

November 13, 2018

The Plastic Bags and Straws Ad Hoc Committee held a Public Hearing on this date at Stonington High School at 7:00 p.m. Present were Moira Deasy, Erika Lebling, Jason Hine, Beth Markowski-Roop, Farrah Kaeser, Stephanie Hayes-Houlihan, Stacey Wilbur and Don Kluberdanz. Also present were members of the public and press. Thaler Hefel was not present.

(1) Call to Order

Ms. Deasy called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm.

(2) Pledge of Allegiance

(3) Correspondence

None

(4) Public Hearing

Ms. Deasy called the public hearing to order at 7:02 pm.

Presentation – Present the findings of the committee and review proposed ordinance.

Ms. Deasy presented the findings of the committee by sharing a PowerPoint presentation. She reported that the community had asked for the creation of this committee, and the committee was comprised of local business and community members.

Ms. Deasy reviewed the committee's Mission Statement.

Ms. Deasy reported that the committee had visited other communities to research similar ordinances. Town officials, businesses and environmental representatives were interviewed during this process to collect environmental data, to assess the business impact, and to assess the impact on individuals with disabilities.

Ms. Deasy reported the key findings of the research were that 73% of litter is plastic, and if this plastic bag ban goes into effect, 3 million bags could be eliminated from Stonington per year.

Ms. Deasy reported the committee's primary recommendations as follows: 1.) Ban single use plastic bags, 2.) Single use plastic straws should be available upon request only, 3.) Hardship waivers can be granted for businesses, 4.) Ordinance will take effect six months after passage, and 5.) Stonington will mirror the roll out from Newport, RI.

(5) Comments from the Public

Ms. Deasy opened the hearing to comments from the public at 7:13pm. In total 19 members of the public spoke; 17 spoke in favor and 2 spoke against.

Those who spoke in favor of the proposed ordinance are as follows:

Noah Kaeser of 396 N. Stonington Road

Helen Gross of 19 Walnut Street

Aly Travis of 7 Hardwood Lane

Sarah Berger of 4 Johnson Avenue

Jon Mitchell of 25 Hinckley Street

Cindy Oksanea of 33 Kidds Way

Peg Roberts, President of the Greater Mystic Chamber of Commerce

Janis Minic

Jackson Hine of 23 Denison Avenue

Suzanne Harle of 95 Water Street

Fred Wagner of 125 River Road
Catherine Deidmann
Matt Beuduin of 2 Washington
Lyndsey Pyke-Fuchild of 37 Greenmanville Avenue
Sonia Klein of 5 Borodell Avenue
Amy O'Neal of 23 Denison Avenue
Tim Lebling of 232 River Road

Those who spoke against the proposed ordinance are as follows:

Mark Mercier of 35 Circle Drive
Connie Szymonik of 6 School St. Unit 17

Mark Mercier spoke against the proposed ordinance citing that he believed education should take place before legislation. He did not believe the legislation would help.

Aly Travis, Helen Gross and Sarah Berger, members of Teens Against Pollution, a youth environmental activism group, spoke in favor of the proposed ordinance, and submitted their written speech for the records along with a petition signed by 40 individuals in support of banning polyethylene bags in Stonington.

Cindy Oksanea spoke on behalf of Trash Talks CT/RI in favor of the proposed ordinance. She cited a survey created by Trash Talks CT/RI in which a sign up sheet was left at 9 small local businesses. The question was asked, "Would you support a single use plastic ban." The survey yielded 576 yeses and 0 nos.

Peggy Roberts, President of the Greater Mystic Chamber of Commerce, spoke in favor of the proposed ordinance, and submitted a letter for the record.

(6) Comments from the Committee

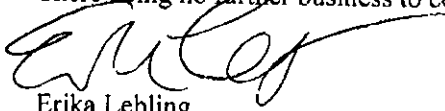
Ms. Deasy opened the hearing to comments from the committee at 8:06 p.m.

Ms. Kaeser spoke regarding why the committee was not proposing an outright ban on straws. She reported that 20-25% of the community has some sort of disability that may require a plastic straw, and currently there is not a sufficient substitute.

Ms. Kaeser also reported that the committee highly interested in creating an educational component as the proposed ordinance is put in place, and will rely heavily on community involvement.

(7) Adjourn

There being no further business to come before this Committee, the meeting adjourned at 8:10 p.m.


Erika Lebling
Recording Secretary