

MEMORANDUM

TO: John Burt, Town Manager
FROM: Jonathan J. Reiner, Director of Planning and Development
DATE: April 10, 2019
SUBJECT: Single-use Plastic Reduction Ordinance

ISSUE

At the direction of the Town Council and Town Manager, the Office of Planning and Development Services has drafted an ordinance to help reduce the distribution of single-use plastics in Groton. The proposed drafted ordinance would prohibit the distribution of single use plastic bags, plastic cutlery, plastic stirrers, and plastic straws.

BACKGROUND

Dozens of communities across the State have enacted or have considered single-use plastic bag ban. At the state level, the General Assembly is considering bills banning single-use plastic bags, straws, and Styrofoam takeout containers. The neighboring Town of Stonington is also proposing a similar ordinance that Groton has used as a model in the early stages of developing our ordinance. Although they are substantially the same, the ordinances do contain the following list of distinctions.

1. Ban on Plastic Straws

The Stonington ordinance limits the ban on plastic straws to “Full Service Establishments” only. This appears to exclude fast food restaurants, coffee shops, and other beverage providers from the ban. We consider fast food restaurants and some coffee shops to be the largest providers of single use plastic straws and have extended the ban to these types of business that are defined as “Food Service Establishments”.

2. Customers with Disabilities or other Impairments

The Stonington ordinance allows plastic straws to be provided to consumers by request only. Our drafted ordinance does not have this provision. To ensure that people who need the bendable plastic straws are accommodated, our ordinance exempts customers with disabilities or other impairments.

3. Plastic Cutlery and Plastic Stirrers

The Stonington ordinance does not include plastic cutlery or plastic stirrers. Our drafted ordinance would prohibit the distribution of these items at all “Food Service Establishments”.

In an effort to reach out to as many interested parties as possible we would like to have a public forum and/or preliminary workshop(s) with the Town Council, prior to the scheduling of a public hearing.

ALTERNATIVES

- 1) The Town Council holds a series of workshops and/or public forum to gather input from the community on the proposed ordinance, prior to scheduling a public hearing.
- 2) No action.