

May 31, 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: Jay Fineman, LeOra Johnson, Herb Goblirsch, Lyle Mattson, Mark Saelens, Katherine Howard, Debra Smith, Heiner Wagener, Rhonda Fry, Mark Jones, Matt Hawkyard, Dennis Fry, Peggy Sabanskas, Gretchen Ammerman, Laura Kriz, and Vince Pappalardo.

Staff present was Peggy Hawker, City Recorder/Special Projects Director.

RE-USE DISCUSSION

1. Hawkyard noted that the goal of this discussion was to consider possible ways of reusing.
2. Mattson reported that there are several plastic bag recycling facilities in the United States although the large majority are located overseas.
3. Mattson displayed a bag that had been made from a recycled product, noting that it cost four cents. He also displayed a degradable bag that costs 13 - 14 cents.
4. Rhonda Fry asked whether the degradable bags pose a new recycling problem.
5. Fineman displayed a book entitled, "Garbagology," that contains the history of waste management. He noted that the largest polluter is cigarette filters, adding that it is possible to get rid of one waste product while producing another.
6. Wagener reported that both Los Angeles and San Francisco have banned plastic bags. He stated that he did not like the article from "New Nation" that had been sent to the Task Force via e-mail.
7. Ammerman noted that she is not a fan of the article regarding soccer kids becoming ill from a reusable bag. Mattson noted that the key to the article is that the bag was tested two weeks later and the germs were still there.
8. It was noted that some of the problems regarding hygiene could be addressed through education. Jones noted that the health factor supersedes all other factors.
9. Hawkyard asked what could be done to make opponents of reusable bags more comfortable in using them. Johnson noted that it's not the bag that is a concern; rather the way people are using them. She added that plastic bags have many other uses.
10. Saelens noted that it has not been suggested that the ban would apply to all stores. He agreed that education is needed, and added that he hopes it is not "all or nothing." He suggested that one alternative is to ban plastic bags in non-grocery stores, or to ban them except for use with meat and produce, or use a better type of plastic bag.
11. Hawkyard noted that the Task Force focus is on single use plastic check-out bags.
12. Fineman noted that where the bags go after being used is very important. He added that he is interested in seeing the risk information for plastic bags.
13. Sabanskas noted that while public health is a big issue; reusable bags post a theft problem in her store.

14. Goblirsch stated that he had heard that plastic bags kill 80% of marine mammals while in actuality, it is lost fishing nets. He asked why try to ban something that is not a problem.
15. Rhonda Fry noted that there is misinformation on both sides of the issue.
16. Hawkyard noted that he is upset when public decisions are purchased.
17. Smith stated that she hopes there is consensus for some community action.
18. Hawkyard suggested that checkers should have the right to refuse any bag that comes into stores. Mattson noted that he doesn't want to be the police, and doesn't want government telling him how to do business. Hawkyard added that the checkers could be educated on the issue, and signage could be placed by the check stands.
19. Hawkyard suggested that reusable bags could come with the message, "Wash Me."
20. Rhonda Fry noted that there is also a liability issue involved with the reuse of plastic bags.
21. Jones suggested looking for what can and cannot be done. He added that a ban is a powder keg. He added that expanding the use of reusable bags creates the probability of a serious health issue. He suggested additional recycling to buy time while a solution is sought.
22. Goblirsch stated that he has a problem with the word "ban." He suggested a discussion on what everyone can agree on, including food safety, cleaning of bags, separate recycling bins for bags, and that a solution should be one that will not upset folks and cost a lot of money. He asked what the group could agree on in terms of education.
23. Wagener asked why big cities ban the bags and do not find these problems.
24. Pappalardo asked whether people would support a ban with a switch to compostable bags if a customer did not bring a reusable bag. Sabanskas noted that she would likely lose vendors.
25. Kriz explained the different types of plastic, and particularly #7 plastics.
26. Saelens noted that he has heard a desire for a palatable solution, and suggested that this be kept on the table.

DEVELOP NEXT AGENDA AND SET MEETING DATE

It was agreed to discuss "reduce" at the next meeting, and that the meeting be held on June 28, 2012, at 5:30 P.M., in Conference Room A of the Newport City Hall. Anyone with material for distribution at this meeting should get the information to Peggy Hawker.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Johnson suggested the Task Force develop a list of some ways that single-use plastic bags are being used.

Goblirsch suggested a contest in schools about what can be done with plastic bags.

ADJOURNMENT

Having no further business, the meeting adjourned at 6:56 P.M.