

August 23, 2012
5:30 P.M.
Newport, Oregon

The Plastic Bag Community Plan Task Force met on the above date and time in the Conference Room A of the Newport City Hall.

In attendance were Task Force Members: LeOra Johnson, Laura Kriz, Herb Goblirsch, Vince Pappalardo, Rhonda Fry, Dennis Fry, Gretchen Ammerman, Matt Hawkyard, Jay Fineman, Ken Riley, and Steve Farish. Also present were Council liaisons Lon Brusselback David Allen. Citizens present were Rex Capri. Media present was Dave Morgan of News Lincoln County. Staff present was Peggy Hawker, City Recorder/Special Projects Director. Rex Capri, Newport resident, was also in attendance.

CALL TO ORDER

Hawkyard called the meeting or order and everyone introduced themselves.

Allen reported that the City Council had extended the deadline for the Task Force to complete its work until November 5, 2012. He read section 3 of Resolution No. 3576 regarding the purpose, as follows: "Section 3. The responsibility of the Task Force is to identify different approaches to reduce or eliminate the use of single-use plastic checkout bags, and ways in which to measure their effectiveness. This may include community outreach and education, local recycling efforts, a local ban either with or without a charge/deposit on paper checkout bags, or a combination of these or other approaches."

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK DISCUSSION

Hawkyard stated that he would like one to three options to present to the City Council, and suggested using the conceptual framework to develop those options.

Kriz reviewed components of the conceptual framework that was developed at the previous meeting, and refined by Kriz, Allen, and Hawker.

Rex Capri asked what precipitated the resolution. Hawkyard explained the history of the issue relative to the city; and Allen explained the stakeholders.

Goblirsch stated that if you want to see a large group of concerned citizens; try banning these bags.

Fry stated that the issue is not just the use and disposal of the bags, but the impact on people of the production of plastic bags. She suggested that the city could work with other groups to provide reusable bags, noting that this could be a great branding opportunity.

Pappalardo reported that there is a ban in Santa Cruz, California, and that there was a lot of concern upfront. He added that there is a charge of ten cents for a bag, and the net effect is that people are bringing useable bags, and there has been no outcry. He stated that the ban was imposed by the City Council rather than an election.

Hawkyard asked that members be respectful and warned everyone not to over talk one another. Goblirsch left the meeting at this time.

Farish displayed a plastic bag that he found under a bush outside the City Hall. He stated that the city is the last line of defense between plastics in the environment and in the ocean. He added that there are at least four Task Force members who create a toxic atmosphere, noting that these folks think the Task Force should not exist. He reminded the group that it is here to address the reduction or elimination of single-use plastic bags, and that these folks will confound the group.

Kriz noted that Fry had made the suggestion to work with local groups to supply reusable bags, and asked for other suggestions.

Capri asked about recycling. Kriz noted that this could be increasing the awareness of recycling and expand the recycling opportunity to all stores using plastic bags.

A discussion ensued regarding whether people would shop in other communities if the city banned plastic bags. Dennis Fry stated that he did not think people would shop elsewhere because of a plastic bag ban. He added that he is fine with increasing recycling and education, but noted that it is important to identify where the plastic goes to in the recycling effort.

Johnson stated that she takes issue with comments regarding adversarial opinions on where the plastic bags go, and added that they are not going into the ocean. She noted that they are not single-use plastic bags; they are sustainable; and are recycled into a number of different products. She suggested using this time to show how to better use the plastic bags.

Goblirsch returned to the meeting.

Pappalardo noted that the bags ultimately end up recycled or in the trash.

Riley stated that less than one percent of recyclables are plastic bags. Pappalardo noted that there is no incentive for people to recycle the bags. Riley stated that it is good to have different views, and added that anything from this group will be well thought out. He added that the effort must begin with education. He stated that the group needs to find common ground to get to the end result; and if it is education - what education. Kriz noted that that also must be a way to measure the effectiveness of the options, including education.

Goblirsch stated that the group should move away from a ban; leave the status quo; and go with education. He added that the haulers could be given direction.

Hawkyard noted that the common problem is getting groceries home from the market, and the issue is that the plastic bags end up in the landfill. Fineman noted that everyone has to believe there is a problem before it is recognized as a problem.

Goblirsch stated that things will improve with education, and that he would not want to see incentives to make people recycle.

Riley stated that he did not know whether it was necessary to recognize a problem to agree on education. He noted that education works and is a good first step.

Pappalardo suggested that education is not strong enough, and recommended no bag with a fee on plastic bags.

Johnson stated that the problem is the misuse of plastic bags and that she is opposed to a ban.

Hawkyard noted that if there is agreement for no ban with a fee, he would like to see the fee set at ten cents so that the grocer recoups some of the cost. He suggested working with store owners to provide reusable bags that are free. He added that at ten cents per bag, it does not take long for every family to have reusable bags. He suggested that five cents could go to the merchant, and five cents toward the purchase of reusable bags.

Allen noted that Lyle Mattson and Joe Gilliam represent larger grocers, and suggested that Hawkyard request input from them.

Johnson stated that not all plastic bags come from Newport businesses.

Goblirsch asked whether the group can all agree to no ban with a fee. Fineman reiterated that everyone had agreed on education, but that a measurement method is needed. Ammerman stated that the haulers conduct a fair amount of education. She added that she would support a fee rather than a ban, and suggested that the fee be used for education, but recognized that there is still a cost to the bags.

Riley agreed with the concept of no ban with a fee, and asked where the money would be directed.

Allen noted that the city would still have to look into fees, as a mandated fee could be a legal issue. He added that the education issue has a lesser requirement in terms of legal analysis.

Rhonda Fry questioned the fairness of a store collecting more than the cost of the bags when Oceana, for example, doesn't provide plastic bags.

Allen reiterated that the legal staff would have to perform a legal review for sufficiency.

Goblirsch asked who would administer the money, and suggested that the fee be kept close to the cost of the bags.

Hawkyard stated that now that the Task Force has direction, it should think about the fee for discussion at the next meeting.

Johnson stated that Cyd Cannazzaro is a wonderful resource for education. She asked why a fee is needed.

Ammerman noted that there is an informative video on recycling at northlincolnsanitary.com.

Allen noted that perhaps between now and the next meeting, the haulers could work with Mark Saelens regarding the current education efforts and how they could be improved.

Pappalardo suggested a sub-task force to discuss what was heard this evening, and Hawkyard suggested it consist of Pappalardo and Goblirsch.

Dennis Fry noted that some businesses in Newport have a fee for paper bags.

Brusselback mentioned the legal time and fees.

DEVELOP NEXT AGENDA AND SET MEETING DATE

Hawkyard stated that he would ask Charlie Plybon to attend the next meeting to discuss what other cities are doing regarding the options of 1 - no ban with a fee and recycling education; and 2 - no ban.

Goblirsch suggested no ban followed by a fee or no fee.

Farish stated that the bags should be banned.

Dennis Fry noted that a phased option should be part of the plan.

It was agreed that the next meeting will be held on September 27, 2012, at 5:30 P.M.

ADJOURNMENT

Having no further business, the meeting adjourned at 6:59 P.M.