

April 2, 2019

The Plastic Bags and Straws Ad Hoc Committee held a special meeting on this date at Stonington Human Services at 6:00 p.m. Present were Moira Deasy, Erika Lebling, Jason Hine, Beth Markowski-Roop, Farrah Kaeser, and Don Kluberdanz. Also present were two members of the public. Thaler Hefel, Stephanie Hayes-Houlihan, Stacey Wilbur and press were not present.

**(1) Call to Order**

Ms. Deasy called the meeting to order at 6:00 pm.

**(2) Pledge of Allegiance**

**(3) Comments from the Public**

Suzanne Harley of the nonprofit Green Planet Films spoke in favor of the ordinance. She would like to offer, in conjunction with the education component of the roll out, a screening of environmentally impactful films. She has hosted screenings at LaGrua Art Center in the past. Ms. Harley also presented a variety of reusable straws.

Keith Bessette spoke in favor of the ordinance as a local resident who enjoys nature and wants to teach his young son the importance of protecting the environment.

**(4) Minutes**

Having sent the minutes from the February 19, 2019, meeting to the committee prior to this meeting, the committee was able to review. A motion was made by Ms. Markowski-Roop, seconded Ms. Kaeser and passed unanimously to accept the minutes.

**(5) Correspondence**

Ms. Deasy reported that the committee had received a packet of letters from Mrs. Temel's 5<sup>th</sup> grade class at Pawcatuck Middle School. The majority of the letters were in support of the ordinance, while two were against.

**(6) Old Business**

**Discussion- Review the Ordinance**

Ms. Deasy reported that there have been several conversations on social media about the proposed ordinance. She asked the committee to discuss the biggest misconceptions and how to address them. She said that she continues to read the complaint that people will not be able to buy plastic straws in bulk at grocery stores, which is not part of the ordinance. Mr. Hine commented that he reads concerns about the government having too much control. He said that he reminds people that the committee was formed because citizens asked for it, it is comprised of citizens, and ultimately it will be citizens who vote on the ordinance. Ms. Kaeser reported that she reads comments about confusion over whether or not the Stonington yellow trash bags will still be in use. Mr. Kluberdanz said he read complaints about the quality of paper straws.

Ms. Markowski-Roop commented that the ordinance leaves room for exceptions, and that the best way to fight misinformation is with information. She stressed the importance of education.

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**(7) New Business**

**Discussion- Discuss a Plan for the Town Vote, Including Vote Format, Securing Vote Attendees, and the Committee's Role in the Vote**

Ms. Deasy asked the committee to discuss how to increase attendance at the Town Vote. Ms. Markowski-Roop asked if the Westerly Sun would be running a notice prior. Mr. Hine said that the vote is already on the Rise Up Mystic website, and would be on their Facebook page next week. He asked the committee to "Like" and share the post.

Ms. Deasy asked the committee to please keep each other informed when updates are posted on various media sites so the committee members can support each other.

Regarding the packet of letters from the Pawcatuck Middle School's 5<sup>th</sup> Grade class, Ms. Deasy will generate a letter of response from the committee. Mr. Hine volunteered to speak to the class and answer questions they might have.

Mr. Kluberanz made the recommendation that the committee posts many articles and links in favor of plastic bans. He will also contact the Waterfront Commission to inform them about the vote.

Ms. Lebling will contact Stonington High School, Stonington Beautification Committee, Westerly-Pawcatuck Downtown Business Association, Mystic Aquarium, and NESS to inform each that the vote is scheduled.

Ms. Markowski-Roop will contact WBLQ to see if committee representatives can promote the ordinance on air.

Mr. Hine will contact the Mystic Seaport to inform them about the vote.

Ms. Deasy and Ms. Markowski-Roop will contact their respective Chambers of Commerce to inform them about the vote.

Ms. Deasy recommended that each committee member share on social media the New London Day announcement of the Town Vote, which should be posted Thursday, April 4<sup>th</sup>.

**Discussion – Start Preparing for the Six Month Roll Out by Discussion Social Media Plans, the \$2500 Budget, and Plans to Focus on Education**

Ms. Markowski-Roop listed some possible items to budget, including a website that would host FAQ's, marketing materials, and events; materials for businesses, such as placards and signage; and a \$500 reward for a logo contest. She also reported that South Kingstown sold reusable bags for \$10 a piece during their roll out, and Newport received a \$10,000 donation to purchase 9,000 bags for their roll out.

**(8) Comments from the Public**

Mr. Bessette commented that he would like to ask various local businesses if they would post signs in their establishments advertising the Town Vote. He also commented that he thought the committee should post images to Instagram with a creative hashtag.

Ms. Harley commented that she would like to donate \$1000 of graphic design time to the committee for signage, PDF downloads, etc.

**(9) Comments from the Committee**

Mr. Hine asked if the committee might reach out to other towns that are contemplating similar ordinances to lend help. Ms. Deasy liked the idea; however, said right now the attention should be focused on Stonington.

**(10) Adjourn**

There being no further business to come before this Committee, the meeting adjourned at 7:04 p.m.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'ER Lebling', written in a cursive style.

Erika Lebling  
Recording Secretary