

**CITY OF NORWALK
ORDINANCE COMMITTEE
SPECIAL MEETING
OCTOBER 16, 2018**

ATTENDANCE: Eloisa Melendez, Chair; Tom Livingston; Doug Hempstead;
Michael Corsello; Chris Yerinides; Beth Siegelbaum; Doug Stern

STAFF: Attorney Brian Candela, Corporation Counsel

1. ROLL CALL

Ms. Melendez called the meeting to order at 7:00PM.

2. PUBLIC HEARING (possible action on):

There was no public hearing this evening.

3. PUBLIC HEARING DISCUSSION

There was no public hearing discussion this evening.

4. PUBLIC COMMENT

Ms. Debora Goldstein- 66 Osborne Street

Ms. Goldstein stated that she wonders sometimes when people craft these ordinances whether they have ever been poor or spoken to a poor person regarding the unintended consequences for this. She said the reason there are cargin bags in the stores is that it is a convenience for the customer and encourages them to spend more money and if it were practical for the store to charge for those bags they wouldn't do so. She said the wide adoption of plastic bags came as a result of the fact that they had handles, and if the paper content is going to be specified on the recycled paper bags in the ordinance she proposed that they include a handle, and recommended that the ten cent charge be taken out all together because its punitive to the poor people to assume

that they have money for reusable bags and to assume that they make single trips to the market or that they have a vehicle. She said we went from paper to plastic because plastic was cheaper for the supermarkets and more utilitarian for customers, she agrees with taking plastic out of circulation but let the markets solve the problem of paper bags.

Louise Washer 280 Silvermine Avenue

Ms. Washer stated that she is the President of the Norwalk River Watershed Association and the organization supports the ban, and part of what they do is river clean-ups and they had done three in Norwalk and approximately 1800 pounds of trash out of the river and most of the bulk that was pulled out was plastic. She said that the environmental problem has gotten worst over the past seven years and their group supports a policy action regarding this growing threat to our environment.

Amanda Barker- 108 Keeler Avenue

Ms. Barker stated that she feels that it is our moral obligation to jump into action before it's too late and that a plastic bag ban is crucial for the City of Norwalk, and they have drawbacks far greater than their benefits and not only are they not astatically pleasing they also cause serious tangible harm to our environment. They have a major negative impact on marine life and with Norwalk located on the coast it is enviable that some of the plastic bags end up in Long Island Sound and 100,000 marine animals are killed each year as a result of plastic bag pollution. She said that plastic bags attribute to climate change and over one trillion plastic bags are produced each year, and they are incredibly hard to recycle and don't break down in the landfills so we need to stop putting the convenience of plastic bags over the health of our planet and marine life and must join our neighboring towns in implementing a plastic bag ban for the greater good.

Jack Egan- Stamford

Mr. Egan stated that his organization has been working with towns on plastic bag bans and there are currently 83 local laws in the State of Massachusetts and eight are pending that ban plastic bags, and 39 percent of the population of Massachusetts in under some sort of a plastic bag ban. He said his organization is not in favor of shifting from plastic to paper bags and it's about bringing our own bag, and they would like to see the ten cent pass through fee that the retailer keeps to help offset their cost of bags and eliminate plastic all together with the idea that the consumer will shift their behavior and bring reusable bags. He said they are also recommending having the thickest bag for reusable bags and the strongest ordinance would require 12 mils. He said there are also grants available for those who can't afford to purchase the reusable bags.

Jim Barley – 19 Park Lane

Mr. Bartley thanked the committee for implementing the fracking ban for the City of Norwalk and for listening to the concerns of the citizens of Norwalk and hopefully move the legislation forward to ban plastic bags.

City of Norwalk
Ordinance Committee
Regular Meeting
October 16, 2018
Page 2

Dick Harris- Westport, CT.

Mr. Harris stated that he works for Norman Bloom and he does water quality efforts in the six harbors and he sees far too many of the plastic bags hung up in the marshes and there are thousands getting into the sound in spite of everyone's best efforts. He proposed that the plastic bags are banned completely, and that the process had gone very smoothly in Westport and they worked with the local merchants on the transition.

David Hudson- Maritime Aquarium

Mr. Hudson stated they have a profound focus on plastics and the effects to the environment.

Fenella Pearson - 51 Quintard Avenue

Ms. Pearson stated she grew up in England and Italy and when she was growing up they all took their own bags to the store and there were no plastic bags. She said overtime plastic bags were introduced but they have now eliminated them and you never see any plastic bags in any supermarket or shop in any part of Italy or England and people have gotten used to it and don't even think to leave their house to go grocery shopping without taking their bags or they use boxes.

Ms. Melendez closed the public comments at 7:20PM

5. ACCEPTANCE OF MINUTES

SEPTEMBER 18, 2018

**** MR. LIVINGSTON MOVED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES AS AMENDED.
** THE MOTION PASSED WITH (6) SIX IN FAVOR AND (1) ONE
ABSTENTION (MR. CORSELLO).**

6. OLD BUSINESS

There was no old business discussed this evening.

7. NEW BUSINESS: Plastic Bag Ban Ordinance (Non-Biodegradable)

Mr. Livingston said he had invited representatives from the Connected Food Association as well as representatives from Skip the Plastic.

Mr. Pesce of the Connecticut Food Association read a statement and said that he represents most of the grocery stores in the State of Connecticut and they have been evolving over time with this issue and that it is a global issue. He said that dozens of Connecticut communities are considering legislation requiring stores to either ban or charge a fee on carryout bags and that Stamford, Greenwich and Westport have already passed local ordinances. With 169 towns and cities in Connecticut a one by one plan is not the right approach and makes it difficult for retailers to comply and is also confusing for consumers. The Connecticut Food Association's position is that fees have proven to be effective in the reduction of using single use bags and protecting the environment, and they purpose that the State of Connecticut should instead require stores to charge a fee on all carry out bags and the goal is to reduce the use of front end plastic bags by at least 85 percent over three years. He said that there is a myth that paper bags are a better solution and they are more costly to recycle than plastic and don't bio-grade easily in landfills. Additionally, they are less likely than plastic bags to be reused and have a larger carbon footprint associated with the production and distribution. Over the past year they have been work with legislators, recyclers and environmental groups to solve this problem via a statewide legislation. The purpose of the law would be to significantly reduce the amount of single use bags and to encourage consumers in Connecticut to use their own reusable bags for shopping by requiring not less than a 5 cent charge on carry out bags that are provided at retail stores. He said that the Connecticut Food Association is here to support the efforts and they are trying to be part of the solution and from a retailer prospective they are trying to be on the right side of the issue.

Ms. Melendez asked Mr. Pesce for an update on what is going on at the state level. Mr. Pesce said that they have been meeting with different legislatures and have sponsors for a bill and they are 100 percents certain that there will be a bill. He said that he thinks the California model is the strongest model and has gotten the most bags out of the environment. Ms. Melendez asked Mr. Pesce if he thinks it's best to charge for plastic bags and keep it still as an option if necessary. Mr. Pesce said he recommends the California model which allows for the ten cents with a higher biodegradable bag has changed behavior and it is a proven model and they would support it because it gets the bags out of the environment but still offers consumers something if they are willing to pay for it.

Ms. Ball stated that she is a member of Skip the Plastic Norwalk and they support passing an ordinance that bans plastic check out bags and they support reusable shopping bags and the

elimination of plastic bags combined with a fee for paper bags will be an incentive for the consumer to switch to reusable bags. According the Center for Biological Diversity Americans use 100 billion plastic bags a year which requires 12 million barrels of oil to manufacture, and according to the Hartford Current it was estimated that Connecticut alone uses 1 billion plastic bags each year which translates into Norwalk using approx 30 billion plastic bags each year and only one percent of plastic bags are recycled. As of October 1st Norwalk no longer accepts plastic bags or film for recycling in the blue bins and plastic bags are used for an average of 12 minutes and more than 100,000 plastic bags end up in Long Island Sound each year. Plastic bags take hundreds of years to degrade and they don't break down completely but instead photos degrade that absorbs toxins that continue to pollute the environment. According to resusethisbag.com studies by 200 individual cities and municipalities that have enacted ordinances around the country show a reduction in plastic bags in storm drains, rivers and residential and a savings in plastic processing fees. She said they believe Norwalk needs to be perceived as a progressive city devoted to sustainably in order to attract people who want to live here, and Stamford, Greenwich, Weston and Westport have all passed ordinances banning plastic checkout bags and they believe Norwalk needs to do the same in order to stay competitive and in only three weeks over 800 Norwalk residents have signed a petition supporting the ban as well as 150 students.

Ms. Melendez asked how they would feel to at first start for charging for plastic bags for a year as a starting point. Ms. Ball said that their goal is to encourage people to reuse reusable bags. Mr. Yerinides stated that he thinks the ten cent charge is good because it levels the playing field for different sized retailers. He said that the low income concerns that were discussed and asked if there are other governments programs that the proposed ordinance can be expanded to.

Mr. Livingston read the proposed ordinance and said that it is based in large part on Stamford and they used it as a starting point. Mr. Corsello asked if someone from DPW would have the authority to issue a citation that states when do go to court if someone were to contest. Mr. Hempstead suggested that it fall under the jurisdiction of Weights and Measures person. Mr. Corsello suggested contacting the agencies to see who would have the manpower to enforce it. Attorney Candela said he would reach out to them as well as Ms. D'Amore. There was further discussion regarding enforcement and Mr. Hempstead suggested contacting Westport or Stamford to see what their process is. There was discussion regarding the charge for the bags and Mr. Corsello suggested that signs be required to be posted that states the bags would be an additional fee. Mr. Hempstead requested there be research done on where the six month implementation period came from, and why or why not we shouldn't include the ban on plastic straws and stirrers in the ordinance as well as the up side and the down side of instituting the fee.

Mr. Hempstead suggested a resolution be drafted that is approved by the Common Council and have it sent to the State Legislator and to the Council of Governments stating that Norwalk is in

support of a state wide ban and or fee on plastic. He also requested copies of the California model.

Mr. Livingston stated that he would like to encourage the city to provide some initial funding for the reusable bags for the senior centers.

8. DISCUSSION ITEM

There was no discussion this evening.

9. ADJOURNMENT

**** MR. YERINIDES MOVED TO ADJOURN**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

The meeting adjourned at 8:45PM

Respectfully submitted,

Dilene Byrd
Telesco Secretarial Services

Candela, Brian

From: Diane Lauricella <dlauricella24@yahoo.com>
Sent: Tuesday, October 16, 2018 3:02 PM
To: Candela, Brian
Subject: Fw: Ordinance Committee Webinar Registration - Writing Bag Ban Ordinances Zoom

Follow Up Flag: Copied to Worldox (Worldox\50470\0039\00037987.MSG)

Brian
FYI.
Please enter this into the record.

Sent from Yahoo Mail on Android

On Mon, Oct 15, 2018 at 6:23 PM, Diane Lauricella
<dlauricella24@yahoo.com> wrote:

Eloisa and Tom

I am pleased that you are initiating an Ordinance related to a plastic bags ban, with incentives. There are many iterations that are found nationally.

I will not be able to attend tomorrow's meeting, but I offer the following thoughts:

1. Consider a multi-item "Single Use Plastic Ban", rather than a stand-alone Bag Ban... That way, we can expedite removal of straws, etc. from the waste stream by discouraging the use.
OR
2. Adopt Stamford's new ordinance verbatim.
3. Whatever Ordinance path you choose, include an Education Component that MUST occur. This will increase the success rate.
4. FYI link below. Please consider inviting Ordinance Committee members and other officials to sign up for this webinar on October 22.

<https://ctdeep.zoom.us/meeting/register/d66448c9f1de0fdf34538d7d4481ef37>

Regards
Diane Lauricella
203-858-1537

Sent from Yahoo Mail on Android