMMUNICATE AND COORDINATE WITH STATE AND COUNTY APIARY INSPECTION OFFICIALS TO UNDERSTAND BEST PRACTICES AND TO ENSURE THAT:**

1. The apiary does not constitute a nuisance; and
2. The apiary does not disturb the tranquility of the surrounding neighborhood; and
3. The apiary does not endanger the public health; and
4. The apiary is placed and maintained ~~in a manner approved by the Director of Neighborhood Assistance and~~ **WITH** the following restrictions:
 - a. ~~The back of the beehive may be no less than six feet from any adjoining residential property or to any public road or public right of way.~~ **BEEHIVES ARE NO LESS THAN SIX FEET FROM ANY ADJOINING RESIDENTIAL PROPERTY, TO ANY RESIDENTIAL STRUCTURE, AND TO ANY PUBLIC ROAD OR PUBLIC RIGHT-OF-WAY.**
 - b. ~~The side of the beehive may be no less than fifteen feet from any adjoining residential property or to any public road or public right of way.~~
 - c. ~~The front of the beehive may be no less than twenty five feet from any residential property or to any public road or public right of way.~~
 - d. ~~B.~~ **The front or entrance of a beehive shall not directly face residences of adjoining property owners, UNLESS IT IS NECESSARY TO PRESERVE THE HEALTH OF THE HIVE.**
 - e. ~~C.~~ No person shall place or keep an apiary, or cause or allow an apiary to remain on land not owned or possessed by such person, without first obtaining the written permission to do so of the owner or person lawfully in possession of such land.
 - f. ~~D.~~ **Every person owning, possessing, or controlling an apiary shall maintain within ten feet of each apiary a supply of water with a backflow prevention device which shall be equipped with a float valve or similar device which assures an adequate accessible and usable supply of water for the bees. A SUPPLY OF FRESH WATER SHALL BE**

MAINTAINED ON-SITE IN A LOCATION ACCESSIBLE TO ALL COLONIES THROUGHOUT THE DAY, AND THE WATER SOURCE SHALL BE LOCATED CLOSER THAN ANY OTHER WATER SOURCE NOT OWNED BY THE PROPERTY OWNER.

F. UNLESS CERTIFIED AND/OR ENROLLED IN THE SUMMIT COUNTY CURRENT AGRICULTURAL USE VALUE PROGRAM OR AN EQUIVALENT STATE OR COUNTY AGRICULTURAL PROGRAM, NO SINGLE PARCEL OF PROPERTY MAY HAVE MORE THAN TWO (2) HIVES, PER TWO THOUSAND FOUR HUNDRED (2,400) SQUARE FEET. IF IT IS NECESSARY TO SPLIT HIVES TO PREVENT SWARMING, GROW THE COLONY, OR OTHERWISE MAINTAIN THE HEALTH OF THE COLONY, THE NUMBER OF HIVES IN EXCESS OF THIS LIMITATION SHALL BE RELOCATED WITHIN THIRTY (30) DAYS.

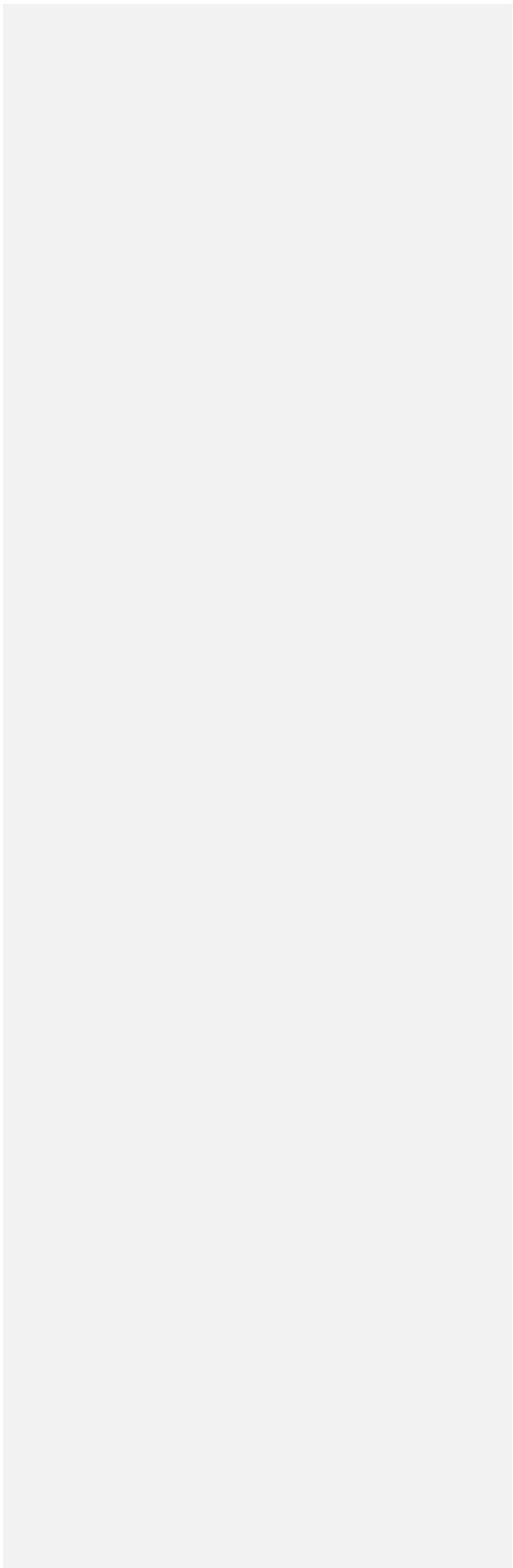
G. IF THE FRONT OF THE HIVE FACES A PUBLIC ROAD, PUBLIC RIGHT-OF-WAY, OR A RESIDENTIAL STRUCTURE ON AN ABUTTING PROPERTY, A FENCE, HEDGE, OR OTHER SOLID PHYSICAL BARRIER, KNOWN AS A “FLYAWAY BARRIER”, OF AT LEAST SIX (6) FEET IN HEIGHT SHALL BE PLACED ALONG THE FRONT OF THE HIVE, AND SHALL BE LOCATED WITHIN FIVE (5) FEET OF THE HIVE AND SHALL EXTEND AT LEAST TWO (2) FEET ON EITHER SIDE OF THE HIVE. NO SUCH FLYWAY BARRIER SHALL BE REQUIRED IF BEEHIVES ARE LOCATED AT LEAST TWENTY-FIVE (25) FEET FROM ALL PROPERTY LINES, OR FOR BEEHIVES THAT ARE LOCATED AT LEAST TEN (10) FEET ABOVE GRADE OR FOR BEEHIVES WITH THE SOLE OPENING POINTED TOWARDS THE RESIDENCE OF BEEKEEPER.

Commented [FW1]: Add citations.....back it up

Commented [FW2R1]: Michele on this

Section 2. That this Ordinance is hereby declared to be an emergency measure necessary for the immediate preservation of public peace, health, safety and welfare for the reason that amending the City’s regulations on beekeeping will provide important benefits to the environment and wildlife in the City, and provided this Ordinance receives the affirmative vote of two-thirds of the members elected or appointed to Council, it shall take effect and be in force immediately upon its passage and approval by the Mayor; otherwise, it shall take effect and be in force at the earliest time allowed by law.

[Signature Section]



Akron City Council - Uniform Council Report (UCR)Subject of Requested Legislation: 92.29 BEEKEEPING CODE UPDATESDepartment/Division: COUNCILRequestor: WILSON Phone/Ext: 330.283.6178If applicable, previous legislation on this subject (reference by ordinance/resolution number): O-133-2022; O-583-1991

Purpose/Objective of Legislation:

UPDATE BEEKEEPING CODE TO: (1) CHANGE BEEHIVE REGULATIONS TO CONFORM WITH CURRENT PRACTICE AND BEST PRACTICES; (2) UPDATE WATER SUPPLY LIMITATION; (3) REMOVE CITY PERMIT REQUIREMENT.**PART II – Financial Information**Does this Legislation directly involve the expenditure of funds? __YES XNOWas this expenditure budgeted for in the current operating budget? __YES XNOIf “YES,” describe how the budgeted amount for the project compares to the actual or estimated costs: **City Expenditures**

Budgeted Costs	
Amount:	
Fund:	
Org:	
Acct:	

City Receipts

Estimate of Costs		City Receipt of Costs	
Amount:		Amount:	
Fund:		Fund:	
Org:		Org:	
Acct:		Acct:	

Amount:		Amount:		Other Considerations
Fund:		Fund:		
Org:		Org:		
Acct:		Acct:		

Total expenditure (if applicable): \$ 0Total receipts (if applicable): \$ 0**PART III – DETAILED INFORMATION:** Attach detailed information/documentation, as described in UCR Instruction Sheet.

EXHIBITION: CLAUSE-BY-CLAUSE EXPLANATIONS

92.29 - Beekeeping.

A. ~~No person shall place or keep a beehive in the City of Akron without first obtaining a permit therefor from the Director of Neighborhood Assistance.~~ **ALL APIARIES SHALL BE REGISTERED WITH THE STATE OF OHIO DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE APIARY PROGRAM.**

Explanation: This edit abolishes the city's permit process for keeping bees and establishes a requirement for apiarists to register with The State of Ohio. This permit process is not being utilized by beekeepers or enforced by the city department. Permits add unnecessary restriction and place more burden on city staff to enforce something that they are not expert in and do not have specialized staffing for. The State of Ohio actively maintains and enforces registration and maintains state and county staff for apiary inspections. Information can be found at: <https://agri.ohio.gov/divisions/plant-health/apiary-program>

1. ~~Permit applications shall be accompanied by a nonrefundable annual fee of five dollars for each apiary to help defray the costs of processing the application.~~ **BEEKEEPERS SHALL TO THE BEST OF THEIR ABILITY FOLLOW OHIO DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE BEST PRACTICES FOR BEEKEEPING.**

Explanation: This edit abolishes the city permit process by stripping the permit fee structure and creates a requirement to follow the State of Ohio's best practices for beekeeping. Please note that the State of Ohio's registration is free.

2. **COMPLAINTS REGARDING APIARIES MAY BE RECEIVED BY THE OHIO DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE. THE DIRECTOR OF NEIGHBORHOOD ASSISTANCE SHALL SHARE ALL NUISANCE COMPLAINTS FILED WITH THE DEPARTMENT OF NEIGHBORHOOD ASSISTANCE REGARDING APIARIES IN THE CITY OF AKRON WITH THE OFFICES OF THE STATE AND SUMMIT COUNTY APIARY INSPECTION OFFICIALS.**

Explanation: This is a new additional clause which creates guidance for complaints from residents, as well as a requirement for the city to share complaints with state and county apiary officials, as the state and county maintain records of apiaries and conduct inspections. The city does not have apiary expertise or an apiarist on staff.

3. **BEEKEEPERS SHALL POST A COPY OF THEIR OHIO DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE REGISTRATION CERTIFICATE ON OR NEAR THE HIVES.**

Explanation: This edit adds a requirement to post certification of hive registration on or around the hives, as many other municipalities in Ohio mandate.

Stow, Ohio code states “Property owners shall post a copy of their Ohio Department of Agriculture registration certificate on or near the hives.”

B. The Director of Neighborhood Assistance shall ~~issue a permit for an apiary if he finds that~~ **COMMUNICATE AND COORDINATE WITH STATE AND COUNTY APIARY INSPECTION OFFICIALS TO UNDERSTAND BEST PRACTICES AND TO ENSURE THAT:**

*Explanation: This edit further abolishes the city permit process, and establishes a framework for city staff to communicate and coordinate with state and county apiary officials to ensure best practices are being kept by beekeepers. Information can be found at:
<https://agri.ohio.gov/divisions/plant-health/apiary-program>*

1. The apiary does not constitute a nuisance; and
2. The apiary does not disturb the tranquility of the surrounding neighborhood; and
3. The apiary does not endanger the public health; and
4. The apiary is placed and maintained ~~in a manner approved by the Director of Neighborhood Assistance and~~ **WITH** the following restrictions:

Explanation: This edit strips the necessity for an apiary to be placed in manner that is approved by the city, further abolishing the permit process, and offers guidance on placement, described in detail below.

- a. ~~The back of the beehive may be no less than six feet from any adjoining residential property or to any public road or public right of way.~~ **BEEHIVES ARE NO LESS THAN SIX FEET FROM ANY ADJOINING RESIDENTIAL PROPERTY, TO ANY RESIDENTIAL STRUCTURE, AND TO ANY PUBLIC ROAD OR PUBLIC RIGHT-OF-WAY.**
- b. ~~The side of the beehive may be no less than fifteen feet from any adjoining residential property or to any public road or public right of way.~~
- e. ~~The front of the beehive may be no less than twenty five feet from any residential property or to any public road or public right of way.~~

Explanation: These edits strip-down Subsections A through C of the original code regarding footage restrictions on placements of different sides of a hive from right of ways, property, and roads, and establishes a new uniform footage requirement for six feet. Different municipalities

have different footage restrictions; however, these footage restrictions are not necessarily considered best practices for beekeeping, and may be considered arbitrary.

Cleveland requires that “No beehive shall be kept closer than five (5) feet to any lot line and ten (10) feet to a dwelling or the permitted placement of a dwelling on another parcel, and no beehive shall be kept in a required front yard or side street yard. The front of any beehive shall face away from the property line of the Residential property closest to the beehive.”

Hudson requires that “Hives shall only be permitted within a rear yard and shall be set back a minimum of twenty-five feet from the property line and fifty feet from any structure suitable for occupancy.”

Stow requires “The back of the beehive may be no less than six (6) feet from any adjoining residential property or to any public road or public right-of-way. The side of the beehive may be no less than fifteen (15) feet from any adjoining residential property or to any public road or public right-of-way. The front of the beehive may be no less than twenty-five (25) feet from any residential property or to any public road or public right-of-way... All hives shall be located within the rear yard.”

Silver Lake states “No hive shall be kept closer than fifteen (15) feet to any lot line or public right-of-way. The entrance of any hive shall face whichever lot line or public right of way is furthest from the beehive location or the residence. Bees shall only be kept in the rear yard.”

In discussions with state and county apiarists, footage requirements will not stop bees from flying anywhere. These provisions may originate from the idea that hives may create a nuisance for neighbors, those on right of ways, or those driving, yet there are rarely complaints of such, as apiarist officials can attest. When complaints and issues happen, the updated code creates a clearer pathway for resolution.

~~4.~~ B. The front or entrance of a beehive shall not directly face residences of adjoining property owners, UNLESS IT IS NECESSARY TO PRESERVE THE HEALTH OF THE HIVE.

Explanation: This edit loosens the restriction for the fronts of hives to face away from residences, and re-orders the Subsection order. Beekeepers and advocates have advised that hives should be allowed to face any direction. It is not a fact that hives facing residences equate to bees becoming a nuisance for that residence. Indeed, State of Ohio best practices articulate that keepers should “Position hive entrances thoughtfully: Face the front of the hives toward a structure, fence, or tall planting so bees fly upward and away from neighboring living areas.” Information can be found at: <https://agri.ohio.gov/divisions/plant-health/apiary-program>

~~e.~~ C. No person shall place or keep an apiary, or cause or allow an apiary to remain on land not owned or possessed by such person, without first

obtaining the written permission to do so of the owner or person lawfully in possession of such land.

Explanation: This edit re-orders the Subsection order.

~~f. **D.** Every person owning, possessing, or controlling an apiary shall maintain within ten feet of each apiary a supply of water with a backflow prevention device which shall be equipped with a float valve or similar device which assures an adequate accessible and usable supply of water for the bees.~~ **A SUPPLY OF FRESH WATER SHALL BE MAINTAINED ON-SITE IN A LOCATION ACCESSIBLE TO ALL COLONIES THROUGHOUT THE DAY, AND THE WATER SOURCE SHALL BE LOCATED CLOSER THAN ANY OTHER WATER SOURCE NOT OWNED BY THE PROPERTY OWNER.**

Explanation: This edit loosens a highly-restrictive and non-enforced provision requiring water to be kept near the hive, removing the requirement for the water supply to have a backflow prevention device equipped with a float valve, and simply requires there to be water on the property closer to the hives than neighboring water off the property. This edit also re-orders the Subsection order. The State of Ohio's best practices state that to keep bee health and colony strength, keepers should "Ensure access to nectar, pollen, and clean water throughout the season;" and during the Summer, keepers should "Ensure there are water sources during hot, dry periods." State and county apiary officials and beekeepers alike regard the necessity for a water source with backflow prevention device equipped with a float valve to be unnecessary and overly restrictive. Information can be found at: <https://agri.ohio.gov/divisions/plant-health/apiary-program>

Stow code states: "A supply of fresh water shall be maintained on-site in a location accessible to all colonies throughout the day, and the water source shall be located closer than any other water source not owned by the property owner."

Silver Lake code states: "A supply of fresh water shall be maintained in a location readily accessible to all bee colonies on the site throughout the day. This water source must be closer than any other water source not owned by the property owner."

F. UNLESS CERTIFIED AND/OR ENROLLED IN THE SUMMIT COUNTY CURRENT AGRICULTURAL USE VALUE PROGRAM OR AN EQUIVALENT STATE OR COUNTY AGRICULTURAL PROGRAM, NO SINGLE PARCEL OF PROPERTY MAY HAVE MORE THAN TWO (2) HIVES, PER TWO THOUSAND FOUR HUNDRED (2,400) SQUARE FEET. IF IT IS NECESSARY TO SPLIT HIVES TO PREVENT SWARMING, GROW THE COLONY, OR OTHERWISE MAINTAIN THE HEALTH OF THE COLONY,

**THE NUMBER OF HIVES IN EXCESS OF THIS LIMITATION
SHALL BE RELOCATED WITHIN THIRTY (30) DAYS.**

Explanation: This edit creates a clear rule on the number of hives permitted per parcel in Akron, while taking into account active agricultural and business considerations for larger hive operations, as well as Ohio Department of Agriculture best beekeeping practices that state that hives should be split during certain seasons for certain reasons. This edit balances nuisance concerns with the practicalities of urban beekeeping and current hive operations in Akron.

In order to promote urban agriculture and beekeeping, it is best not to put a blanket ban on number of hives per lot, but moreso have a per-size-of-parcel restriction. Also, it should be noted that Akron parcels vary widely in size, with many small parcels around 2,500 square feet and many parcels with homes around 5,000 square feet. It is understood and recommended by some keepers to have one or two hives when starting out, and that even the smallest lot can be a good place to put a handful of hives.

About CAUV: Approximately 1,400 parcels in Summit County are enrolled in the Current Agricultural Use Value (CAUV) program. Of those, only about 42 parcels—roughly 3% of the countywide total—are located within the City of Akron. Akron parcels comprise 235.35 acres enrolled in CAUV. The average Akron CAUV parcel is 5.6 acres (approximately 244,110 square feet). Only 11 parcels are 10 acres or larger, while the remaining parcels are less than 10 acres. Parcel sizes range from a high of 19 acres (827,640 square feet) to a low of just 0.03 acres (1,306.8 square feet). To qualify for the CAUV, land must meet one of the following requirements during the three years preceding an application for the CAUV:

- Ten or more acres must be devoted exclusively to commercial agricultural use; or*
- If under ten acres are devoted exclusively to commercial agricultural use, the farm must produce an average yearly gross income of at least \$2,500.*

Many of the larger CAUV properties are concentrated in Ward 4, particularly along St. Michaels Avenue. The fact that only 3% of Summit County's CAUV-enrolled properties are located within Akron suggests that existing local policies and regulations may be limiting agricultural participation. This data indicates an opportunity to review and revise those policies to better support and encourage urban and small-scale agricultural activities and business opportunities within the city.

Ohio Department of Agriculture beekeeping best practices state that seasonal maintenance of hives include directions for the Spring, stating to “Prepare for colony growth by splitting strong colonies, rearranging brood boxes, and spacing brood frames” and recommendations for the Summer, stating to “Split colonies as necessary to avoid late swarms.” Information can be found at: <https://agri.ohio.gov/divisions/plant-health/apiary-program>

Commented [FW3]: Add citations.....back it up

Commented [FW4R3]: Michele on this

Cleveland requires that “No more than one (1) beehive shall be kept for each two thousand four hundred (2,400) square feet of lot area, and no beehive shall be kept on a lot less than two thousand four hundred (2,400) square feet in area.”

Hudson requires that “There shall be no more than a maximum eight hives kept on any property.”

Stow requires the following restrictions: “R-1 District. up to eight (8) hives; R-2 District. up to six (6) hives; and R-3 District. up to four (4) hives.”

G. IF THE FRONT OF THE HIVE FACES A PUBLIC ROAD, PUBLIC RIGHT-OF-WAY, OR A RESIDENTIAL STRUCTURE ON AN ABUTTING PROPERTY, A FENCE, HEDGE, OR OTHER SOLID PHYSICAL BARRIER, KNOWN AS A “FLYAWAY BARRIER”, OF AT LEAST SIX (6) FEET IN HEIGHT SHALL BE PLACED ALONG THE FRONT OF THE HIVE, AND SHALL BE LOCATED WITHIN FIVE (5) FEET OF THE HIVE AND SHALL EXTEND AT LEAST TWO (2) FEET ON EITHER SIDE OF THE HIVE. NO SUCH FLYWAY BARRIER SHALL BE REQUIRED IF BEEHIVES ARE LOCATED AT LEAST TWENTY-FIVE (25) FEET FROM ALL PROPERTY LINES, OR FOR BEEHIVES THAT ARE LOCATED AT LEAST TEN (10) FEET ABOVE GRADE OR FOR BEEHIVES WITH THE SOLE OPENING POINTED TOWARDS THE RESIDENCE OF BEEKEEPER.

Explanation: This edit mirrors other municipal regulations regarding flyaway barriers, by adding it to Akron code, with built-in flexibility for a variety of situations.

Silver Lake code states: “A solid fence of dense hedge, known as a “flyway barrier” at least six (6) feet in height shall be placed along the side of the bee hive that contains the entrance to the colony, and shall be located within five (5) feet of the hive and shall extend at least two (2) feet on either side of the hive. No such flyway barrier shall be required if all beehives are located at least twenty-five (25) feet from all property lines, or for beehives that are located at least ten (10) feet above grade or for beehives with the sole opening pointed towards the residence of beekeeper.”

EXHIBIT 2: 2027 Ohio Department of Agriculture Beekeeping Best Practices

Information can be found at: <https://agri.ohio.gov/divisions/plant-health/apiary-program>

Best Practices for Beekeepers

This guide provides **recommended practices for managing honey bee colonies in Ohio**. These are **voluntary guidelines** designed to help beekeepers maintain healthy, productive colonies. For official regulations, please refer to Ohio Apiary Laws separately.

Recommended Practices for Hive Location

- **Choose a sunny, sheltered site:** Bees thrive in areas with good sunlight and protection from strong winds.
- **Position hive entrances thoughtfully:** Face the front of the hives toward a structure, fence, or tall planting so bees fly upward and away from neighboring living areas.
- **Avoid hazards:** Stay clear of flood-prone areas and places exposed to pesticide drift.

Bee Health & Colony Strength

- **Source healthy bees:** Purchase from inspected, licensed suppliers to avoid introducing disease.
- **Maintain strong, queenright colonies:** Healthy colonies are less vulnerable to pests and pathogens.
- **Provide resources:** Ensure access to nectar, pollen, and clean water throughout the season.

Seasonal Management Recommendations

Spring

- Ensure bee clusters have nearby frames of honey or feed. Feed if needed.
- Prepare for colony growth by splitting strong colonies, rearranging brood boxes, and spacing brood frames.
- Track Varroa mite levels and inspect for disease.
- Confirm queen presence, acquire new colonies or queens early for summer buildup.

Summer

- Monitor for Varroa mites and treat if thresholds are exceeded.
- Continue checking colonies for queen presence and disease.
- Ensure there are water sources during hot, dry periods.
- Split colonies as necessary to avoid late swarms.

Fall

- Monitor for Varroa mites and treat if thresholds are exceeded.
- Ensure colonies weigh at least 80 pounds so they have enough honey for winter survival.
- Remove excess supers and consolidate brood boxes so that clusters are close to the food stores.
- Install mouse guards and check hive insulation.

Winter

- Protect hives from wind and moisture; wrap or insulate if needed.
- Maintain good ventilation & air circulation prevent condensation buildup.

Disclaimer

These guidelines are **recommendations only** and are not legal requirements. They represent widely adopted practices among experienced beekeepers to promote healthy colonies and successful apiary management.