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## **More Written Comments Submitted to RTM on the Proposed Carryout Bag Ordinance**

**Author :** David Gurliacci

**Categories :** [Proposed 2019 Bag Ordinance](#)

**Tagged as :** [Checkout Bag Ordinance 2019](#), [Plastic Bag Ordinance 2019](#), [Plastic Bags 2019](#), [Proposed 2019 Bag Ordinance](#)

**Date :** February 27, 2019

Here are 14 written comments from Darien residents on the proposed town ordinance imposing restrictions on carryout bags.

The comments were submitted to the Representative Town Meeting and [posted on the Web here](#) (in the "Comments" section) by the RTM Town Government Structure and Administration Committee, among other documents about the subject.

***You Can Submit Your Own Comments Through Friday, March 1***

- **Additional comments on the "Proposed Ordinance for the Management of Plastic and Paper Checkout Bags in Darien" can be submitted through Friday, March 1 if emailed to [DarienRTM@DarienCT.gov](mailto:DarienRTM@DarienCT.gov).**

If the town seems in favor of an ordinance, the RTM will have several key details to consider, said Monica McNally, chair of the RTM Public Works Committee, who presided over the Feb. 6 public hearing on the proposal.

McNally said those key details include:

- Should there be a mandatory charge on paper bags that are collected and kept by a business establishment?
- What should the minimum thickness be on a recycled bag that a store or business establishment sells?
- Should there be stipulated standards on the composition of the paper bags that are offered by the stores?
- What should the effective date be after the approval of the ordinance?
- "These are some of the points that we would like to hear your thoughts on," McNally said.

Darienite.com has removed exact addresses but kept street names, when provided. Dates are provided, where known.

## **Gary Holmes**

Feb. 6

I am unable to attend the hearing on the plastic bag ban but I still want to register my opposition and am requesting this commented to be entered into the record.

A proposal to ban plastic bags in Darien was previously rejected, so I don't know why this needs to be reconsidered — I am not aware that any new evidence has been introduced. And if anything, this new proposal is even more burdensome because it seeks to phase out paper bags as well.

First, the assertion that other towns have also imposed bans is completely meaningless. For generations parents have been responding to arguments of that nature with references to other people jumping over a cliff.

However, my primary objection to this ban is that it seeks to impose inconveniences on everyone for the sake

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of making a symbolic gesture. Plastic bags may be highly visible but they are actually a very minor factor in the use and abuse of plastic. And there is considerable evidence that the environmental impact of plastic bags is negligible, especially when compared to paper. (see [more detailed arguments here](#): and [here](#)).

Those people who believe plastic bags are a problem are more than welcome to deploy their own reusable bags. No one is preventing them from doing that. It seems, though, rather overbearing that they are trying to compel the rest of us to do the same. It's easy for someone who's comfortably situated to dictate behavior to their benighted neighbors, but as usual, the real burden of phasing out of all bags will be felt most heavily on the already burdened: the elderly, busy single parents, people with memory problems.

There is no question that the people of Darien, with their big houses, big lawns and big cars, have a huge carbon footprint. If we are really serious about reducing it, we shouldn't resort to virtue-signaling ordinances involving shopping bags. Why not more meaningful gestures such as:

- Rationing the amount of heating fuel that each house can use per to 1,000 gallons per year (or the equivalent amount of natural gas)
- Limit the number of cars to two per house
- Ban the sale of paper newspapers that are available online physical (newspapers use a lot more paper than grocery bags -- plus they are delivered in plastic too!)
- Ban electric Christmas lights, which are unnecessary

Unless the town is willing to put real teeth into its concern for the environment, I object to imposing this additional inconvenience on the rest of us.

Thank you.  
Gary Holmes  
Patricia Lane  
Darien, CT 06820

### **Holly Homes**

RTM Members,

Last night I attended the RTM meeting regarding banning all plastic bags in Darien. I 100 percent back this proposal.

I was inspired by all the people who spoke, especially the handful of Darien High School students who were so passionate about the future of our community and our planet.

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This is not a solution to all our environmental problems, but it is a start. We need to do so much and time is running out.

The few opposing views out there did nothing to sway my views. Bruce Orr said that most of the plastic pollution comes from China, India and Vietnam so we shouldn't ban plastic bags here because of that. Sorry — but that argument completely falls flat! There are so many pieces of plastic that end up in our waterways and our trees — and they didn't come from China.

Thank you for considering my views and I really hope that you approve this ban.

Holly Homes  
Laforge Road, Darien

**Jane Jepsen**

Thank you for holding tonight's meeting. I am in favor of the ordinance for the management of plastic and paper checkout bags in Darien. I grew up in town and returned with my own family in 2012. We feel fortunate to live in this beautiful, coastal town and we enjoy it every day. We love our daily walks along Goodwives River to Pear Tree Beach. There is always something new and beautiful to see and my children and I play a game of pointing out the beautiful things we didn't see the day before. Sadly there is now plastic waste in the picture, floating amongst the marine and plant life and corroding our coastline.

It saddens me to see this but even more concerning is how it will impact the health of our environment and that of our children. Our families are at greater risks for cancers caused by the plastics that are being consumed by our wildlife and later consumed by us, along with breathing contaminated air when these plastics are burned.

I believe this community is ready to move beyond a small convenience for the greater good of our environment and our health.

I listened to the concerns of the local shop owners and I appreciate their thoughts. I am a big fan of small business but I believe the people of Darien will be more supportive of the shops that show their allegiance to the betterment of our town and the health of its community.

Thank you for helping us to move forward on this issue. This is a step in the right direction.

Sincerely,  
Jayne Jepsen  
Tory Hole Road

**Monica Keady**

Esteemed members of the Darien RTM,

I attended the meeting regarding the proposed Ordinance regarding checkout bags in Darien and was pleased to see that the majority of speakers were in favor of the ordinance.

The statistics regarding bag use in Darien certainly point to a problem, especially since plastic bags are no longer accepted for recycling.

There were several points made about the negative environmental impact of checkout bags throughout their lifecycle.

Additionally, speakers referenced greater environmental challenges facing Darien as well as surrounding communities and indeed, the rest of the globe. One speaker suggested that it is our “moral imperative” to take action. This is a first step of many.

A significant number of Darien’s citizens spoke about their personal behavior, such as carrying reusable bags when they shop. The point of this ordinance is to raise awareness and change behavior. Those who have already moved away from checkout bags indicated that it was an easy adjustment to their lifestyle.

Opponents of the resolution referenced macro scale environmental issues. While we can wait for those to be resolved or point fingers at other societies, it is better to move forward to protect our community and future generations right here at home.

Business owners who either opposed or had concerns about the Ordinance, raised valid questions about the impact of the cost of switching to the required bag types. Again, it is the intention of the ordinance to limit the use of checkout bags and eventually, reduce the cost to merchants. It’s also an opportunity to get creative and to start a global conversation with customers. We do not need to live in a bubble.

The members of BYO Darien have done a service to this town in researching and coming up with solutions. We will not be leaders here, but will follow what other towns have already done. This effort has been made in the past and we’re overdue in taking action on this issue.

Please support the Proposed Ordinance for the Management of Plastic and Paper Checkout Bags in Darien.

With appreciation,  
Monica Keady

**Sheryl Lincoln**

This email represents my full and unconditional support for the Draft Ordinance referenced above. I was not able to attend the town meeting concerning this, but I would have been there to voice my support publicly.

I am a member of the Garden Club of Darien and have been educated about this by Juliet Cain. She has been thorough, intelligent, and has stated the facts as reported, without emotion or bias. I have been aware of the plastic problem affecting the environment for quite awhile and I am happy and relieved that concerned citizens have dedicated their time and energy to attack this problem.

In the past ten years it has become a common sight to see plastic bags in the woods, along the highways and roads, and in my own yard. It is no longer a problem that can be shelved for another day. Plastic has been proven to be found in our food supply chain, not just in our eyesight.

I have tried to reuse, reduce and recycle all bags in general and have been successful. Like most things, it is about breaking habits; difficult in the beginning but then it becomes second nature. Reusing bags, or using a reusable bag for shopping, is not placing an undue burden on the consumer, especially in Darien.

Thank you for your attention to this matter. I appreciate everyone's time and consideration.

Sincerely,  
Sheryl Lincoln

**Caroline Luz, RTM District 6**

Feb. 12, 2019

I have been speaking with my neighbors about the proposed ban and would like to weigh in both on their and my own behalf. Many did not know that the bags are currently burned in Bridgeport — they thought the bags were recycled. Most of the people I heard from (14 people/families) are fully in favor of the ban.

“I cannot understand any argument to the contrary.”

“Plastic is becoming a major problem in the world. I am in favor.”

In other towns...”people seem to have adjusted just fine.”

One person responded to the idea that poor people will be disproportionately burdened by a charge on paper bags: “Low income people are almost always disproportionately affected by our failure to protect the environment.”

“Being dumped into the air is not better than being dumped into the ocean.”

“People just need to develop the habit.”

“We should all aspire to be like China with their face masks.”

“I’d be less inclined to patronize businesses who object to this ban.”

“We should not wait for the State - it will take forever.”

“I support anything that forces us to be thoughtful about our planet.”

Two people do not think the ban is worth the trouble and would oppose it. A further handful of people support the idea of environmental stewardship but are concerned about creating a hardship for local businesses. One person cited a case of the ban backfiring in a Cape Cod town because the paper replacements were so bad and kept breaking that store management now just gives away heavier plastic bags, contributing to more plastic, not less (although a different kind of bag).

I firmly support the proposed ban, despite the potential difficulties. I believe that people will adjust over time, and I think very few people will object to paying for bags if the stores take the time to explain the reason. It is 2019 — what are we waiting for?

Thanks, Caroline  
Caroline Luz  
RTM District 6

**Lisa Mason**

Good morning,

I attended your public forum last night and I was happy to see so many people listening and talking about this topic and how it should move forward.

While I’m not completely versed in all of the ins and outs of this proposed ordinance, I did listen to the business owners concern about the type of paper bags they could use in their shops and the fact that only three companies could provide those types of bags. I feel this is an awful constraint to our business owners. They need to be able to flourish and make a good living to be able to keep their businesses open. We need these small town businesses in our town, they are unique and add to the charm of a small town as ours. These types of businesses keep people shopping in our town. They afford employment opportunities for our youth and bring tax revenue to our town. I feel like most of the businesses already are trying to reduce plastic in their operations and they need better options for compliance with the ordinance.

I know that our environmental groups have been promoting bringing your re-usable bags when shopping, and I feel that with time and more education, people will remember to do this. The ten cent charge per bag is a great teacher as well!

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This is a good ordinance, and I know that your members will thoroughly vet it and find the right balance for the community and the business owners. Thanks for all your work on this very important topic.

Lisa Mason  
Boston Post Road

#### **Christa McNamara**

Dear Members of the Darien RTM -

I could not attend the public hearing on February 6th, but I wanted to let you know that I support a ban on single-use plastic bags and I hope that your body approves the proposed ordinance as such.

As you heard from the many speakers whom I also saw on Channel 79, there really is no need for these bags, and all they are doing is polluting our waterways and destroying our environment. Our neighboring communities are banning them - it is time for Darien to be part of the solution.

In regard to the proposals on what to do with the paper bags, I must admit I struggle a bit with the answer. I am happy to pay the 10 cents, but is this legal? Or the best solution? And what about paper bags that can be recycled, but are not from recycled material? I believe this was an issue brought up by the owner of the Darien Toy Box.

I am not an expert on this topic, but perhaps extend the scope of the ban to plastic straws and stirrers, and not put the paper bags in the ordinance at this time? Or to put in the ordinance that it will be reviewed in 1 year to address the paper bags?

At a minimum, please stop the use of single-use plastic bags in Darien.  
Thank you for your service our town.

Regards,  
Christa McNamara  
Saint Nicholas Road

#### **Nicolas Mendoza**

Feb. 6

Hi, my name is Nick, I live on Mansfield Ave in Darien and I strongly agree plastic bags should be banned from Darien.

Please follow on the steps of neighboring towns that have done the same such as Greenwich and most currently, Norwalk.



Plastic bags are used for an average of 12 minutes, and only 1% are returned for recycling. Annually, more than 100,000 of them end up in Long Island Sound harming our marine life.

Sincerely,  
Nicolas Mendoza

**Sophie Murphy**

Feb. 13  
To the editor:

I felt compelled to write this letter after having read the comments in opposition to the proposed ordinance banning single use plastic bags. Single use plastic is not only a Bridgeport problem and a developing world economy problem, it is a problem here, across our country and around the globe.

Plastic bags, straws and packaging are destroying our waterways. As a coastal community, we should be at the forefront of the effort to reduce our impact on the Long Island Sound ecosystem. And the extent of the plastic pollution is not just what you can see/collect on a beach walk. Several studies are underway to assess the microplastic threat in Long Island Sound and initial results are scary.

Soundkeeper Bill Lucey of Save the Sound used a manta trawl on his boat last summer and harvested an incredible amount of microplastics from the surface of the waters of Long Island Sound and the University of Connecticut has estimated that the Sound holds 5,000 microfibers per cubic meter. Our reliance on plastic conveniences is turning our waters [into a plastic soup](#) — yuck!

And plastic bags and oil go hand in hand. It is estimated that our country uses about 8-10 percent of our total oil supply in making plastic - that is roughly 12 million barrels of oil (a finite resource) to create the same plastic that in turn is creating a major pollution problem.

And we should all keep in mind the collective power of individuals making small changes. If everyone in Darien were to make simple changes to reduce their use of plastic, it would have a big impact on our community. I refuse to accept that we can't make a difference in this effort and if plastic bags are "just a drop in the bucket" then let's start with that drop and move forward from there. Doing nothing is defeatist and our neighbors in Westport, Greenwich, Stamford & Norwalk are certainly not taking that stance.

Finally, I am hoping that our business community will embrace initiatives to reduce plastic waste. For example, it would be amazing if more of our local restaurants shifted from plastic take-out containers to cardboard boxes and eliminated plastic straws.

But let's start with single use plastic bags. Please Darien RTM - move this Plastic Bag Ordinance forward and vote in favor of banning single use plastic bags!

Sophie Murphy

**Kerri Sloan**

Hi,

I was at the meeting last night and heard the residents opinions about the bag ordinance. I am in favor of the ordinance. We must start realizing our everyday activities that need to be changed that contribute to the pollution of our world. Although sometimes it seems like we can not make a difference, this is just one small step in the right direction to clean up the negative things we do the pollute the environment.

The Darien Environmental Group was started 29 years ago and reusable bags were a part of their first initiative. This ordinance is a long time coming and necessary step to support the reusable bag initiative and also a clear way to reduce the use of plastic.

Thank you,  
Kerri Sloan, Overbrook Lane

**John Tibbetts**

Am responding to your invitation for comment on the proposed plastic bag ban. Was unable to attend last night's RTM meeting and wanted to share some thoughts on the subject, so thank you for providing this opportunity.

My wife Caroline and I are opposed to the ban. We diligently recycle our plastic bags and reuse them for shopping. Although the dump no longer accepts them for recycling, the grocery stores do, so we now take them there. We also find the plastic bags handy for our garbage can under the sink! :-)

Statistically, the greatest plastic waste issue is the plastic filter that's used in cigarettes, followed by plastic water bottles and caps. We're not discussing banning these, so I'm confused why plastic bags have been targeted. We certainly see a lot more cigarettes, bottles, and caps litter than plastic bags.

Thanks for hearing me out!

All the best,

John Tibbetts  
CT Waterfront Properties

**Meg and Jim Tweedy**

Dear Brian,

We are writing , as constituents of District 4, to ask you to vote for the plastic-bag ban ordinance. On a personal level, we have tried to reduce the use of plastic in our home because plastic pollution on land takes hundreds of years to decompose and in our waters it breaks down into tiny toxic pieces of micro plastic.

It is distressing to hear that by 2050, scientists predict there will be more plastic than fish in the oceans. Already fish are eating the plastic, and we are eating the fish. So we worry about what the next generation will be consuming.

Living on the coast, our town has an even greater responsibility to cut down on plastic.

We were shocked to learn recently that it is estimated Darien uses 6 million plastic bags a year. Please support the ordinance, which will ban single-use plastic shopping bags and place a fee on paper bags that will encourage the use of reusable bags. Let's join our neighboring towns of Greenwich, Stamford, Norwalk, Weston and Westport and take an easy step to safeguard our environment for the next generation.

Thank you and please share this letter with your fellow RTM members.

Yours,  
Meg and Jim Tweedy  
Nearwater Lane

**Anonymous**

*The writer has requested to remain anonymous.*

I would like to share my thoughts on a proposed plastic bag ban/consumer bag fine and I thank you for soliciting input from residents such as myself who are not interested in speaking at a public hearing.

I honestly don't have a strong opinion one way or another but I would urge the town representatives to consider the potential impact not only on the environment but also on the retail industry and I would hope that we could make improvements to one without harming another. While I personally detest the cheap plastic bags given out by Stop and Shop (that can often only support one or 2 heavier items) and I am in favor of a move to paper bags and the efforts to reduce waste overall and recycle more, I'm not sure that the best solution is to charge consumers for paper bags. Paper bags are a wonderful alternative to plastic bags. Shoppers would use far less of them, they are recyclable and can be reused for multiple purposes at home (I use paper bags in lieu of plastic bags for my recycling bin at home and I often run short of them when I need them whereas I have to dispose of the multitude of cheap plastic bags I get for I have little use for them). I think that a move to paper bags would have a huge impact on our environment but I would question the impact consumers would have if they were penalized/fined for not bringing their own bag

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when they stop unexpectedly at one of the boutiques in town? I'm guessing it would be a small fine but it still feels like a "penalty" and I wonder if that would dampen the shopping spirit? I know that when I go to Westport to shop, I always get a paper bag which actually feels like a small treat. I don't think I would feel the same way if I had to pay for a bag to carry out the hundreds of dollars that I just spent.