

Public Hearing at 8 PM Wednesday on a Proposal to Ban Plastic Bags for Store Purchases in Darien

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Members of the public are invited to be heard at a public hearing on Wednesday, Feb. 6, 2019 at 8 p.m. in the Darien Town Hall Auditorium, concerning a proposed “Ordinance for the Management of Plastic and Paper Checkout Bags in Darien.”

— *a Darien town government* [announcement](#)

Speakers may sign up upon arrival, and are limited to three minutes each.

The proposed ordinance is intended to reduce bag waste in the Town of Darien by encouraging the use of reusable checkout bags, and prohibiting single-use plastic checkout bags and non-recyclable paper checkout bags.

Definitions of the terms to be used in the ordinance include:

- Reusable checkout bag: washable, lifetime of not less than 125 uses and, if plastic, greater than an established thickness. These reusable checkout bags may be purchased from the merchant or brought to the store by the customer.
- Recyclable paper checkout bag: contains no old growth fiber, consisting of a minimum of 40% post-consumer recycled content, and is 100% recyclable and appropriately labeled.
- Single-use plastic checkout bag: a plastic bag that is less than a thickness to be determined.

The proposed ordinance would affect the customer and the business establishments in this manner:

- Single use plastic checkout bags are prohibited, with the exceptions noted below. The goal of the ordinance is to have customers bring their own reusable bags to retail stores and therefore not request any checkout bags for their purchases. A customer may use bags of any type that they have brought to the store with them.
- A business establishment may sell a customer a reusable checkout bag.
- A business establishment may provide customers with a recycled paper checkout bag for a charge of \$0.10. The funds collected by the merchant may be retained to offset the cost of using such more expensive recycled paper checkout bags. The legality of this charge is now under review. If this portion of the ordinance is found not to be permissible, alternative means of encouraging the merchants and customers will be examined.

There will be a penalty applied to merchants that are not operating in compliance with this ordinance.

Monitoring and enforcement will be by individuals appointed by the Board of Selectmen, in that it has been requested that no Town employees be charged with the administration of this ordinance.

There are several exceptions to the ban on plastic bags. These exceptions include: bags used for newspapers, dry-cleaning, pet waste, yard waste, bags sold in a package with multiple such as garbage, bags used by customers in the store for produce, candy, bakery or covering meat, fish and similar products, bags used with plants, flowers, where dampness may be a concern, bags containing pharmacy prescriptions or being used to safeguard public health during the transportation of hospital waste.

The date for implementation of the ordinance will be selected to allow for merchants to prepare, and for residents to adjust and prepare for the new procedures.

Comments can be emailed to: DarienRTM@darienct.gov.

Editor's note: Three committees of the Representative Town Meeting are holding the hearing: the Public Works, Public Health & Safety and Town Government Structure and Administration.