

**MINUTES
JOINT MEETING
CULTURAL AND SOCIAL AWARENESS COMMISSION
ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION**

January 7, 2016
City Council Chambers

The special joint meeting of the Cultural and Social Awareness Commission and the Environmental Commission of the City of Woodstock was called to by Chairperson Laura Crain 6:01PM on Thursday, January 7, 2016 in the Council Chambers at City Hall. Notice of this special meeting was posted at least 48 hours in advance as required, and the media and all Commission members were notified of this special meeting.

Roll calls were taken.

CULTURAL AND SOCIAL AWARENESS COMMISSION MEMBERS PRESENT: William Donato, John Hudson, Jose Rivera, Ivy Sagrado, and Laura Crain.

CULTURAL AND SOCIAL AWARENESS COMMISSION MEMBERS ABSENT: None

ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION MEMBERS PRESENT: Ed Ellinghausen, Laurie Kacmar, Steve Wenzel, and Erica Poremba.

ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION MEMBERS ABSENT: Jaci Krandel

STAFF PRESENT: Human Resources Director Deb Schober, Planning and Zoning Administrator Jim Kastner, Assistant Director of Public Works Tom Migatz, and Executive Assistant Jane Howie.

OTHERS PRESENT: Mayor Brian Sager and City Clerk Cindy Smiley

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion by E. Poremba, second by W. Donato, to approve the minutes of the December 10, 2015 meeting as presented. Ayes: W. Donato, J. Hudson, J. Rivera, L. Kacmar, S. Wenzel, E. Poremba, and Chairperson L. Crain. Nays: none. Abstentions: I. Sagrado and E. Ellinghausen. Absentees: J. Krandel. Motion passed.

PUBLIC COMMENT

John Headley, 1008 Powers Road, stated he is a teacher at Woodstock High School and noted three students are present this evening who would be interested in helping the Commissions with the project. He further noted there are additional students who would like to work on this project.

Cynthia Kanner, Chairperson of the Environmental Defenders' Bagless Committee, expressed her support and thanked the Commissions for hosting her presentation at the last meeting. She stated she and the Defenders are looking forward to working with the Commissions.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

Mayor Sager expressed his sincere appreciation to the Commissions for their willingness to take this project on for the community. He stated this is of obvious interest to the Environmental Commission but also crosses the boundary into social awareness and the image of the community. Noting that Woodstock has been identified as one of the most sustainable communities, he stated he has come to really dislike the litter created by plastic bags and the image this presents of the city. He stated he has a strong personal bias that we do not have to rely on plastic bags, and noted this program gives the City

of Woodstock the opportunity to be the first to address this. Mayor Sager then stated this is one of his two major priorities for the next two years, with the other being the homeless population.

Mayor Sager stated his feeling that it is never a good idea for the Mayor to direct a Commission and this is not his intent. He wants to, however, communicate some important points to the Commissions. He noted the City of Woodstock, with the help of the Defenders, was first in curbside recycling many years ago and he wants the City to be first in terms of a very comprehensive program concerning the use of plastic bags. He stated he is in favor of a proclamation but he also wants to go forward with the comprehensive program which includes the inclusion of an identifiable municipal bag which will be an alternative to plastic. He displayed an example of such a canvas bag which was given to him in Woodstock England and whose large size and sturdy construction would appeal to people. He noted this bag provides space for not only a City logo, but also sponsor information. He noted he would like the logo as displayed on the bag to be modified to also include the skyline of Woodstock in the background and described some other modifications that could be made to the bag. He stated, to him, this bag says "sustainable Woodstock." Mayor Sager then noted his wish to provide one of two of these bags to each household in the city, just as a recycling bin is provided to each household, with additional bags available for purchase at retailers or City facilities.

Mayor Sager stated his feeling there is a strong interest in this program, and that City staff has been engaging in conversations with some of the larger retailers. He further noted that once the City attains Home Rule status, the City would have the authority to impose a tax which would be similar to the fee for bags charged by Aldis whereby people could be charged \$.04 or \$.05 for a paper bag, half of which would go to the City to sustain the program and half of which would go to the retailer. Mayor Sager stated American AdBag is looking into the style and cost of bags. He expressed the wish that the Program be put together and approved by Council and then rolled out with a big campaign that would include bag distribution. He stated he knows there is an interest in passage of a resolution or proclamation at this time which would be fine, but he wishes to ensure there is a comprehensive program to follow the development of which will take the work of both Commissions.

In response to a question from L. Crain, Mayor Sager stated his hope that the retailers will become partners in this program but noted it will take education. He further noted that there may be certain retailers, such as dry cleaners, who will still be allowed to use plastic bags and that it would also be difficult to ban plastic in the use of food packaging; but that every effort should be made to develop a program which would eliminate plastic bags and packaging as much as possible. A brief discussion ensued concerning retailers which use large plastic bags for over-sized items.

In response to a question from S. Wenzel, Mayor Sager stated Economic Development Director Garrett Anderson and Economic Development Coordinator Krista Coltrin have had discussions with both WalMart and Harley-Davidson concerning the proposed program and noted it is still necessary to speak with Farm and Fleet, Walgreens, Menards, and Jewel-Osco.

W. Donato noted that signage and bag stands can be provided through a grant and stores have been supportive of putting bags out on these free stands. He stated some opposition is to be expected but investigation should be conducted concerning what other communities with plastic bag bans have done. Mr. Donato stated his opinion there should be a lot of time expended at the beginning of this project in educating the public and talking with the retailers on how the City can help them so this becomes an everyday thing. He also stated his feeling the City should investigate doing even more as paper bags are not great for the environment either.

Mayor Sager reminded the Commissions to remain aware that the City's ability to charge for paper bags must be done within its authority to do so. He cautioned the City must not use this to put the program off for another year, however, stating the Special Census will be conducted in late summer; and the program can be developed and the educational component rolled out in the interim so that the program can be implemented upon certification of the Census.

In response to statements from C. Kanner concerning her efforts in working with Algonquin, Mayor Sager stated he is very proud of the efforts of other communities and the fact that other communities are working on this also, but noted it is his wish to develop a comprehensive program specific to Woodstock and for Woodstock to be the first community to implement such a program. In response to a request from L. Crain that Algonquin's ordinance be forwarded to her, Ms. Kanner stated Algonquin has a proclamation but no ordinance, noting there is no other municipality in McHenry County which has an ordinance. Mayor Sager again reiterated his wish for Woodstock to be the first, noting, in response to a suggestion from Ms. Kanner concerning reusable plastic bags, that it is his wish that Woodstock's program ban plastic bags.

W. Donato stated his feeling that the proclamation should be passed in February or March, proclaiming April as BYOBAG Month so that the public and retailers can be exposed to the idea, noting this would be the first step in the education effort.

W. Donato suggested that the students create a survey, with Ms. Kanner stated she will provide copies of surveys that were conducted in other communities. Ms. Kanner also noted her wish to have such a program in place County-wide by Earth Day 2017.

Mayor Sager acknowledged there are benefits of a gradual introduction, including adopting the proclamation first, putting information on the City's website, and having the students work on education. He noted the students could also take this information out to the City's households.

S. Wenzel requested that American AdBag also provide costs for a bag that could be used on a bicycle. In response to a question from Mr. Wenzel, Mayor Sager stated he has not yet received the cost projections from American AdBag as they are developing pricing based upon several different volumes.

At the request of D. Schober, Ms. Kanner will forward the ordinances which were passed by Evanston and Chicago to Ms. Schober. Ms. Kanner noted these ordinances may not be what the City wants but could be used as a starting point. She stated that the first decision to be made is whether the City wishes to use any type of plastic bag and whether there will be a charge for plastic or paper, noting there are high-density plastic bags which provide a limited number of uses. Mayor Sager reiterated his wish that Woodstock's program be a complete ban on plastic bags with a charge for paper bags.

Discussion followed of getting the word out to the community with Ms. Kanner providing a copy of Crystal Lake's newsletter for the members' review. It was noted that the deadline for the City Scene has passed but that a news release could be developed concerning the proclamation of BYOBAG Month for placement on the City's website, with a banner developed for the home page concerning the program.

W. Donato suggested the following actions to begin the process of development of the program:

- 1) Research the type of bag to be allowed
- 2) Create a resident survey

- 3) Research ordinances
- 4) Look at the cost effectiveness of providing a bag for each household
- 5) Look at the cost effectiveness of having the bags manufactured locally
- 6) Look at the design of the bag and development of a logo.

Mayor Sager noted his wish to use the design, logo, and type of bag which he earlier displayed. He stated minor modifications could be made to include the skyline of Woodstock as he suggested and sponsor logos could be included in the gussets. In response to Ms. Kanner's suggestion that the Defenders' logo be placed prominently on the back, Mayor Sager noted it could be included in the gussets with the other sponsor logos.

- 7) Begin what would be a marketing campaign to educate the public and the retailers.
Mayor Sager stated Economic Development staff has established sector groups for dialog within the business community, one dedicated to retailers and one dedicated to restaurateurs. He noted these groups could be good venues for dialogue concerning the program and urged the Commissions to work with ED staff.

Following further discussion, it was the consensus of the joint Commissions that the ultimate goal of the program is to eliminate as much plastic as possible.

Following further discussion of the delegation of duties, it was the consensus of the joint Commissions that the following members would work with City staff as indicated:

- 1) W. Donato and J. Krandel will work with City staff to develop sponsorships
- 2) Following consultation with Mayor Sager, L. Crain will work with the high schools on the design of the bag/logo.
- 3) E. Poremba and L. Crain will work on an education plan for the retailers and the public.
- 4) L. Crain and W. Donato will work with John Headley and the ED sector groups in the research and development of surveys, looking at comments received by other communities.
- 5) It was agreed that development of a marketing campaign will wait until completion of the research/surveys.
- 6) It was agreed that all members will work on the development of the ordinance at a future meeting.

L. Crain stated updates on these various facets of the project will be provided to the entire group at the next meeting.

D. Schober reiterated that it was the consensus to strive for the use of cloth bags and not to allow the multi-use plastic bags. In response to a question from Ms. Kanner as to whether this would be a ban on plastic bags, L. Crain confirmed that it would.

A discussion followed of the timing of the proclamation with it being noted that this is a proclamation which is encouraging the public to do something and which will open a dialog and begin the education process. Mayor Sager expressed his appreciation to W. Donato and others who have been and are working on the outline of the proclamation and noted the established procedure that a draft of the proclamation be forwarded to City staff for editing into the City's acceptable format and placement on the Council's agenda. He stated the joint Commissions would be recommending that Council approve a proclamation that would be perfected by staff.

E. Poremba suggested, if possible, that, rather than proclaiming April as BYOBag month, 2016 be proclaimed as BYOBag year in Woodstock. She noted this would provide the opportunity to keep the issue at the forefront of the community, allowing for better and continuing educational opportunities.

Mayor Sager expressed support for this idea noting the previously discussed banner on the City's website would be left up for the whole year proclaiming BYOB year touting the bagless program and providing educational information. Following further discussion, it was the consensus of the joint Commissions that the proclamation be forwarded to staff for placement on the agenda for the 2nd meeting in March, proclaiming 2016 as BYOBag year.

In response to a question from J. Headley, Mayor Sager stated the proclamation is a statement of intent and encouragement, but an ordinance is something Council would adopt as a law. He further noted if a tax is imposed for any individual who does not have a plastic bag, this must be done by ordinance and in order to do this the City must be Home Rule. Mayor Sager also noted if a ban is imposed stating there cannot be plastic bags, this must be done by ordinance as well.

Following further discussion, it was the consensus of both Commissions that the next meeting be held on Thursday, February 11, 2016, at 6:00PM.

ADJOURN

Motion by E. Poremba, second by W. Donato, to adjourn this joint meeting of the Cultural and Social Awareness Commission and the Environmental Commission to the next meeting at 6:00PM on Thursday, February 11, 2016. Ayes: W. Donato, J. Hudson, J. Rivera, I. Sagrado, E. Ellinghausen, L. Kacmar, S. Wenzel, E. Poremba, and Chairperson L. Crain. Nays: none. Absentees: J. Krandel. Abstentions: none. Motion carried. Meeting adjourned at 7:16PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Cindy Smiley
City Clerk