

July 26, 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, Mark Jones, Lisa Kallenberger, Laura Kriz, Peggy Sabanskas, Herb Goblirsch, Vince Pappalardo, Mark Saelens, Rhonda Fry, Dennis Fry, and Steve Farish. Also present were Council liaisons Mark McConnell, David Allen and Sandy Roumagoux, and Cyd Cannizzaro.

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

### **CALL TO ORDER**

Jones called the meeting to order and everyone introduced themselves. He reported that the Task Force had previously discussed recycling, reusing, and reducing, and that tonight's discussion would focus on education and on synthesizing the germane details from previous discussions. Jones noted that while this issue is sometimes emotional, that everyone needs to be respectful of one another. It was noted that the City Council would like a menu of options or suggestions.

### **EDUCATION DISCUSSION**

Kriz reported that the solid waste haulers are not making money from recycling, other than metal recycling. She suggested looking at opportunities in the community, and noted that Dahl Disposal publishes a quarterly newsletter, as do Thompson's Sanitary Service and North Lincoln Sanitary. The newsletters are also available on the companies' websites. It was noted that the newsletters are educational and focus on waste prevention and reduction. Kriz added that Dahl Disposal has articles on plastic bags. She brought samples of archived newsletters for the Task Force, noting that the newsletter is a good educational tool. Sabanskas reported that since she no longer receives a paper bill, that she does not read the newsletter on-line. She stated that most media outlets publish public service announcements at no cost. Saelens noted that there is room for more education, but that public service announcements cannot be relied on as a sole source for education.

Johnson stated that the bags have been mislabeled as single use bags, and that this mislabel negatively advertises what they truly are. She added that the problem is with people and how they use the bags. She suggested taking programs to the school, but added that the programs need humor and hands-on activities. She also noted that teaching can occur through a negative approach, i.e., "here's what happens when you do dumb things."

Goblirsch noted that all plastics, with the exception of diapers, get reused. He added that radio would be a valuable educational media. He stated that he agrees with the education approach, rather than enacting a law.

Papplardo stated that the bags are labeled appropriately. He noted that education will work to a small degree, adding that a good alternative would be to pass a law prohibiting the use of anything but true reusable bags.

Farish stated that the education aspect is interesting, but that an incentive is needed. He noted that he is leaning toward a stiff tax or fee, i.e., 50 center per plastic bag with some of that amount going back to the retailer, and some going toward a clean-up program and education. He added that 90% of plastics could be replaced with hemp products. Sabanskas asked how hemp products would be cost effective for businesses, noting that she could financially do this.

Jones stated that plastic bags make up one-half percent of the garbage waste stream. He added that he disagrees with a tax without a citizen vote. He noted that there is a small group of people trying to force big change. He suggested reusing bags, not penalizing people, and recognizing the health issues associated with reusable bags. Pappalardo noted that the city has set a precedence with a tax without a vote when it imposed the gasoline tax.

Saelens noted that he and the solid waste haulers are already in classrooms teaching youth. He added that the children understand the issue more than adults. He stated that the Task Force was formed to develop recommendations that can be measured and that will significantly reduce plastic bags in the community. He added that product stewardship programs are catching on, noting the upfront fees for the disposal of electronics, paint, etc. He suggested that a survey could be conducted to gauge the public's thoughts on this issue.

Johnson displayed a reusable bag.

Goblirsch stated that he is shocked at the misinformation on the internet regarding this issue. He added that he is opposed to a ban, fee, or tax, as they interfere with his freedom of choice.

Allen read the resolution that created the Task Force and defined the task. He noted that the charge of the committee is to define what approach it wants to use and determine whether it can be done in Newport.

Kriz noted that Corvallis explored three options. One is a ban on plastic with a pass-through fee on paper; another is a retail pass-through fee on both plastic and paper; and the other is a voluntary education program about the plastic problem and to encourage reusable bags. She reported that Corvallis had developed a flyer that included the pros, cons, and comments on each of the options.

Dennis Fry suggested looking at existing models. He discussed the Corvallis implementation, noting that the adjustment could be made easy for retailers. He stated that he disagrees with the fee being a tax.

Saelens reported that Hawaii has a state-wide ban on plastic bags. He discussed a potential implementation schedule that would include educating folks on the goals and implementation while allowing vendors to deplete their stock of plastic bags. He noted that the ban could be permanent or a pilot project. He added that the adoption, education, and inventory reduction could occur at once, while continuing discussion on the measures and time frames. Jones asked how the outcomes would be measured.

Allen suggested developing three approaches to send to the City Council. Saelens suggested that the options could be: 1. No ban; 2. An option with a fee structure; and 3. A phased in approach.

McConnell noted that the Task Force could indicate support of each option.

Kriz suggested three options: 1. Ban with or without a fee and with a vote of the citizens; 2. No ban and voluntary education; 3. A ban with a phased in approach to include education. She developed a charge of goals and approaches to the issues that is attached to these notes.

Dennis Fry asked whether a fee is possible without a ban. Goblirsch asked about the fee and who would be the recipient of the fees.

Sabanskas asked why there is no curbside recycling of plastic bags at this time. Kriz noted that it is financial, but that a survey of customers could indicate interest. Sabanskas suggested asking customers for options in the survey. Rhonda Fry suggested that people might willingly switch to reusable bags, and that it would be good to survey the community. Goblirsch stated that a ban should be on the state level, and recommended no ban with a minimal fee. Jones stated that he supports recycling, reuse, and education, and that he believes a survey or an election should be conducted. A discussion ensued regarding survey methods. Dennis Fry noted that an election would exclude a large population, and that a survey would be a more thorough sampling. Allen suggested that by the next meeting, the Task Force should develop a survey to reach a broad population, and the type of survey that would be most effective. He noted that election questions must be run by the city attorney for a review of legal sufficiency. Dennis Fry suggested distributing the surveys through the utility bills. Kriz noted that it would be difficult not to have individuals responding multiple times. It was noted that an election would consist of one question while a survey could have multiple questions and sample interest and attitudes.

It was agreed that Allen, Roumagoux, Kriz, and Hawker would organize the chart.

Jones stated that he appreciated all input.

Saelens displayed the "2010 Lincoln County Opportunity to Recycle Report," adding that he would try to make current copies available for Task Force members.

#### **ESTABLISH NEXT MEETING DATE**

It was agreed to hold the next meeting on August 23, 2012, at 5:30 P.M. Saelens agreed to help co-chair if Hawkyard is unable to attend.

#### **ADJOURNMENT**

Having no further business, the meeting adjourned at 7:03 P.M.