

MINUTES OF THE

SANTA FE COUNTY

Single-Use Plastics Working Group

December 20, 2022

5:30 – 7:00 p.m.

I. Call to Order

This regular meeting of the Santa Fe County Single-Use Plastics and Polystyrene Working Group was convened by Olivia Romo, Santa Fe County Constituent Services Liaison on the above-cited date at approximately 5:45 p.m. in the Johnson Conference Room, 100 Catron St. Santa Fe, New Mexico with in-person and on a Webex/audio platform.

II. Roll Call

Roll call indicated the presence of a quorum as follows:

Member Present:

Sarah Pierpont, Chair
Kim Kelly
Joseph Eigner
Gary Stoller
Karen Sweeney

Members Excused:

Steven Schwartz (New Member)

Others Present:

Olivia Romo, Constituent Services Liaison
Jacqueline Beam, County Webex Host
Hank Hughes, County Commissioner D5
Laura Jagles, Constituent Services Liaison

III. Approval of November 16, 2022 Meeting Minutes

Member Eigner noted in Item E, what he was supposed to do at a hardware store was mistakenly assigned to Member Stoller in the minutes under Assignments and Research Discussion.

Chair Pierpont agreed to change that to Member Eigner

Member Eigner moved, seconded by Member Stoller, to approve the minutes of November 16, 2022 with one correction. The motion was approved by unanimous voice vote.

IV. Approval of Agenda

Member Sweeney moved, seconded by Member Stoller, to approve the agenda as published. The motion was approved without opposition.

V. Matters from the Working Group

A. Assignments and Research Discussion

Chair Pierpont referenced the spreadsheet of assignments for discussion.

Member Eigner reported that he contacted the Eldorado Hardware Store owner who indicated he works 16 hours per day and was unable to respond to the survey. He was unable to contact the owner of the Upper Crust Pizza out on Highway 285 in Commissioner Hamilton's District. He contacted the city store and left messages. There was no answer at the business or at his home.

Member Eigner tried to contact the Bimbo people in Albuquerque because their store, on Google Maps, was located at the corner of Entrada and Cerillos Road, so it was within Santa Fe City limits. So he concluded that Bimbo is not an active Bimbo branch and should be taken off the business list.

His other assignment was the John Brooks store. He reported it has a new owner, Mr. Schmiel, after Mr. John Brooks died last March. He contacted the local manager, who asked for a copy of the Resolution and left a copy for him. Member Eigner has heard nothing back from him. He also opposed a similar bag ban in Albuquerque. He concluded they were not going to participate and might show up to oppose it at the Board of Commissioners' meeting. The manager of the local store told him that brown paper bags cost 23 or 27 cents each and plastic equivalents were about one cent each. If the ban passes, the store would be giving away brown paper bags and the customer would pay five cents from their purchase if they bring their own bag(s) they would deduct five cents.

Chair Pierpont knew paper bags cost more but not that much more than plastic bags – not 23 cents each. Member Eigner agreed and wanted to confirm that comparison.

Member Stoller reported three contacts. The first was simply malicious and he called back, said she didn't use plastic bags; she used other things and was not interested in the Committee's work because she was too busy. He mentioned contact with Julianna who was not excited and didn't take a stand for or against it. She had a very small business cooking for people.

Commissioner Hughes arrived at 5:47.

Member Sweeney contacted El Parasol, Blackbird, Legal Tender, Harry's, and Article Cheap. Harry's did give a very positive response. She would like to invite him to the February meeting to present. She was willing to invite him if it was okay. Blackbird was not interested. El Parasol was one with whom she really wanted to go further because they have really good

food but everything they use is disposable. Their headquarters is actually in Española. But she got no response from them.

Member Sweeney was suddenly muted and was unable to unmute for a while.

Member Kelly forwarded an email that the chart on costs was not current and needed to be updated. The chart showed 500 clam shells for \$33 and now it is \$122 for 500.

Member Kelly agreed to update the chart and the consequences of supply chain issues. She assumed most small businesses go to Costco to get their containers or some would go to the Sysco on Gallina which was about half the price compared to the biodegradable place her friend recommended which 20 cents for a clamshell.

Chair Pierpont suggested using the Tacoma model she showed on the screen with graphics, vendors' contact information and comparison information. She put it on the to-do list.

Ms. Romo said the list needs to add the vendors information for all the alternative products.

Chair Pierpont asked Ms. Romo to share her meeting with Councilor Fernandez from Taos about how to be more helpful to local businesses.

Ms. Romo said Councilor Fernandez shared their ordinance with her and rolled it back during the pandemic and went back to using Styrofoam. To enforce the ban, the Town put a fine structure in the ordinance that empowered the enforcement officers who could impose a fine. They later removed it because they had only one officer who was also managing the Planning Division. They are now trying to attract the businesses on the front end. He said their key supporters are young people and suggested recycling at home. He also offered to make a proposal to the Committee with the Mayor of Taos if there were questions or concerns.

Member Eigner said their ordinance is available on the Taos website.

Ms. Romo said Councilor Fernandez recommended the County place ads in the newspaper or on social media to engage the public and the public on the front end and provide education. She had reached out to the Land Use Department to find out whether the County could regulate big events. A Staff person told her when someone asks for a business license, that the application could have a recycle requirement included in the license requirements for weddings, and other such events. Using a County facility would require more oversight.

The Committee discussed scheduling Councilor Fernandez and the Mayor of Taos at a future meeting and decided to ask the owner of Harry's to come to present at the March meeting And Councilor Fernandez in February.

Chair Pierpont shared her work that was done and shared statistics on the type of trash they found at the Pueblo of Pojoaque. About half was recyclable material. She reported on the other categories that were found from the waste load. Some of it was very recyclable, with materials that could be diverted with more education.

Member Sweeney assumed they could choose recyclable containers.

Chair Pierpont said they leave cardboard where it is, and nobody takes it to the recycle centers. There was almost no cardboard in the recyclable containers.

Member Stoller submitted a report on programs getting ready for the ordinance. He could not find any voluntary programs. At Chair Pierpont's request, he shared an article from the web to put in their final report. The article had been sent to the member by Ms. Romo.

Member Stoller pointed out that restaurants can be visited to show where they can get reusable materials. And how they can save money. It would be person-intensive when the County is short-staffed and would need volunteers.

Member Sweeney thought it would be great for the Green Chamber to volunteer for.

Member Stoller had envisioned inspecting restaurants to become "a green restaurant" as a project for the future.

Members gave other suggestions to consider trying in the future.

VI. Discussion & Next Steps

Chair Pierpont asked if the new member, Steven Schwartz, will be able to join us soon.

Member Kelly said he was presently in Mexico for vacation and will join us at the January meeting.

Chair Pierpont said the next step is getting an updated version of the Tacoma Policy by making it more for Santa Fe and she would start on it. She asked if anyone could email her with comments on it.

Another next step was a group of citizens, trying to get a state-wide ban of plastics. They approached Senator Steinborn who liked the idea and Secretary Kenny of NMED, and she could not do it if it required hiring more staff. Senator Steinborn didn't like the ten-cent fee. We are now using the Vermont model which has a ten-cent fee per bag at the point of sale and lets the owner of retail sales to keep the cents. But Steinborn does not like the ten-cent fee. The meeting with NMED missed the opportunity for funding. Steinborn would not introduce a bill that has a ten-cent fee in it.

She will also follow up on the Taos County issue for how to enforce the ordinance.

Member Sweeney mentioned that Santa Fe County pre-files our legislative priorities each year and asked if this plastics ban bill could be added to the list.

Commissioner Hughes said we already put a general sentence that we want the Legislature to ban plastics.

Chair Pierpont said the bill has a sponsor – Representative Patricia Caballero.

Commissioner Hughes added there are not too many restrictions on those. He asked if they were thinking of a study on use of plastics.

Chair Pierpont agreed. Once it is set up, it could become recurrent funding through a department and not just a one-time funding.

Commissioner Hughes clarified that each Legislator gets an amount to allocate but probably not a recurrent funding. One-time funding is more likely.

Member Sweeney asked Ms. Romo to see if the Taos Councilor and Mayor could come in February and if not, to ask for March.

Member Stoller asked for minutes to be made available earlier than the morning of the meeting.

Ms. Romo agreed that would be done. The Committee has its own website, and the minutes will be put there no sooner than 72 hours before the next meeting date.

Ms. Romo said the Legal Department is urging all members to attend in person at the meetings.

VII. Matters from the Public

There were no matters from the Public.

VIII. Other Business

Next Meeting January 17, 2023

Ms. Romo announced the days the County facilities would be closed.

Chair Pierpont will also put in her newsletter the information on the recycling center.

Member Eigner congratulated Commissioner Hughes on his retirement and sympathies with the BCC.

IX. Adjournment

Member Sweeney moved, seconded by Member Eigner, to adjourn the meeting. The motion was approved by unanimous voice vote.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:40 p.m.

Approved by:

Sara Pierpont

Respectfully submitted by:

Carl G. Boaz

Stenographer