



Agenda Item Summary

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Submitted By

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Reviewed By

LKS

Agenda Item Title

An Ordinance Amending Chapter 20 ("Public Health") of the Oak Park Village Code to Add a New Article 14 - ("Retail Single-Use Bag Pilot Program")

Overview

The Village Board referred the issue of single-use carryout bags to the Environment and Energy Commission (EEC) when the City of Chicago adopted their ban on plastic bags. After having researched ordinances regarding plastic and single-use bags enacted throughout the country and conducted outreach with both residents and business owners, the EEC is recommending that alternatively the Village impose a single-use bag fee on all carryout bags. Staff is recommending a pilot program for a two-year period, with a one-year follow-up with the EEC.

Recommendation

Approve the Ordinance.

Staff Recommendation

Staff has reached out to the Chair of the EEC for feedback, and the EEC will accept staff's recommendation for a voluntary pilot program rather than imposing the program on the merchants at this time.

Fiscal Impact

A fee on single-use bags could generate funds to the Village. If a merchant voluntarily accepts the program, the fee would be 10 cents for every bag provided to the customer and 5 cents would be returned to the Village. The Village would use a portion of these funds for marketing those merchants who participate and "certify" them as a green business, as well as retain these funds for other sustainable activities.

Background

Originally in May of 2014, the Village Board asked the EEC to review the newly adopted ordinance by the City of Chicago to ban plastic bags. After considerable research by the EEC, the EEC decided to recommend a fee that would be imposed on any person who needs a bag, paper or plastic. After further discussion, staff recommends a voluntary program to start beginning June 2017 - June 2019. The EEC will review the issue after one-year, and provide a report by December 2018 to the Village Board so that the Village can determine to keep or alter the program.

Studies from Boulder, CO, Seattle, WA, San Jose, CA, Washington, DC, Aspen, CO, and Boulder, CO estimate

average single use plastic and paper bag consumption at 340 - 630 bags per person per year. (Source: "Options for reducing disposable checkout bag use in Boulder", Boulder City Council Meeting Agenda, May 15, 2012. <http://www.bouldercolorado.gov/files/05152012Agenda/AgendaFINALWeb.pdf>). Given Oak Park's population of approximately 52,000 and assuming Oak Park's per person consumption falls on the low side of this spectrum, Oak Park's potential per year consumption of single-use bags could reach 17.5 million bags.

Plastic bags do not fully break down in the environment contaminating public spaces and natural ecosystems, and paper bags can actually have higher life-cycle environmental impacts than plastic bags. (Sources: "Life Cycle Assessment for Three Types of Grocery Bags - Recyclable Plastic; Compostable, Biodegradable Plastic; and Recycled, Recyclable Paper", Boustead Consulting & Associates. <http://static.reuseit.com/PDFs/Boustead%20Associates.pdf>; "Review Of Life Cycle Data Relating to Disposable, Compostable, Biodegradable, and Reusable Grocery Bags", Use Less Stuff. <http://use-less-stuff.com/Paper-and-Plastic-Grocery-Bag-LCA-Summary.pdf>)

Single-use bag fees have been shown to decrease single-use bag use by over 50%. (Source: "Policy options to reduce public consumption of disposable shopping bags.", Gabriela Carvalho and Seth Geiser, University of Washington Evans School of Public Affairs, 2009. <http://courses.washington.edu/pbaf513m/Carvalho%20Geiser.pdf>)

Alternatives

The Commission considered recommending a single-use bag ban similar to Chicago and Evanston but believes that imposing a fee would be more effective in decreasing single-bag use while increasing public awareness and possible behavior change.

Previous Board Action

On May 19, 2014, the Board referred this topic to the EEC for discussion and consideration of a plastic shopping bag ban in light of actions taken by the City of Chicago and Evanston.

At the Board study session on May 14, 2016, staff was directed to propose an ordinance to store owners and/or managers of establishments that generate a large number of carryout single-use bags.

Citizen Advisory Commission Action

In November 2014, staff reviewed the issue at a meeting of the Business Association Council (BAC). At their suggestion, an online survey was created with 2 versions: 1 for residents; and 1 for business owners. The surveys were promoted in January 2015. On May 27, 2015, EEC Chair Bridge, Commissioner Cullen and staff met with the BAC to review survey results.

On July 7, 2015, the EEC, in a 7 to 1 majority, voted to recommend that the Oak Park Village Board should consider a single-use bag fee equally applicable to paper and plastic bags.

Anticipated results of such an ordinance would be to:

- Reduce stray litter in the community and globally
- Reduce life-cycle environmental impacts due to single-use bags
- Reduce costs to recycling streams due to plastic bag contamination
- Increase environmental awareness and education in Oak Park

Promote a culture of environmental consciousness by reducing the use of disposable, single-use items in favor of reusable alternatives

EEC Chair Bridge, Commissioner Cullen and staff held a discussion with business leaders at the September 23, 2015 meeting of the BAC. As a result, a revised online survey was created and a notice was sent to all business owners in November of 2015. There were few responses (a total of 40) from the business community received by February 29, 2016.

At the Board's request, a meeting was held on July 13, 2016 with store owners and/or managers of establishments that generate a large number of carryout single-use bags. The representative from Jewel/Osco requested that the Village delay any action while the State considers legislation. Staff's summary of the pending IL legislation is attached.

Anticipated Future Actions/Commitments

Review the impacts of the Ordinance in the future to determine its effectiveness.

Intergovernmental Cooperation Opportunities

N/A

Performance Management (MAP) Alignment

N/A