

**COMMITTEE ON LIAISON
MONDAY, DECEMBER 13, 2021, at 6:22 p.m.
CITY COUNCIL CHAMBER
WOBURN CITY HALL**

Voting Members present: Chairman pro tem Michael Concannon, Councilor Joseph Demers, Councilor Joanne Campbell, Councilor Jeffrey Dillon, Councilor Darlene Mercer-Bruen, Councilor Richard Gately, and Councilor Robert Ferullo. Absent: President Edward Tedesco, and Councilor Michael Lannan

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Reading of previous meeting minutes: Motion made by Councilor Demers and seconded by Councilor Campbell to waive the reading of and to approve the minutes of the meeting of October 25, 2021; all in favor, 7-0.

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Citizens Participation request from June Mackenzie regarding notification and enforcement of the plastic bag ban: Ms. Mackenzie said a ban on single-use plastic bags was passed about a year and a half ago and she still sees plastic bags everywhere. She said one of the stores that still uses plastic bags is the Family Dollar store. She said she went in to inform them there is a ban on plastic bags and the employees looked puzzled. She said it appears some of the retailers in the city are unaware of the ban, or they are flouting it. She asked if the city has a responsibility to enforce the ban. She said she talked to the mayor and he suggested the Board of Health is supposed to enforce the ban. She said she is here to find out how the regulation is enforced. Councilor Campbell said as far as she knows the Board of Health has the responsibility to enforce the ban. She said she thinks the committee needs to send a letter to the Board of Health or the City Solicitor to find out who is responsible for enforcing the ban. Councilor Dillon asked Ms. Mackenzie which establishments aren't following the ban. Ms. Mackenzie she said the bigger stores seem to be following the ordinance, but some of the smaller ones are not. She said she sees people carrying out food from restaurants in plastic bags. She said the Family Dollar store is using plastic bags. Councilor Dillon asked if there is a way the city can find out which establishments are not following the ordinance. He said Family Dollar is a good place to start. Motion made by Councilor Dillon and seconded by Councilor Mercer-Bruen to request the Board of Health send a letter to Family Dollar to stop using plastic bags or face fines. Councilor Mercer-Bruen said she does not have a copy of the ordinance, but she imagines it indicates who the enforcement agent is. She asked if there is a contingency for fines. She said if there is no contingency for fines, then enforcement would consist of written correspondence. Councilor Demers asked the clerk if the city maintains any records of retailers who use plastic bags. Clerk replied the City Clerk's office keeps a record of business certificates, but not every retailer in the city is required to file and the list is incomplete. Clerk said the License Commission keeps a record of Common Victualer's license holders who may be offering take-out food, but that would only account for a portion of entities which can offer single-use plastic bags. Councilor Demers suggested asking the Woburn Business Association to assist by getting the word out to its subscribers about the ban on plastic bags. Chairman Concannon said there is a motion on the

floor to send a communication to the Board of Health. He asked if it might also be worthwhile to ask for guidance from the City Solicitor. Councilor Mercer-Bruen said it might be helpful to have a copy of the ordinance. Councilor Campbell said she has a copy of the ordinance, which calls for a \$50 fine for a first offense and a \$100 fine for each subsequent offense. She said the ordinance indicates enforcement is the responsibility of the Health Inspector. Councilor Mercer-Bruen said the council has a complaint that Family Dollar is not abiding by the ordinance. She suggested sending a communication to Board of Health Agent Jack Fralick asking him to investigate a report of plastic bags being used at Family Dollar and start from there. She said she agrees with the idea of sending a communication to the Woburn Business Association asking them to share something in their monthly bulletin about there being complaints to the City Council and advising their members of the ordinance. Councilor Ferullo said the WBA posted last September an advisory that the ordinance banning single-use plastic bags is in effect. Councilor Mercer-Bruen said ignorance of the law does not mean violators get a pass. Councilor Campbell suggested sending a copy of the ordinance to the Board of Health. Motion made by Councilor Campbell and seconded by Councilor Mercer-Bruen to send a communication to the Board of Health asking it to reach out to Family Dollar and take any enforcement action necessary as it relates to the ban on single use plastic bags, and to include in the communication a copy of the ordinance banning plastic bags; approved, 7-0. Chairman Concannon asked if the committee wants to send communication to the WBA. Motion made and seconded by Councilor Mercer-Bruen and seconded by Councilor Campbell to send a communication to the Woburn Chamber of Commerce (fka Woburn Business Association) asking if they would be willing to notify their members of the ordinance banning single-use plastic bags; approved, 7-0.

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Motion made by Councilor Demers and seconded by Councilor Mercer-Bruen to adjourn; approved, 7-0. Chairman pro tem Concannon adjourned the meeting at 6:32 p.m.

Attest: _____
Gordon Vincent
Clerk of Committees