

City delays plastic bag ordinance until December

By JACK FICHTER

Cape May Star and Wave

CAPE MAY — City Council tabled action on an ordinance for more revision that would have banned plastic bags from merchants and Styrofoam food containers.

At a Nov. 18 meeting, solicitor Frank Corrado said he met with members of the Surfrider Foundation, which offered suggestions for amendments to the proposed ordinance. He suggested council listen to any public comments on the topic.

"I will take account of their comments. I've taken account of some of the comments that council members have had about the ordinance as it was

drafted and introduced, and I also have the comments from the Surfrider folks," he said.

Corrado said after public comment is heard, the hearing on the ordinance could be adjourned until council's Dec. 3 meeting and continued at that time. He said before the next meeting, he could have a proposed amended ordinance that incorporates public and council comment and suggestions from the Surfrider Foundation.

Council could amend the ordinance at the Dec. 3 meeting, Corrado said. If the amendment is substantial, the ordinance could be brought back for a second reading Dec. 17, he said.

Councilman Zack Mull-

ock said he was comfortable with Corrado's suggestions. Mullock expressed concerns that businesses were getting closer to the time of year they must order supplies for the summer season.

"I think we have agreement on at least a plastic bag ban and I think the public should be made aware of that as soon as possible," he said.

Corrado said until an ordinance is adopted, any business would be acting at their own risk.

During public comment, Richard Meyer, Washington Street Mall Business Improvement District vice president, thanked council for taking a 5 cent charge out of the original ordinance for providing bags to customers.

Public Works Recycling Coordinator Pat D'Arco said she ordered compostable plates, bowls and utensils for city functions and events.

"I also ordered bags made out of corn and they're compostable but they have a very short shelf life, so we are going to try two cases of them.

They are not for the big cans but the smaller cans," she said. "I just wanted to mention we are being a little proactive with the plastic bags."

Corrado said there was some question about compostable products regarding a facility in the county that is able to compost the items.

"If they're in the right facility, which we don't have down here, they compost or decay in 180 days," D'Arco said.

Katarina Poulsen, of the Swede Things shop on the Washington Street Mall, said she has a stock of thousands of branded bags that she does not want to waste.

Corrado said council was looking at two ways to handle plastic bags a business may already have in quantity. He said one method is a long delay of when the ordinance takes effect to allow businesses to deplete their stock. He said another possibility was to build in a case-by-case exemption for those that come before council and request a temporary exemption from the ordinance. Corrado said

one or both suggestions could be included in the ordinance.

Council approved a motion to adjourn the public hearing on the ordinance until Dec. 3.

The original ordinance called for eliminating Styrofoam and single-use plastic products and other non-locally recyclable and non-properly compostable food packaging to protect marine and wildlife in surrounding waterways, to maximize the life of landfills and lessen the economic and environmental costs of managing waste.

Section 3 of the ordinance states "no operator of any store shall provide any single-use plastic carryout bag to any customer for the purpose of enabling a customer to transport products or goods out of the store." It noted nothing in the section shall preclude store operators from providing single-use paper bags to customers or making reusable bags available for sale to customers.

The ordinance would prohibit providing food in any disposable food service ware

than contains Styrofoam. The rules would also apply to city-sponsored events.

All food or grocery establishments and food providers within the city of Cape May utilizing disposable food service ware shall use recyclable or compostable products except straws, which cannot be made of plastic or compostable material.

Items exempt from the regulation would include dry cleaning, laundry and newspaper bags and those intended for garbage, pet or yard waste and bags provided by physicians, pharmacists or veterinarians to contain prescription drugs or other medical necessities.

Also exempt would be bags containing bulk items such as produce, nuts, candy or small hardware items and bags containing or wrapping frozen foods, meat or fish, whether or not prepackaged. Bags to contain or wrap flowers or potted plants as well as bags for unwrapped food or bakery goods would also be exempt from the ban.

TIDES : Nov. 27 to Dec. 4, 2019

DATE	HIGH		LOW	
	A.M.	P.M.	A.M.	P.M.
27	8:05	8:29	1:30	2:18
28	8:51	9:17	2:16	3:07
29	9:36	10:05	3:02	3:56
30	10:22	10:55	3:49	4:45
1	11:10	11:48	4:38	5:36
2		12:01	5:30	6:28
3	12:45	12:54	6:27	7:20
4	1:44	1:51	7:27	8:10

MOON PHASES

First quarter, Dec. 4 • full moon, Dec. 12

Fire dept.

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Promenade and a new library should all take a back

seat to the public safety building.

"And for the naysayers of the public safety complex, I don't believe any of them have any architectural, engineering, municipal planning credentials at all," Matthews said.

He addressed the suggestion of placing the police station on Elmira Street, saying the street has 26 parking spaces, most of which are metered or restricted to

permit holders. He said the lot is used constantly.

"But people don't want to lose possibly 10 spaces where the firehouse sits now, but you are willing to lose the revenue from 26 parking meters," he said.

Resident Bill Seeger asked why temporary trailers have not been brought in for quarters for the fire department, due to the mold issue in the firehouse, while council makes a decision on

a new building.

"You gotta get those guys out of there and into something else. It won't be the Taj Mahal but it shouldn't be an area that's harmful to their health," he said.

Councilman Shaine Meier said the city received a letter from the firefighters union asking for a timeline for full remediation of the mold problem. He said he had discussed bringing in trailers with one other council member.

City Manager Neil Young said firefighters are not sleeping in the area that is being remediated for mold. He said fire personnel have concerns the mold was airborne and spread throughout the building.

Young said the building would be tested again for airborne mold and at that point, a decision made on the use of trailers.

"Public safety should be the most important thing on everyone's mind sitting at this front table," Matthews said.

CITY OF CAPE MAY RECYCLE COLLECTION

HOLIDAY SCHEDULE – THANKSGIVING,
THURSDAY, NOV. 28 & FRIDAY, NOV. 29

The Thursday & Friday
collection will be collected on
Monday, December 2, 2019

REMINDER: NO PLASTIC BAGS

CITY OF CAPE MAY PUBLIC WORKS
830 CANNING HOUSE LANE, CAPE MAY, NJ 08204
609-884-9570

Cape May Star & Wave

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