



Programs & Services Committee Report

City of Newton In City Council

Wednesday, April 18, 2018

Present: Councilors Rice (Chair), Albright, Brousal-Glaser, Scibelli Greenberg, Krintzman and Kalis

Absent: Councilors Baker and Schwartz

Also Present: Councilor Danberg

City Staff Present: Karyn Dean (Committee Clerk)

#221-18 Appointment of Leland Fisher to Jackson Homestead

HER HONOR THE MAYOR appointing LELAND P. FISHER, 954 Chestnut Street, Newton Upper Falls, as a Trustee of the JACKSON HOMESTEAD for a term to expire April 30, 2021. (60 days: 6/16/18)

Action: **Programs & Service Held 5-0 (Councilor Albright not voting)**

Note: Mr. Fisher was unable to attend this meeting. He will join the Committee at the next available meeting. The Committee voted to hold his appointment.

#222-18 Re-Appointment of Aric Parnes to the Biosafety Committee

PRESIDENT LAREDO re-appointing ARIC PARNES, 43 Beverly Road, Newton Highlands, as a member of the BIOSAFETY COMMITTEE for a term to expire April 1, 2021. (60 days: 6/16/18)

Action: **Programs & Services Approved 5-0 (Councilor Albright not voting)**

Note: The Committee was pleased that Dr. Parnes would continue serving on the Biosafety Committee and unanimously approved his appointment without discussion.

Referred to Programs & Services and Finance Committees

#127-18 Prohibition on polystyrene-based disposable food or beverage containers

COUNCILORS DANBERG, ALBRIGHT, NORTON, CROSSLEY, LEARY AND KALIS requesting a prohibition on polystyrene-based disposable food or beverage containers in the City of Newton if that packaging takes place on the premises of food establishments within the City.

Action: **Programs & Services Held 5-0 (Councilor Albright not voting)**

Note: Councilor Danberg joined the Committee and explained that this item has been before the Programs & Services Committee for a number of years and there were several conversations in Committee during the last term. This proposed ordinance will prohibit the use of food and beverage containers used in packaging on the premises of establishments in the City only and will go into effect 180 days after its passage. There can be a 6-month extension of that time if an establishment has a supply they would like to use up. The Health Department would be enforcing

the ordinance. The fines were determined based on Brookline's fines and also generally follow the graduated fines for other violations in the City's ordinances.

At the last discussion in 2017, the docketers said that they would spend some time talking to local food establishments to determine the effect this ordinance might have on their businesses and to find out if any of them were already using alternative products.

The state has been considering a polystyrene ban, however, they generally take their cue from municipalities. If enough show an interest, then they take action. She would like Newton to be one of the leaders on this issue.

Councilor Danberg also explained that recycling polystyrene was extremely expensive and that is why the City does not do it anymore. Recycling a ton of polystyrene costs about \$7K while disposing of it costs about \$97. Those costs would be prohibitive for the City. The Rumford Ave. Recycling Center does take very large pieces of polystyrene, for example, from appliance boxes, for recycling. The Recycling Manager for the City has found a source to take those larger pieces. Twenty-seven cities and towns, including Brookline, Cambridge, Natick, Somerville and Wayland have a polystyrene ordinance and it is becoming more and more prevalent.

Sunwoo Kahng, a member of the polystyrene task force joined the Committee. She is a member of the Solid Waste Commission and a Board member of Green Newton. She explained the carcinogenic properties of the material, reiterated the cost of recycling it and pointed out that it contaminates the environment, and the recycling collected by the City. Waste Management, the contracted company that picks up the recycling, has fined the City about \$21K from November through January for exceeding the allowed contamination rate of 10%. Once the contamination is higher than 10%, the entire load is deemed unrecyclable and ends up as trash. Taking polystyrene out of the waste stream in the City would certainly reduce the rate of contamination. There are residents who do not realize that polystyrene is not recyclable.

Ms. Kahng reported that the task force spoke to 20 restaurant owners in the City. Ten of them did not use polystyrene at all; 5 of them used polystyrene for just one item and alternative products for everything else (Coney Island Ice Cream; Dunkin Donuts; Jake's; Raviolis and Blue Ribbon BBQ); and 2 use multiple polystyrene containers as well as alternatives. A list of alternative products was provided with the agenda packet. The ordinance should eliminate the vast majority of polystyrene uses in the City.

A Councilor asked if the City should be specifically mentioned in the ordinance so that it is clear that it is also included in this ban. Ms. Kahng said the intention is that the City would certainly be included and she would check with Councilor Danberg on the language.

Several members of the Committee wondered if polystyrene packing materials (packing peanuts) should be included in this ordinance. Currently, the UPS stores in Newton do not use polystyrene

packing peanuts anymore, but it was unclear if there are others that might. Councilor Danberg accepted this friendly amendment to the language.

The Committee decided to have the Law Department amend the ordinance to include packing peanuts because even if current establishments do not use them, new businesses coming into the City might. This would apply to packages packed in the City only, and would not apply to any shipments coming into the City as that would be impossible to enforce.

Councilor Krintzman and Kalis will forward suggestions for language to Councilor Danberg. Councilor Kalis moved hold and the Committee voted in favor, unanimously.

Meeting adjourned.

Respectfully Submitted,

John B. Rice, Chair