

**Economic Development Subcommittee  
August 14, 2019, 5:30 PM  
Minutes**

TOWN OF FRANKLIN  
TOWN CLERK  
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RECEIVED

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

**Also in attendance:** Town Administrator Jamie Hellen, Planning Director Bryan Taberner, Assistant to Town Administrator Chrissy Whelton, Town Planner Amy Love, Planning Board Vice Chair Joe Halligan.

Councilor Kelly called the meeting to order at 5:30 PM.

**1. Plastic Bag Ban Proposal.** Mr. Hellen introduced the issue and referred to the distributed packet, which included the same documents distributed at the last meeting on June 6<sup>th</sup>. Several Town residents provided comment on the potential plastic bag prohibition bylaw. There was debate on whether or not plastic bags are actually recyclable.

Theresa Shea of Christine Ave provided substantial input on the proposed ban, stating the Students are doing a good job, but the Town should be looking at all plastics. She stated 10 years ago the Town had a committee on trash, and a similar committee should be created now to address not only plastic bags but Styrofoam cups and all plastics. House and Senate Bills regarding a possible state-wide bag ban are currently being discussed at the Statehouse. The Bills are still being fine-tuned but there is a good chance a Bill will pass in the near future. Ms. Shea mentioned if Franklin passes an ordinance it would become null and void if a state bill passes; she mentioned 134 Massachusetts communities already have bylaws banning plastic bags. She stated the current bylaw should not be passed, the issue is much bigger than that, and a committee should be formed.

Andrew Bissanti of 148 Brook Street stated he was chair of the Economic Development Subcommittee when the issue was discussed in 2016. He mentioned several issues were concerns in 2016, and some still are today, including possibility of jobs being affected, cloth bags are easily forgotten, some segments of the community like the plastic bags, and some need plastic bags with handles. He asked if Town Council would consider a ballot question. Ms. Shea mentioned there has been a pole (paper or plastic) and 80 people did not want plastic banned.

Ethan Salvesen, one of the student proponents stated he'd like to address these concerns. He mentioned the main concern is with seniors and their trouble carrying other type bags, and also that others use the bags for trash or other reasons. He mentioned paper bags with handles have slightly less environmental impacts; he mentioned several Towns have banned plastic bags and he hasn't heard about negative impacts. Ethan mentioned in 2016 there was a Bill being discussed at the State House that did not pass, so we shouldn't count on the 2019 Bill being passed. He provided a quick update on the petition; they have 157 signatures since they started in July. They will likely get many more. He stated most people talked with were in favor of the bag ban. He contacted Franklin Downtown Partnership for input and support; the issue will be discussed at their September meeting. He stated of the 28 businesses providing input, 25 were in favor, 2 were neutral and 1 opposed.

Hannah Burr, one of the student proponents stated there are definitely many other trash and recycling related issues, but we should start with plastic bags. She commented even though there

are bins in grocery stores there is no way to actually recycle. Ms. Shea disagreed stating there are companies that take the plastic bags and make them into other plastic items including benches.

Henry Maddox of 90 Elm Street said he asked a Market Basket manager what they did with the returned plastic bags, and the manager stated he did not know. Ms. Shea stated there is a program that takes the plastic bags. Councilor Kelly stated much research is still needed and asked Ms. Shea if she would work on it. Debra Carlson of 517 Maple Street mentioned bags can be recycled but they turn up in the trees. They are not being recycled.

Jane Flaherty from Concetta Way stated that if they are recycled they are just turned into another plastic item. The Town should address other containers later, the bags are a good first step.

Councilor Hamblen stated the students are getting the Community to understand that changes are needed. Councilor Eames stated uniformity is important for the business community; businesses in all communities should be dealing with the same recycling regulation. It would be good to see the State take action on the issue. Councilor Jones stated he appreciates all the efforts, but not much has changed. He believes the State will eventually pass a Bill. He stated he wasn't sure if banning bags is the way to go, and gave his opinion that it's time for a cultural shift similar to in the 1980s when plastic bags started to be used to save trees. A subcommittee may be a logical start.

Councilor Kelly stated the issue would be put on the Economic Development Subcommittee's October 23<sup>rd</sup> agenda. He requested Representative Roy be invited to discuss what the State is doing on the issue.

**2. Potential project at the former Keigan's dealership - East Central Street.** Joe Halligan discussed the former Keigan property that he wishes to develop. Two individuals, Muneer Ahmed and Mirajuddin Ahmed, representing the possible developer attended the meeting. Mr. Halligan stated the previous project he pursued did not work out; MassDOT delayed the project by a whole year. The adjacent Ficco's property is no longer available. Mr. Halligan introduced a preliminary plan for a mixed use development that included two 4-story apartment buildings and two commercial buildings. He would have cross easements with the adjacent Big Y property, and the Town would be provided with a permanent easement to access their well.

Meeting Adjourned at 6:45 PM