

**SANTA FE COUNTY
SINGLE-USE PLASTICS WORKING GROUP
TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 21, 2023, 5:30 PM
100 CATRON STREET, SANTA FE, NEW MEXICO**

I. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting of the Santa Fe County Single-Use Plastics Working Group was called to order by Olivia Romo, Santa Fe County Constituent Services Liaison, on Tuesday, February 21, 2023 at 5:35 pm, in the Johnson Conference Room, 100 Catron St., Santa Fe, New Mexico.

II. ROLL CALL

MEMBERS PRESENT

Joseph Eiger
Garry Stoller
Karen Sweeney
Kim Kelly (telephonically)
Sara Pierpoint, Chair (telephonically)

OTHERS PRESENT

Olivia Romo, Constituent Services Liaison
Jacqueline Beam, Constituent Liaison
Shirlene Sitton, Director, City of Santa Fe
Environmental Services

III. APPROVAL OF JANUARY 17, 2022 MINUTES

It was noted that Ms. Beam's name was misspelled. It is spelled Jacqueline Beam.

MOTION A motion was made by Ms. Sweeney, seconded by Mr. Stoller, to approve the minutes as amended.

VOTE The motion passed on a voice vote.

IV. APPROVAL OF FEBRUARY 6, 2023 MINUTES

MOTION A motion was made by Mr. Stoller, seconded by Ms. Kelly, to approve the minutes as presented.

VOTE The motion passed on a voice vote.

V. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

MOTION A motion was made by Mr. Stoller, seconded by Ms. Kelly, to approve the agenda as presented.

VOTE The motion passed on a voice vote.

VI. MATTERS FROM THE WORKING GROUP

A. PRESENTATIONS

1. PRESENTATION BY KIM KELLY

Ms. Kelly reviewed her proposed chart with an overview of the plastic bag bans from other municipalities across the state.

Chair Pierpoint stated that neither Deming or Carlsbad have passed their bag ban.

Ms. Kelly recommended that the Committee needed to consider whether we will change the 10 cent fee or ban the bags all together. Her second recommendation is to consider banning all plastic, even the thick bags. She recommended that we ban all of the bags. Her third recommendation was that we adopt enforcement strategies.

Ms. Kelly asked if we are going to approach only retail stores and restaurants with our recommendations or just grocery stores.

Chair Pierpoint said the City of Santa Fe was given direction to have soft enforcement on the bag ban, but Shirlene Sitton says it pretty much enforces itself. If we implement fees it has to be clear who enforces it. It may be out of the wheelhouse of Code Enforcement. If they are to enforce it they will have to be trained and we will need additional staff.

2. PRESENTATION FROM CITY OF SANTA FE

Ms. Sitton said the focus of the City in adopting their plan was to reduce water, address soil and water, the aesthetics of the community, contamination and for public welfare. The City plan began in February of 2014 and had a lot of support from local activists. Exceptions included in the plan are newspaper bags, dry cleaning bags, floral bags, trash bags, heavy reusable shopping bags and produce bags. The initial results were compiled in a study conducted by ESD. The study showed that smaller stores were not impacted, but grocery stores were impacted. The bag fee went into effect in June of 2015.

Ms. Sitton continued saying our enforcement is light. We send letters to retailers and make consumer reports to ESD. ESD also visits locations. We created our own logo called "BYOB" and we hand out reusable bags and provide resources for them. Ms. Sitton said she would help the County come up with cost estimates.

Ms. Sitton said an estimated 2 million paper bags are being used in Santa Fe according to the City's income from the charge per bag, but there could be a discrepancy in the data because some cashiers may not know about the Ordinance. The Ordinance has been amended twice and went through public hearings to make the changes after the study was done. Keep Santa Fe Beautiful may require more State money to keep the support in place for communities.

B. ASSIGNMENTS AND RESEARCH DISCUSSION

Chair Pierpoint gave her presentation identifying the issue and the problems in Santa Fe County, saying illegal dump sites are severe in New Mexico. We cannot recycle our way out of this problem. Plastics are made from chemicals and fossil fuels. The plastics crisis is a climate crisis. In Santa Fe County 20 million single use plastic bags and 12,750 take out containers cause \$67,000 annually in contamination.

Ms. Sweeney gave a presentation on the reduction of plastics in restaurants saying, if you can use the lowest level of products that is the best way. A better way would be to use compostable products. Switching to reusable is the number one strategy. It is important to just skip the containers and to not take plastic cutlery. She recommends that we may need to meet with all the restaurants to educate them on compliance. That will require work with the State Health Department as well.

Mr. Stoller and Mr. Eiger made their presentation Mr. Eiger recommended that they have a meeting to go over the Ordinance line by line so we can have something to recommend to the County.

Mr. Stoller said it is inferred in the Beyond Plastic Legislation to ban all plastics and polystyrene products in one fell swoop. Mr. Stoller gave a comparison between all the current Ordinances within New Mexico saying the Taos Ordinance is the most model bill. We should use it as a framework to build on for the County. We do not have to reinvent the wheel. We can do something business friendly alongside legislation within the County. Taos is getting rid of plastic at the point of sale, even for big box stores. We need to ask them about how that is being enforced. We are not winning the fight if people are still using plastic bags. Education is important in our work as behaviors are not changing. The goal is to make people think about this more. The State Bag Bill will help if it is passed, but it needs to be clear that using something only once is wrong.

Mr. Stoller continued saying the big thing we are mission now is looking at what the impact to Santa Fe County will be with the implementation of the Ordinance. We have to quantify our results as much as possible. We have until August 2023 to make these recommendations. The County can work on having an educational campaign with printed materials, events and bags.

VII. DISCUSSION AND NEXT STEPS (ACTION ITEM)

Chair Pierpont said she would like to schedule a special working meeting. Our next regular meeting is March 21st. She would like to have a Special Meeting on March 10th from 10:00 am to 11:30 am. At the next meeting we need to focus on an impact analysis and honing in on our recommendations.

VIII. MATTERS FROM THE PUBLIC

None.

IX. OTHER BUSINESS

None.

X. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION A motion was made by Ms. Sweeney, seconded by Mr. Stoller, to adjourn the meeting.

VOTE The motion passed on a voice vote.

There being no further business before the group, the meeting adjourned at 7:02 pm.

Sara Pierpont, Chair

Elizabeth Martin, Stenographer