

**RTM Public Health and Safety Committee**  
**October 22, 2018**  
**Darien Town Hall Room 213**

**MINUTES**

Committee Members in Attendance: Nina Miller, Jennifer Woodbury, Brian Rayhill, Laura Mosher, Sara Parent, Mac Patrick, Gary Swenson, Olive Hauser, Lois Schneider, Holly Giordano

Committee Members Absent: Mia Handler, Colin Kelly, Susannah Lewis, Linda Terhune

PH&S Chair Mac Patrick called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm and introduced Olive Hauser, a new member of the PH&S committee. Olive worked in the Department of Human Services in Darien for 26 years, and was the Director of Human Services for 7 years.

The committee unanimously approved the minutes of the 6/11/18 PH&S meeting.

Paola Sordini, Lori McGrath, and Annie Roberts from BYO Darien joined the committee to discuss their group's efforts to achieve plastic bag reduction in the Town of Darien.

The mission of BYO Darien is to reduce plastic bag waste by promoting the use of reusable bags. They are proposing an ordinance in Darien to prohibit merchants from handing out plastic bags in their stores. Recycled paper bags would be permitted with a 10 cent charge per bag.

According to BYO Darien, there is a significant amount of plastic bag waste being generated in town. One grocery store in town uses 18,000 plastic bags per week and one pharmacy uses 22,000 bags per month. Plastic bags cannot be recycled in Darien any longer, so the only place these bags end up are incinerated, in landfills, or in the ocean.

Ms. Roberts discussed how plastic affects public health. Chemicals released when plastic is burned include lead, mercury, and cadmium. PBA found in plastics affects human hormones. Microplastics are found in bottled water and seafood. There are 8 million tons of plastic introduced into oceans every year.

Mr. Patrick encouraged BYO Darien to work with town attorney, Wayne Fox, for help in crafting the proposed ordinance.

Ms. Sordini stated that there should be no financial burden to local businesses, and most businesses in town support this ordinance. She also stated that the fee for paper bags is important to achieve the goal of reducing waste, as it reminds people to bring reusable bags. There will be a 6 month waiting period after the ordinance is passed before the fee is imposed.

Many other local communities have already passed similar ordinances, including Stamford, Greenwich, Westport, and Weston. 17 other towns are currently working on ordinances as well.

The committee discussed enforcement of the ordinance. Mr. Patrick mentioned that Jayme Stevenson does not want any town funds spent on enforcement. There will be a fine for businesses that do not comply.

Ms. Sordini mentioned that the reduction of plastic bag waste should provide a cost savings to the town because of less trash having to be incinerated (currently it costs \$94/ton to burn trash).

The Public Works Committee will lead this ordinance through the RTM, so BYO Darien was encouraged to meet with them.

Mac Patrick adjourned the meeting at 7:53 pm.

Respectfully submitted by Jennifer Woodbury.