

April 30, 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, Thaler Hefel, Erika Lebling, Beth Markowski-Roop, Farrah Kaeser, Stephanie Hayes-Houlihan, Stacey Wilbur and Don Kluberanz. Also present was one member of the public, Donna Simmons from the Stonington Garden Club. Jason Hine 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

None

(4) Minutes

Having sent the minutes from the April 2, 2019 meeting to the committee prior to this meeting, the committee was able to review. A motion was made by Mr. Hefel, seconded Ms. Kaeser and passed unanimously to accept the minutes.

(5) Correspondence

None

(6) New Business

Presentation- Representatives of the Stonington Garden Club Will Discuss the Possibility of Partnering with the Ad Hoc Committee During the Roll Out.

Donna Simmons, the Conservation Chair of the Stonington Garden Club expressed the Club's interest in assisting in the ordinance roll out. She discussed that one focus of the SGC's conservation initiative is "Refusing" in addition to Reusing and Recycling. She displayed reusable bags made from t-shirts and discussed the possibility of working in tandem with the ad hoc committee to engage local students with this project. Ms. Simmons would also like to offer the SGC's help in planning town-wide educational events, like potluck dinners featuring environmentally minded film screenings. She commented that the SGC has 80 plus volunteers who are willing to aid in any part of the ordinance's roll out.

Discussion- The Committee Will Discuss the Budget Allocated by the Town and the Possibility of Other Funding Sources

Ms. Deasy reported that the ad hoc committee's budget is estimated to be at \$1500; however, the budget had not passed as of this meeting.

Mr. Hefel reported a list of local Stonington businesses who were interested in contributing to the ad hoc committee to benefit the roll out process. He will contact the Town of Stonington to determine the proper way accept and record donations and sponsorships, and if the committee needs a treasurer moving forward. One option discussed was finding sponsors for the reusable bags and putting the sponsors' logos on the back of the bags. Ms. Markowski-Roop has sample bags with a price list and will bring them to the next meeting.

Ms. Deasy, Mr. Hefel and Ms. Lebling will be responsible for creating the parameters of possible sponsorship levels and for recruiting sponsors.

Discussion – The Committee Will Discuss the Incentive Program for Businesses Complying with the Ordinance

The committee discussed options for offering incentives to the businesses who were already providing green options to the community. Ms. Deasy tasked the committee with brainstorming ideas to promote these already participating businesses. She will research ways to find out which businesses are already taking green initiatives.

Discussion – The Committee Will Create a Basic Outline of the Roll Out Timeline

Ms. Markowski-Roop noted that the ordinance will go into effect on October 12, 2019, 6 months after the day of the vote April 11, 2019. She then reported some of the tasks Newport, RI, completed in the roll out period of their ordinance. She noted that Newport had events or activities to promote the education of the ordinance every month, including producing marketing materials, attending events and recruiting school groups to assist. They also maintained a strong online presence through various social media platforms and a website. Their most popular link on their webpage was the “Frequently Asked Questions” section. After a brief discussion, Ms. Markowski-Roop, Ms. Hayes-Houlihan and Mr. Kluberanz volunteered to compile a list of 10 frequently asked questions each. They will present these questions at the next meeting, and then ensure the questions are answered with accurate and up to date information for publishing on the website. In addition, Mr. Kluberanz and Ms. Markowski-Roop will begin to gather pertinent articles and tips which will go on a “Helpful Guidance” section of the website.

Because the ad hoc committee’s web site will be hosted by the Town of Stonington, Ms. Deasy will arrange a meeting with the Town’s IT department to ask the following questions about the website capabilities: 1.) How often can we add new information, specifically articles, to the website? 2.) When can the website go live? 3.) Can the committee have a Facebook page?

In terms of the logo contest timeline, Ms. Deasy reported that the Mystic Chamber of Commerce has offered the committee a table at the Mystic Art Festival in August. The committee discussed the possibility of running a logo contest through the summer, with the final vote being held at the art festival. There was a discussion of if that was too far in the future, and how can the businesses who are currently operating under green standards be incentivized, but there was also hesitancy to create a temporary “seal of approval” prior to the unveiling of the permanent logo. There was a discussion of the possibility of having the logo contest conclude with a vote at the Taste of Mystic event in early June. Ms. Deasy and Ms. Markowski-Roop will meet to discuss and research options for the contest.

Ms. Deasy recommended that Mr. Hine head the education initiatives, specifically as they relate to the Pawcatuck school that wrote letters to the committee presented at the April 2nd meeting, and the

educational components of the SGC partnership. Ms. Wilbur said she would be interested in assisting with education, too.

Ms. Lebling reported that she had been in contact with Mystic Aquarium, Save the Bay and NESS and all three would like to be involved in the roll out. She also volunteered to head the community outreach components with Ms. Kaiser's help.

(7) Comments from the Public

Ms. Simmons asked if the committee would consider reaching out to the Mystic Chamber of Commerce to engage them more with this process. She also asked if the businesses who are currently "green" could receive a "seal of approval" sticker prior to the official logo being released. She also offered SGC Volunteers as needed.

(8) Comments from the Committee

None

(9) Adjourn

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



Erika Lebling
Recording Secretary