



CAROLINA BEACH
TOWN COUNCIL MEETING
MINUTES • DECEMBER 15, 2015

Conference Room

Special Meeting

6:30 PM

1121 N. LAKE PARK BLVD.
CAROLINA BEACH, NC 28428

I. CALL MEETING TO ORDER

Attendee Name	Title	Status	Arrived
Dan Wilcox	Mayor	Present	
LeAnn Pierce	Mayor Pro Tem	Present	
Steve Shuttleworth	Council Member	Excused	
Tom Bridges	Council Member	Present	
Gary Doetsch	Council Member	Present	
Michael Cramer	Town Manager	Present	
Kim Ward	Town Clerk	Present	

II. JOINT MEETING WITH PLASTIC BAG COMMITTEE

Mayor Wilcox called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

Plastic Bag Committee members present include: Ethan Crouch, Deb LeCompte, Sarah Finn and Meg Young.

Mr. Cramer explained the intent of the meeting was to allow council to ask questions about the facts and findings that the committee put together and to have a discussion. We were unable to do that at the last meeting because of time.

Mr. Cramer - I heard from council that there was an interest more so in an education program than one that starts out with a ban or a fee. By no means was that a universal decision from council, it was just a sense that I got. I met with Ethan after the previous meeting and we talked briefly about what types of things make up a good and successful education program. I then took those notes and pulled together this proposal of what an education program could look like. We can change any part of it. The idea was that if we are interested in educating the public more on the use of reusable bags rather than plastic bags, we would need two things. One is some way to encourage them to recycle and provide them with a reusable bag. If we were able to get a couple hundred businesses that were interested in participating in the program and pay \$100, we could supply them with a recycling box, a decal on the window, 50-100 reusable bags with their logo and the town's logo so there would be some advertising involved for that business and some brochures. They could help us encourage people to use reusable bags or recycle if they don't. That would expand our recycling program greatly. The only recycler on the island is Food Lion.

MPT Pierce - Does the \$100 cover our cost?

Mr. Cramer - It goes toward our cost, it doesn't cover the entire cost. It's approximately 90%. The main thing the town would contribute to would be the bags. They range anywhere from 99 cents to \$1.50. We could have the retailer sell the bags and roll the money back into the program.

Mayor Wilcox - I think your take from my perspective is accurate. I think the committee has given us everything we need on what a fee based program would look like and what a ban would look like. I'm not particularly looking at a ban at this time. I am open to going to a fee based program but I think it is slightly premature. My questions are really centered around what have our educational activities been and what has our outreach been - what kind of failures, what kind of successes have we seen? Hopefully, we can always implement to fee based if the educational program doesn't work. I would really like to see us have a robust educational program. I certainly think the town needs to be involved financially and from a management perspective.

MPT Pierce - \$100 is minimal. Businesses donate more than that for all sorts of other things.

Mayor Wilcox - My concern is keeping it serviced. If businesses run out of supplies - they are busy trying to run their business, they might not be able to run up here and get more.

Mr. Cramer - My intent is to task Hannah with managing this program because it is an educational marketing outreach type program and that is what we are utilizing Hannah primarily for, along with helping the clerk. She would be the one to go out and solicit to those businesses and introduce the program and she would be the one they would contact if they ran out of brochures or bags. The part where I saw the businesses coming into play was the recycling itself. One thing we would need to vet is, where would we recycle the bags and with who. Not a lot of places do this. Food Lion has an organization backing their program. The bags that are collected here are shipped off to Food Lion Headquarters and then they have a carrier that comes and ships them off. If we could tap into their program, that would make it easy to get ours going. If not, we would have to see if the vendor would come here to pick up bags. The recycling piece would be contingent upon that. I have not talked to Food Lion specifically.

Council Member Doetsch - That would be good publicity for Food Lion.

Mr. Cramer - If it is council's interest to do this, I will have Hannah reach out to Food Lion and other businesses.

Mayor Wilcox - Some people are not going to be receptive so what is our plan if they are not? Whoever we send out there to do this has to have the right knowledge and the right approach and presentation. They also have to keep records.

Council Member Bridges - If I understand correctly, restaurants would not be included?

Mr. Cramer - That's correct. That's not saying that they couldn't participate but you wouldn't necessarily want to have food bags.

MPT Pierce - Everyone is going to want to jump on this boat. I would. If they walk into every business and see it, people are going to be encouraged to use reusable bags.

Council Member Doetsch - I think this is a great starting point. I think down the road, we should say that if you sell and use plastic bags, you must have a recycle bin.

Mr. Cramer - I have talked to other towns like the Outer Banks that have a ban on plastic bags. Their ban is under a section of legislation with the state that is specific to plastic bags. If we wanted to do a fee, a ban or anything other than education, we would have to tack onto that legislation. You don't necessarily have to under 130 but you do under

160 which is the statute that towns apply to. It actually comes out and says local governments can only engage in and charge for specific activities allowed by the general statute in North Carolina. When you go through that, the fees in there do not include plastic bags. Anything we do would have to get some sort of enabling legislation saying that Carolina Beach can do that. Our attorney reviewed this. She is the one that led me to it.

Ethan Crouch - We would love to see that legislation because that is contrary to the other attorney's opinion that we received. I would like to say that I am shocked because this is the first time that we have seen this document and it says on our behalf. I want to be clear that we did not write this.

Mr. Cramer - That was probably not the right statement. You are right.

Mr. Crouch - I think it is a great program. Michael and I did meet and discuss this. There are some concerns about this program, mainly in terms of cost to the town. That is a concern as a citizen of this community. I would hate for the town to have to make an annual \$16,000 investment just for an education program. Secondly, there is no real deterrent in this program. We want to reduce the demand for single use plastic bags. Recycling is great for some things but there are some difficult challenges for trying to recycle. The majority of recycling companies just won't take them. Recycling a bag is better than putting it in the landfill but we are still producing a bag. Once we recycle, there is no real motivation on the commodities market to use recycled plastic bags. They are much more expensive on the per ton basis. They are not actually being completely recycled. They are being down cycled. A recycled bag does not make another plastic bag. You are still having a major impact.

MPT Pierce - I understand but we are using this as a marketing tool to get people to think.

Mayor Wilcox - I would be willing to vote for a fee based system. I don't want to go from 0 to 60. I have not seen any information on education that we have tried. What has failed, what has worked? I want to move as fast as good planning dictates. We need to be able to measure the success.

Council Member Doetsch - The end result for me is no more use of plastic bags on Carolina Beach. We need to keep that in mind while we are developing the process. We need to know what the best tool is for not only educating our residents but our visitors. We need to show them what happens when the plastic bags blow into the ocean. They need to see what happens to our sea turtles that have ingested the plastic.

Mayor Wilcox - This is a two phase program. The first phase is the education. The second phase would be to implement a fee based program along with the education.

Mr. Crouch - One of the concerns we are trying to mention here is you don't want to overly emphasize recycling because people will feel like they can use the bags because they are going to recycle it.

Council Member Bridges - At Lowe's Foods, for every reusable bag you bring, you get a nickel off. It's not a lot but they are doing it. Target does the same thing.

Sarah Finn - There is research from Cornell University that shows that those programs are somewhat effective but fee based programs are even more effective. People being charged a nickel has more impact than receiving a nickel.

Mayor Wilcox - I would say, let's not let this linger. Let's do a strong education based program for a year and in a year we will look at combining that with a fee based program. One thing that jumps out at me is, you say you are going to give 50 bags to each business with the town logo and their logo on it. I don't know how you could put their logo on it. Maybe if you knew all the businesses that were going to participate, you could put all of them on there.

Mr. Cramer - There are several companies that do these types of things in lots of 50 or 100 and you are doing one or two logos.

Mayor Wilcox - ..but when you are dealing with 75 businesses someone has to manage all that information.

Mr. Cramer - Most definitely. We really could over extend ourselves on it. Initially we would need to start talking to people so we can gauge that understanding.

Mayor Wilcox - Why couldn't we ask the vendors to provide their own bags?

Mr. Cramer - I haven't thought about that but we could.

MPT Pierce - Some people are picky about their bags. You could give them the bags and they might not ever use them. Island women has had a huge success with their bags. Maybe we could partner with them without taking over their bags. Can we put something in the video that we are doing with the Marketing Committee?

Mr. Cramer - I don't see why not.

Mayor Wilcox - What are our next steps?

Council Member Doetsch - I think the Plastic Bag Ad-hoc Committee has fulfilled their purpose. We are going to have to repurpose the committee if we want them to continue as a working committee.

Mayor Wilcox - I don't want them to be a working committee but we will certainly need to pick their brains. Maybe we could restructure them as a steering committee.

Council Member Doetsch - Is the committee interested in continuing to work with the town?

Mr. Crouch - I can't speak for the whole committee but I would be interested. I will not have the time to manage the program.

Mayor Wilcox - Staff will manage the program.

Mr. Cramer - I think we should sit down with Hannah and work through some of the concerns and pull together a polished final product and bring that back to council. We would manage it.

Mayor Wilcox - What do we do if we get rejected by a business owner?

Mr. Cramer - We would track that. We would make a spreadsheet as to who we spoke to, when and why they were not interested.

Mayor Wilcox recognized the two people in the audience who were not on the committee and asked if they had anything to contribute.

One was member of the Surfrider Foundation who lives in the county who said he pulls numerous plastic bags from his properties.

The other was the director of the new art galleries and specialty museum in Wilmington. Their first exhibit is geared toward ocean plastics. They are working with local schools to get field trips organized. Education is their mission.

Mayor Wilcox - Any business owner will tell you that marketing to the kids is the way to go. Maybe we need to go into our elementary school.

MPT Pierce - Would the committee be willing to go into our school.

Mr. Crouch - Surfrider Foundation actually does go into the schools and gives this presentation. We have never gone into Carolina Beach Elementary.

Council Member Doetsch - Is it possible for us to start asking patrons not to bring plastic bags on our beach strands? We have done it with glass.

Mr. Cramer - We just recently changed out all the signs at the beach access points. However, the new signs are modular so they have sections that can be rearranged.

Mayor Wilcox - We could totally try to ban plastic bags but we are still going to get them.

Deb LeCompte - The best example that we found was the Breckenridge Community. I vacation there every year. I think we should model our program after them. They are willing to talk to us. They started with an education program and went to a fee based program. Since they are a tourist community also, they did a lot of their education through their lodging and their rentals. Each time you have a new renter come in, you have that educational material there in the bag.

Mayor Wilcox - The beach is a little different than a ski resort but the fact that they started with education and went to fee based is what we are talking about here. It is a multi-phase processes.

Ms. Finn - I think you should go ahead and start educating about the upcoming fee. You could educate about the larger goal. One thing I do not see in the budget is the cost for the contract company that would take the recycled bags like Trex.

Mayor Wilcox - I have no problem with getting a consensus from council for a future date for implementation.

Council Member Bridges - I don't think we have to put a specific date, maybe just say in the future we will consider a fee based program.

Meg Young - You should keep that as a strategy for the planning and education - not saying that you have to set a date that is set in stone.

Ms. Young - We had a hard time trying to find data in Carolina Beach as far as litter. How would we be able to measure the effectiveness of an education program? What would an effective education program look like to council?

Mayor Wilcox - It's a point of sale thing. How many business have signed on? How many times have they reordered their reusable bags? If they are bringing in the recyclables, we would have a way to measure those.

MPT Pierce - You could even stand out in front of Food Lion and look to see who is walking in with their bags.

Ms. Finn - If your goal is to reduce the number of bags, then you have to have a number to measure. You need to measure the plastic bags.

MPT Pierce - Maybe we could get with Food Lion to see if they are ordering less bags.

Mr. Cramer - We need to get the businesses to help us collect the data.

Mr. Crouch - Is our goal to educate about negative plastic bags or about the forthcoming policy change?

Mayor Wilcox - I think we need to educate about the upcoming policy change. I think council would have to say that, before the season we are going to move to a fee based program. If you use that strategy, would it help us? Some may say, well ok do it.

Council Member Bridges - We also need to establish where we are going to take all these plastic bags.

Council Member Doetsch - We need to develop a mission statement to start the education program. Have the mission statement say that Carolina Beach wants to be plastic free in so many years. It tells people where we are headed.

Mayor Wilcox - You can say that the Town of Carolina Beach wants to be plastic bag free in three years and this is the implementation of that program.

MPT Pierce - Another outreach could be Island Women, Island Men, boy scouts, girl scouts and all these groups. Everywhere you turn you will see it.

Council Member Doetsch - On the bag itself, I think you should put something like - "Plastic Free in 3".

MPT Pierce - I like the phrase, "Carolina Beach Leading the Way, Plastic Free in 3".

Mayor Wilcox - I am only here for two more years but I will continue to vote to put an educational program in place. I think we need something in place before the summer but we are not going to be able to reach business owners until after March.

Mr. Crouch - We need to get a policy established.

Mr. Cramer - Would the committee mind staying on their schedule for a few more months to help us organize that?

Committee members agreed to stay on.

MPT Pierce - Maybe we could even email the business owners with a picture of what we are looking to do.

Mayor Wilcox - Can we talk to the MAC about helping us come up with a slogan? I think we could use them to figure out some promotional ideas. I want them to fine tune LeAnn's slogan.

MPT Pierce - I want it to say, "Carolina Beach Leading the Way". Let's show them that

we are doing something. I think our tourists will appreciate it.

Mrs. LeCompte - I think the window clings would be a good idea. It would go on the driver's side of the car reminding you not to forget your bags.

Mayor Wilcox - The next MAC meeting is January 26th and we will be talking about the rollover funds but this wouldn't take that long. The good thing about that meeting is the CVB will not be there.

Mr. Cramer - January 12th is the meeting that CVB will not be there.

Mayor Wilcox - That's the one I was thinking. I don't want to take up the CVB's time with hearing this. Maybe we can do this on the 12th at 2:30 p.m. You guys can pitch it to them and let them think on it for a little while and get back to us.

MPT Pierce - Have we started making the video with the MAC?

Mr. Cramer - No. We are just now getting back quotes. It was proposed at the last meeting.

Mr. Crouch - I wanted to share one last thing from my Surfrider hat. We are actively engaged with other communities. What we are doing here, we plan to take to Kure Beach and Wrightsville Beach. I think the slogan is great.

Council Member Doetsch - This committee has been a pleasure to deal with. I showed up for the first couple of meetings and realized I didn't need to come anymore. They had it covered. I think these joint meetings are a good thing. We can move a lot quicker. Once the word gets out, these seats will start filling up.

Council Member Bridges - If we do go to a fee based system, will we have to hold a public hearing?

Mayor Wilcox - Yes, you would be creating an ordinance.

Mr. Cramer - I had some thoughts about if we create a fee, who's fee is it? Who would collect that fee? Those are things you put into an ordinance or enabling legislation. If the town takes on the responsibility to collect the funds, I have accountants but I don't have collectors. We are not going after people. There are a lot of details to work out.

III. ADJOURNMENT

Mayor Wilcox made a motion to adjourn at 7:45 p.m. Motion carried unanimously.

Kimberlee Ward
Kimberlee Ward, Town Clerk

1-12-16
Date Approved