

# Minutes of the Berkeley Heights Mayor's Recycling Task Force

March 11, 2020

Meeting called to order at 7:35pm

## Attendees

**Members:** Angus Chen, James Coler (by phone), Manuel Couto, Kim Diamond, Alvaro Medeiros (by phone), Saeed Sharifian (by phone)

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## Business

### Ordinance on Restrictions on Plastic Bags, Plastic Straws, and Polystyrene

- Kim spoke with Delicious Heights, who had switched to using both waxed paperboard and #1 plastic containers. She brought samples to the meeting.
- She wanted to make sure that the #1 plastic containers were recyclable to prepare for the future December 1st enforcement of the polystyrene ban. She spoke with JoAnn Gemenden, who informed her that the #1 plastic take-out container is not recyclable.
- Kim said the Recycle Coach app indicates #1 plastic take-out containers are recyclable, and some of the information on the Union County website is confusing for restaurants and residents.
- She suggested sending JoAnn a letter on the township letterhead regarding clarifying discrepancies. Members of the township council on the task force and perhaps the mayor should sign this letter. The letter has the following objectives:
  - We need to send a clear and consistent message to our business and residents.
  - Are #1 plastics that aren't bottles recyclable, especially since the Recycle Coach app states it is recyclable.
  - If it isn't recyclable at curbside pickup, it should be removed from the Recycle Coach app.
  - Ask if there is a place that can recycle these containers can be recycled. Perhaps it could be taken once a month on a the same site that takes polystyrene and electronics.
- Kim will start the letter, then collaborate with the group to refine it. Alvaro and Manny agreed to print and sign the letter.
- The statewide bill to ban plastic bags and polystyrene was discussed. It was recently passed in the state Senate.
- Angus will send out links to current plastics ordinance bill and article discussing it
  - <https://www.northjersey.com/story/news/environment/2020/03/10/nj-plastic-bag-ban-take-two-pass-legislature-time/4976155002/>
  - [https://www.njleg.state.nj.us/2020/Bills/S1000/864\\_R2.HTM](https://www.njleg.state.nj.us/2020/Bills/S1000/864_R2.HTM)

- It was noted that the township ordinance does not require that businesses replace polystyrene with recyclable containers.
- Since there will be efforts to guide businesses on how to comply with the township ordinance, some businesses (like Delicious Heights) want to be environmentally responsible and know what containers to buy. It will help smooth the transition when the ordinance is in effect.

### **Recycling Bid**

- The bid is targeted to be submitted before April. Alvaro will follow up with Joe Graziano.
- Alvaro will also ask Joe about incorporating carts at a later date into the bid.

### **Educational Initiatives**

- Board of Education member Michael D'Aquila was not able to attend this meeting because he was attending a Board of Education meeting. We will see if he is available for the next meeting.
- April 22nd is Earth Day and the task force would like to participate in educating students on recycling
- Lower Columbia Park has been reserved Saturday April 25 from 9am to 1pm for the tree saplings giveaway, which is spearheaded by Councilwoman Susan Poage.
- Kim mentioned that signage will be important if the event is at lower Columbia Park to make sure residents know where to go.
- Angus will ask Susan how she is planning to advertise this giveaway.
- The task force will have a table at this giveaway to educate residents on recycling, just as they have done at Vegan Fest, the Color Run, and Winter Walk
- Angus will volunteer to work this table and will send an email requesting other volunteers. Saeed may volunteer.
- The poster board from last year will not be used for this table because the carts may not be part of the next recycling bid. This table will be focused on educating residents on proper recycling.
- Kim asked if the Recycling Task Force has a budget. Manny will look into this.

*Motion to adjourn - 8:26pm*

*Next meeting scheduled for March 25*

*Respectfully submitted by Angus Chen on March 24, 2020*