

**Newburyport Board of Health Public Meeting
December 23, 2014**

Date of Approval: 1/22/2015

Attendees:

Chairperson of the Board: Dr. Robin Blair

Board Member: Dr. Susan Beluk

Board Member: Patricia Lawrence

Energy & Recycle Coordinator: Molly Ettenborough

Note Taker: Patricia McAlarney

Call to Order: 7:00 PM – Dr. Blair called the meeting to order.

Reading of the Minutes: Tabled until the next Board Meeting.

Ban on Plastic Bags - Energy, Recycle & Sustainability Coordinator – Molly Ettenborough:

Ms. Ettenborough explained that the City Council had held public meetings and voted and passed a law banning retailers from dispensing certain plastic bags. The law, which falls under the Chapter of ‘Environment’ is to take effect in March. Ms. Ettenborough asked the Board to vote on the Rules and Regulations covering enforcement of the law, for which she will be responsible as Energy, Recycle and Sustainability Coordinator. The Board discussed and clarified that while the Rules and Regulations fall under the auspice of the Board of Health, it was not the Board that initiated the proposal or voted to ban plastic bags in the City. Ms. Ettenborough confirmed that the Ordinance falls under the City Council and that any request to change or challenge the law would be directed to City Council and not to the Board of Health. The ordinance was read and the Board agreed that the wording clearly defined that the purpose of the ban was for environmental protection. Ms. Ettenborough explained that bags over 3 mm will still be allowed; the ban only applies to the lighter bags with integral handles which pose a threat to the environment because of their tendency to become airborne. The amount of the fine was discussed and it was determined that the fine was set by the City Council and would be up to the Council to make any changes. The Board agreed that they would not pursue changing the fine. Ms. Ettenborough explained that enforcement of the ban will be handled with a degree of reasonableness so as not to put undue hardship on retailers. If, at the inception of the ban, a retailer has a large quantity of bags in stock, the City would work with the retailer to determine an acceptable amount of time in which the retailer could dispense their remaining stock of handled bags (for example, a year.)

A motion to accept the Rules and Regulations related to the Citywide ban on plastic bags was made by Patricia Lawrence and was seconded by Dr. Susan Beluk.

Votes in favor of accepting the Rules and Regulations: Dr. Robin Blair, Patricia Lawrence, Dr. Susan Beluk. Votes opposed – None.

Meeting adjourned at 8:41 pm.