

MINUTES OF THE
SANTA FE COUNTY
Single-Use Plastics Working Group
March 10, 2023

I. Call to Order

This meeting of the Santa Fe County Single-Use Plastics and Polystyrene Working Group was convened by Olivia Romo, Santa Fe County District 5 Liaison on the above-cited date at approximately 10:05 AM. in the Johnson Conference Room, 100 Catron St. Santa Fe, New Mexico.

This meeting was available on a WebEx/audio platform. Called to order at 10:05 AM.

II. Roll Call

Roll call indicated the presence of a quorum as follows:

Member Present:

Karen Sweeny

Sarah Pierpont

Kim Kelly

Joseph Eigner

Gary Stoller

Others Present:

Olivia Romo, Constituent Services Liaison, D5

Laura K. Jagles, Constituent Services Liaison, D2

Members Excused:

III. Approval of February 21, 2022 Meeting Minutes

Approval of Minutes

All in favor of minutes, approved collectively. Karen noticed a few updates. Kayla Connor's name needs to be added. Gary and Joe were present online. A few typos should be corrected. Under B, 4th paragraph, 3rd line "best"; B. 5th paragraph: the big thing we are "missing" instead of "mission." Joe's last name is misspelled three times. Gary has one r, not two. Karen made a motion to approve. Second from Gary.

IV. Approval of Agenda

All in favor of agenda, approved collectively. (Karen made a motion to approve. Second from Joe.)

V. Matters from the Working Group

A. Assignments and Research Discussion

Joe: Discussion of the Taos Ordinance. The ordinance talks about paper bags, but it doesn't have a fee. We should discuss these two issues and come to a conclusion. The City of Santa does deal with those issues. We should discuss them point by point in addition to the testimony we received from the City. 2 million bags were sold. This tells me that the fee is not effective. The State bill being considered also doesn't have a fee. Let's talk about the value of the fee. The legislator proposing this fee is against it. My impression is the fee is so small that it doesn't give any incentive.

Sarah: I'm for the fee. It is an incentive for reuse. More people brought their bags. If you don't have the fee, no education or outreach will happen. The fee assists grocers, so they don't oppose it. I think the fee would be great.

Kim: I agree with Sarah. When we originally worked on the Santa Fe ordinance, the ten cent fee is more effective. Santa Fe already has that established, so it would be easier to piggy back on this system. At the last meeting, we asked Shirlene about it, but \$100,000 a year was raised for outreach. Shirlene also thought the amount was due to tourists in town. Are we leaning toward Taos as a model? Where are we?

Gary: I agree with what Kim said. I suggest Taos as a framework as a model, but it needs a lot of adjustments. I shop at the COOP. They give an incentive for bringing a reusable bag, such as .05 cents for each bag. It isn't in any ordinance at this point. Do you know why?

Sarah: It was popular to give .05 cents until the bag ban.

Joe: The Taos ordinance bans plastic bags. Most of the bag bans do not allow plastic bags, except for produce and bulk items. What if the ordinance bans paper bags also? You can buy a reusable bag. It would really force people to bring their own bags.

Sarah: New Jersey tried that, but the reusable bags are now the disposable bags. They are everywhere. Colorado bans certain bags, so some stores said, "No Bags." You have to have some alternative. Maybe .25 cents per bag.

Joe: We're not going to have income.

Sarah: The income would be more about an incentive for reuse. The money stays at the store as

incentive rather than going to the County.

Joe: What do the Commissioners feel about increasing the fee from .10 cents to .25 cents?

Sarah: In Las Cruces, you don't have to pay the .10 cent fee. People may not always pay with an EBT card. There is no way to prove someone is on assistance.

Joe: It is disrespectful and insulting to presume that low income people are not going to remember to bring a reusable bag.

Kim: If we are going to put on this whole thing with the restaurants and banning all these things, we need to keep it as is. Otherwise, there will be a lot of pushback. It is not the appropriate time to implement something so drastic.

Sarah: Increasing the .10 to .25 would be too much.

Kim: We're trying to do so much at once, such as utensils, containers, etc. There is also no precedence for it, which makes it an even more uphill battle.

Joe: Is she saying we should follow the City system?

Sarah: Kim is saying "no bags" is too much.

Gary: I agree with Kim. Implementing too much may be too confusing for people. Keep the bag fees the same.

Sarah: Maybe for the single use plastic bag, we mirror the .10 cent fee like City of Santa Fe, but for the County, we add the styrofoam, utensils, etc.

Karen: It would be helpful to learn about the Taos experience. Are we going to get someone from there to present to us?

Kim: They seem to be successful with cutlery and styrofoam part, so we can get them to present to us.

**OLIVIA WILL REACH OUT TO TAOS TO GET THEM TO PRESENT TO THE GROUP.
(LESSONS LEARNED AND SUCCESSFUL APPROACHES)**

Olivia: Taos recommended that we have stronger and definitive language.

Sarah: The state-wide single use ban bill got momentum, but it wasn't passed. We learned a lot, and we had a lot of support. The language requires a retail sales operation to ban bags. Single use providers are also defined. Restaurants with takeout food with high liquid content can still use a plastic bag. In Santa Fe, their ordinance does not apply to restaurants in the City.

Kim: We take what the City has and ramp it up a notch.

Karen: We don't have any business representation, so we cannot impose anything on them and expect them to be happy. Can one of us go to a Chamber of Commerce meeting?

Sarah: The Chamber of Commerce is opposed to our initiatives.

Olivia: We already discussed this group creating questions for a questionnaire that could be utilized in getting feedback from restaurants and local businesses.

Joe: We need to determine the language for our ordinance before we begin creating language for the survey.

Kim: LA has a plastic ban for restaurants. Rubber bands are put around the soup containers.

Joe: The most important thing for restaurants and carry-outs is the styrofoam containers.

Sarah: Business and Impact Analysis. We need to know what we're proposing. Are we all comfortable with what the City has done?

Homework: Create a 5 question survey. Try to get people's impact to present to the BCC. Date from 10 businesses, # of people, etc.

Joe and Gary, do you have other items besides single-use plastic bags?

Joe: Revise the draft to include what we discussed today. We are trying to get to a version we can support. Our original draft needs to include exemptions for carry out bags for restaurants.

Sarah: That's only talking about bags.

Karen: Save the stuff. "Accessories upon request."

Sarah: California and New York City have done that.

Kim: Can we have a chart that includes different things that are up in the air? What precedent is there and what is the solution in place elsewhere? When we present our information, we have all their questions answered because we developed our solutions. Organize our thoughts in a chart.

Olivia: You could chart costs for bags, and show your data to support your recommendations for the policy side of it.

Joe: What about the release of Balloons? We may need to include a clause in the ordinance banning releases.

Sarah: Let's talk about styrofoam.

Joe: One of the things I like about our version is that it bans big box stores from selling 1,000 styrofoam coffee cups. It bans all retail sales of styrofoam.

Sarah: Ban Styrofoam? What do you want to ban?

Olivia: Carry out containers and convenience stores have fountain drinks.

What type of Styrofoam do we want to ban?

Carry out containers for food (to be replaced with cardboard biodegradable containers)

BPI certified means it is not lined with plastic. PLA lining is created from plant-based starches. Aluminum is fine.

Kim: The ideal scenario in getting restaurants onboard by getting carryout products that are biodegradable. And, they have a place to put their biodegradable items the way ReUnity uses biodegradable items.

Joe: Item E defining a plastic bag. The draft bans bags that are not biodegradable or compostable. We could include more items on this list besides bags.

Sarah: What have other states done that banned takeout styrofoam containers?

Joe: Definition of disposable plastic ware.

Sarah: Some containers are not compostable once they have food in it.

Kim: Recommends this language, "The new law bans any single-use disposable polystyrene foam food service containers including bowls, cartons, clamshells, cups, lids, plates, and trays. Additionally, polystyrene peanuts used for packaging will be illegal.

Sarah: What alternatives could we have? Consider egg cartons. They are biodegradable.

Can we create an incentive? Starbucks offers discounts for bringing your Reuse Takeout Cup. No one brought the Verde glass bottle back. How do we incentivize reuse?

How do we get Allsup's to change from using a styrofoam big gulp to a paper or cardboard cup?

Why is it okay to bring your own mug but not bring your own container?

Replace single-use plastic and styrofoam takeout containers with aluminum, cardboard, or wax paper. If we do that, most restaurants would replace them with paper cups with plastic lining and containers will be aluminum with plastic or cardboard lids.

Olivia: Fee structures, plastic bags, and take out containers. Please have a chart ready for review and adoption at the next meeting.

LIST TO BAN (include on chart):

Plastic bags, stir sticks (splash guard), straws, utensils/cutlery, coffee cup lids

Plastic clamshells and take out containers

Balloons

Condiments (upon request)

All styrofoam take out containers and cups

Should the alternatives be compostable? If yes, what recommendation does the group have for compostable replacements?

Incentive fee for bringing reusable bags?

Cost to impose for not bringing bags?

Sarah: Should we just ban all styrofoam take out containers and cups? Would this be enough? Is that better than what we have now?

We'd have to argue that this is better than what we have now?

This list of items above do not break down and are not reusable. (This fact incentives reuse.)

The State Law has a good definition of Plastic.

Begin with really strict ideas. Have them in the surveys. Get their input. Revise based on input.

1 - Satchels for condiments should be upon request.

2 - If you provide utensils, they should be wood.

Sarah: Balloons are still being released.

Olivia: Commissioners requested a recommendation from the committee to address this.

Karen: Fee incentive. Recommends the vendor receives half of the fee.

Joe: Can we ban plastic flags for utility companies marking their lines? Ask them to replace them with paper.

Sara: Let's include this as an item to consider in the future: dental floss plastics, plastic flags for utility lines, cigarette buds, etc.

Olivia: Recommends that the committee concentrate on restaurants and businesses.

Kim: City of Santa Fe's definition of exemptions of what's reusable.

Sarah: Look at House Bill 432. Definitions are good in there. City of Santa Fe has lots of loopholes. (NMLegis.gov)

VI. Discussion & Next Steps

Sarah: **Start the Chart and send out template early next week.**

Everyone: Health Department Research (Styrofoam vs. Plastics)

Is it good enough to not have styrofoam cups and clamshells?

What are the business impacts of doing nothing?

Could we quantify litter problems? (What are the costs for businesses paying to pick up litter in and around their businesses?)

Olivia will post the agenda this afternoon. Sara will send out the template for the chart, so everyone can complete the chart on a Google Doc by 3/16 to include in the meeting packet to post for our 3/21 meeting. DEADLINE: 3/16

VII. Matters from the Public

None were offered

VIII. Other Business

None were offered

IX. Adjournment

Karen made a motion to adjourn. Second from Joe. All in Favor.

Approved by:
Sara Pierpont

SFC Single-Use Plastics and Polystyrene

Working Group President

Respectfully submitted:

Laura Jagles, Constituent Services Liaison