

February 27, 2019

The Stonington Board of Selectmen and the Plastic Bags and Straws Ad Hoc Committee held a joint special meeting on this date at Stonington Police Department at 6:00 p.m. to conduct a public hearing. Present were First Selectman Rob Simmons, Selectman John Prue, Selectwoman Jocelyn Kepple, Erika Lobling, Thaler Hefel, Farrah Kaeser, Don Kluberanz, Jason Hine, Stephanie Hayes-Houlihan, and Stacey Wilbur. Also, present were members of the public and press. Moira Deasy and Beth Markowski-Roop were absent.

**(1) Call to Order**

Mr. Simmons and Mr. Hefel called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

**(2) Pledge of Allegiance**

**(3) Correspondence**

Mr. Simmons took in correspondence from Ms. Julie Holland, Chairperson of the Stonington Beatification Committee, in favor of the ordinance.

**(4) Public Hearing – Review of the proposed ordinance**

Mr. Simmons called the Public Hearing to order at 6:02 p.m. Mr. Hefel thanked local business owners and committee members. He stated that they had received little to no push back on the ordinance.

Mr. Simmons gave an overview of the ordinance stating that the overall the goal is to encourage the use of reusable bags. If approved the ordinance includes exemptions for bags such as dry cleaning, newspaper, garbage as well as allowing plastic straws for those who request it specifically. Further, it includes a ban on single-use plastic carryout bags and single-use plastic straws. The ordinance also includes enforcement which contains fines and a potential for non-renewal of any municipally issued license if found to be in violation.

Ms. Suzanne Harley spoke in favor of the ordinance and discussed the different types on non-plastic straws available. She also commented that with time people will adjust to the idea of reusable bags and biodegradable straws.

Ms. Sally Cogan spoke in favor of the ordinance and believes it is very doable considering what plastics do to the ocean.

Ms. Carlene Donnarummo asked about public concerns. Mr. Hine stated that the biggest concerns were with the public being misinformed. He stated that residents assumed that town yellow trash bags would be included in the ordinance which they are not.

Ms. Susan Jones questioned if the committee had reached out to local businesses to see how the ordinance would impact them.

Mr. Hefel stated that Big Y is ready to comply as soon as the ordinance goes through. He added that Mr. Simmons had conversations with Mr. Michael McQuade who is against the ordinance. He stated they did not approach Stop and Shop. Ms. Wilbur stated that fast food corporations should have procedures in place to follow the ordinance as similar changes have been incorporated around the country.

Mr. Simmons suggested minor edits to the ordinance which had some duplicate information and formatting issues.

A motion was made by Mr. Prue seconded by Ms. Kepple and voted unanimously to approve the edits.  
A motion was made by Mr. Hefel seconded by Ms. Kaeser and voted unanimously to approve the edits.

**(5) Comments from the Public**

None

**(6) Comments from the Committee**


- Ms. Hayes-Houlihan stated that the Town of Middletown has moved forward to vote on their ordinance and they began after the Town of Stonington. She hoped the item would move to a town meeting soon so they can begin educating people.
- Mr. Kluberdanz stated that he hopes the ordinance moves forward soon.
- Mr. Hefel stated that the reason that the committee exists is because residents asked the Town to create a committee to research this topic.
- Ms. Kaeser stated that restaurants will still have plastic straws available upon request.

**(7) Comments from the Selectmen**

- Ms. Kepple thanked the committee for their dedication and research.
- Mr. Prue thanked the committee for presenting such a good product and stated it would be up to the voters to decide on the ordinance.
- Mr. Simmons congratulated the committee on their hard work.

**(8) Adjourn**

There being no further business to come before this Committee, the meeting adjourned at 6:39 p.m.



Stacey Haskell

Recording Secretary