

Lopez, Donna

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**From:** Judith Nathans [judith.nathans@gmail.com]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, April 23, 2014 1:27 PM  
**To:** Lopez, Donna; City Council  
**Cc:** Mail, Randi; O'Riordan, Owen; Peterson, Lisa  
**Subject:** PLASTIC BAG ORDINANCE

I attended the public hearing on April 17 regarding the proposed Plastic Bag Ordinance, although I had to leave around 7pm. I was struck by the very sincere and supportive concerns of several business owners, especially the Harvard Book Store and Garment District, both long-term businesses in our city. I still have my Garment District bags which I use for many things. I think their concerns are extremely valid.

Perhaps I should have been paying more attention to this matter (I was a member of the City's Recycling Advisory Committee for over 20 years, ending in 2012) but I am now just learning about the specifics, etc. I have to say I am not someone who likes "Bans" and prefer using economic incentives. I was encouraged to hear the positive results in cities like Washington, DC and others cited, that implemented a fee on BOTH plastic and paper bags. As a shopper in Brookline, who have no fees in place, I was appalled at the size of the bag I got at a few stores (CVS for one) for a small item.

I would love to see a reduction in plastic bag use, but let's be realistic here. We all still use plastic for our trash, and even Whole Foods uses plastic for their produce and bin items, which I see are exempt. Those "light" bags also end up endangering marine life, so "dramatically" expressed by Phil Seago of the Sierra Club. Of course, all of these bags can be recycled...and in Cambridge we have a long-standing Drop Off center that takes them...as well as many stores, etc. Frankly, I am more concerned with the items WE CANNOT recycle, such as chip bags, frozen bags, cellophane, etc. But that is an issue for another day. Right now, the best incentive to reduce use of bags, is to make them REUSABLE, and I don't mean that you have to have a cloth one. Once you start paying 10 cents for your plastic one, you will remember to stuff it in your bag or pocket when you go back to the store, more easily done than with many of the bulky alternatives. Imposing a fee of 5 cents for paper, 10 cents for plastic will educate the consumer and help the bottom line of the store owners, many of whom are small proprietors.

I do not think the measure of how well a community is doing should be based on a ban such as this one. Cambridge is a leader in Massachusetts in composting and recycling among other accomplishments.

Thank you.

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