

**Economic Development Subcommittee**  
**June 12, 2019, 6:00 PM**  
**Minutes**

TOWN OF FRANKLIN  
TOWN CLERK

2019 SEP -9 A 10: 10

**Members present:** Matthew Kelly, Glenn Jones, Melanie Hamblen, Eamon McCarthy Earls.

**Also in attendance:** Town Administrator Jamie Hellen, Planning Director Bryan Taberner

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Councilor Kelly called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM.

**1. Grants Update.** Mr. Hellen provided an update on three recent grant applications:

**a. DLTA Economic Profile analysis.** The Town has been awarded a technical assistance grant through the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC) for a Foundational Market Analysis and Market Position Summary. The hope would be to increase economic activity in the following older commercial districts: Downtown Franklin Commercial District; the Crossing (near Union and Cottage Streets); and the Mixed Business Innovation District. DPCD is partnering with the Cultural District Committee and Franklin Downtown Partnership on this project.

**b. Municipal Vulnerability Grant w/ Bellingham.** The Towns of Bellingham and Franklin received a State grant to reduce their vulnerability to natural hazards and climate impacts through two related projects: (1) Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness (MVP) and (2) FEMA Hazard Mitigation Planning (HMP). MAPC will provide related consultant services and the project will begin this summer.

**c. Housing Choice Designation.** In March the Town submitted a 2019 Housing Choice Designation Application to the State, and in May we received the Housing Choice Designation. Mr. Taberner mentioned that building permits for 805 housing units were issued during the last five calendar years.

**2. Plastic Bag Ban Proposal.** Mr. Hellen introduced the issue and referred to the distributed packet, which included a cover memo, an October 4, 2016 memo from Jeff Nutting, House Bill No. 771, and the original proposed bylaw amendment - Bylaw Amendment 16-774, New Chapter 130, Plastic Checkout Bag Prohibition Bylaw. The ban was presented and discussed at a 2016 Town Council meeting; at that time the issue did not gain enough support to move forward. One question asked at the time was why wasn't the proposed Bylaw fully vetted by the Economic Development Subcommittee first before going to the full Council.

Mr. Hellen stated a new version of a Bylaw is being worked on. The current House Bill has over 100 supporters in the Statehouse, a retailer association is now in favor of a state-wide ban, and over 100 Massachusetts communities already have bylaws banning the plastic bags. Mr. Hellen mentioned there are several students from Franklin High School advocating for a bylaw banning thin plastic bags at checkout; the following FHS sophomores and juniors attended the meeting: Jasmin Singh, Pratusna Navavri, Hannah Burr, Charlotte Healy, and Ethan Salvesen.

The five students provided details on why the Town should pass a bylaw to ban plastic bags, and provided a handout for the Committee - "Franklin Plastic bag ban: Why it is best for our community", which provided a summary of their thoughts on the matter. Students discussed a variety of issues, including environmental and health impact of plastic bags.

The students mentioned the current plan includes new business safeguards including a 12 month waiting period when continued use would be allowed, and a 3 month long additional waiver,

which combined give businesses a chance to easily phase out their plastic bag stock, and ensures businesses are not caught off guard and hurt by the proposed bylaw. The students mentioned Franklin is a Green Community and has always been a leading community; it should lead the way on this issue.

Councilor Jones asked why ban plastics bags instead of Dunkin Donuts cups or straws. Students provided a variety of reasons, including it's a good place to start, bags are the largest problem at this time (100 billion bags per year are used in the U.S.O, and there is no way to properly recycle.

Councilor Eames asked if the students were proposing 5 cent per bag, or a total ban. Students confirmed a total ban was proposed. A discussion was had regarding pros and cons of plastic vs. paper grocery bags, and related issues. A question was asked if reusable plastic bags (4 mil) would be allowed. Students answered yes, only grocery plastic bags would be banned. The proposed Bylaw is the same as proposed in 2016, plus safeguards.

Councilor Jones recommended making residents aware of these issues, possibly through Franklin Downtown Partnership, provide more time for public input, and garner support of business.

Councilor Hamblen mentioned there is a petition being circulated. Students claimed to have over 1,000 signatures from businesses and community members. One business owner to oppose the Bylaw in 2016, Dadaroi's Hardware, is now neutral on the issue.

Councilor Eames stated the deposit option should be looked at. Studies in Connecticut have shown more plastic is now being used because the reusable bags are of thicker plastic. The Town may want to work with Bellingham because the majority of groceries are purchased there.

Councilors discussed next steps. Councilor Jones asked if students should return to the subcommittee. Councilor Kelly stated the students should make whatever changes they want and send to Jamie Hellen for review. Mr. Hellen stated the students should consider a petition, and requiring a deposit on bags or purchase of bags. When students return with the updated bylaw, a presentation will be given to the full Council.

Meeting Adjourned at 6:45 PM