
**Somerville MA**
Mayor Joseph A. Curtatone

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196628 : Gewirtz - provide plastic bag reduction info

Meeting 10/22/2014 6:00 PM **Vote Results**

October 22, 2014 6:00 PM  spacerKept in Committee

Mr. Buckley reported that 5 other MA towns are taking similar actions. All were reviewed by the Attorney General's Office and approved as being within the authority of selectmen, etc. and being a proper use of its policing powers. Mr. Buckley reviewed a draft ordinance that mirrored Brookline's and pointed out that Somerville already has 3 ordinances dealing with plastic bags. Alderman Gewirtz suggested that the fines be changed to increase the 2nd offense to \$100 and the 3rd to \$300, without limiting the city's ability to impose fines within a certain time period.

Alderman Niedergang discussed how manufacturers might avoid being affected by this ordinance by changing the thickness of their plastic bags. The detrimental effects of some compostable and/or biodegradable bags were also discussed. Mr. Sellers-Garcia spoke with Brookline's Public Health Director and was told that compostable/biodegradable bags not readily available. Brookline observed that, after enacting its ordinance, it appeared that plastic bag use was entirely replace by paper bags, (although there is no factual data on this). Ms. Lowitz spoke about the litter caused by plastic bags and suggested that compostable/biodegrade bags would probably still end up as litter.

Currently, there are 200 cities/towns in 17 states banning plastic bags. Chairman Ballantyne will schedule a public hearing on the matter.

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