

Minutes of May 19, 2016 Public Health and Safety Sub-Committee Meeting

Attendance:

Chairperson Councilor Dan Allie

Councilor Mary Ann Babinski

Councilor William Onyski



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Chairperson Dan Allie called the meeting to order at 5:10 PM on May 19, 2015 in Room 315 Municipal Building, 59 Court Street, Westfield, MA

**Agenda Item 1--Discussion relative the Plastic Bag Ban per presentation on 5/5/16**

- Discussion surrounding the recommendations of the Westfield State University student presentation to City Council on 5/5/16
- One component is to address the minimum thickness of the bags--possibly use 4.0 mils as minimum thickness
- A ban could exclude produce bags
- The plastic bags may cause an environmental hazard to animals eating them and manufacture of the bags
- Many cities in MA already have a plastic bag ban
- There is a state website that discussed recycling
- So there is no duplication of effort, sub-committee will contact the board of health to see if they are doing any work on a plastic bag ban
- Education of the citizens and businesses is essential
- Commissioner Surprise, in audience, suggested that Liglin bags may be an alternative to plastic. They are similar to the plastic bags except made of a byproduct of paper and degrade in 150 days. Cost is about 1.5 cents a bag.
- Action: Councilor Babinski to check with Board of Health to determine if they are working on something similar
- Action: All to read "Bag It"--a seven page document discussing the pros and cons of a plastic bag ban and contains a sample statute
- Action: Councilor Babinski to summarize ways to achieve a ban that will pertain to Westfield
- Action: Councilor Onyski to investigate Liglin bags

By a 3-0 vote, Item 1 was left in committee with no action.

**Agenda Item 2--Discussion to developing a Complete Streets Policy/Network per the Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee Report (2/18/16)**

- The Complete Streets Policy, or ordinance, will not be a quick decision--no need to rush this

- Councilors Allie, Bean, and Figy met with the Mayor and Jay Vinsky, Sue Phillips, and Mark Cressotti on March 14 and had a long list of concerns that included losing local authority, unfunded mandates, limited funding, proposal now written completely locally, state aid could decrease, mandates on all projects, supports United Nations Agenda 21, maintenance of pathways, and possible land takings.
- Any program should be designed to fit the city

By a 3-0 vote, Item 2 was left in committee with no action.

Meeting adjourned at 6:05 PM

Minutes submitted by Councilor William Onyski