

PLASTICS ADVISORY COUNCIL MEETING

Tuesday, September 6, 2022, 9:00 a.m.

Meeting #6 - Minutes

All Council meetings are held via Microsoft Teams.

The meeting agenda provides the planned action items of the Council to the extent known at the time of sending.

I. Roll Call (5 min)

Members Present

Christine Cassidy
Nandini Checko
Judith Enck
Tim Fekete
Janine MacGregor
Charles Malaniak
Gary McElyea
Melissa Miles
Loel Muetter
Amanda Nesheiwat
Mary Ellen Peppard
Beth Ravit
Gary Sondermeyer
John Weber
Cindy Zipf

Members Absent

Jeanne Cretella

Additional Staff Present

Julia Rossi- DEP
Jill Aspinwall- DEP
Kari Martin- COA
Christina Page- DEP
Julia Garcia- DEP
Erin Jensen- DEP
Melanie Willoughby- NJBAC

II. Opening Remarks from Chair (5 min)

An attendance roster will be included in the minutes going forward.

III. August Meeting Minutes Certification

Motion to certify minutes moved by Gary Sondermeyer, seconded by Gary McElyea. Passed with one abstention from Cindy Zipf, as she was not present.

IV. State Agency Report (30 min)

a. DEP report

i. Organizational changes

The Division of Sustainable Waste Management has the statutory responsibility to implement several new laws related to sustainability, plastics, recycling, etc. There have been organizational changes within the Department recently. One of these changes has moved the Division of Sustainable Waste Management out of Site Remediation and Waste Management Program and into the Air Quality, Energy, and Sustainability (AQES) Program under Assistant Commissioner Paul Baldauf. This change will not affect operations of the Division and no contact information is changing. The Division of Sustainable Waste Management has been assigned new positions and is expanding the unit that works on developing new policy and implementing/rule development for emerging legislation. Comments and input from the Council are welcome in these future efforts.

b. NJBAC/NJCCC report

NJCCC provided a written report. They are hosting an enforcement webinar on September 14th at 1 pm, along with DEP, NJBAC, NJDOH, and NJFC. NJCCC is also buying reusable bags to provide to food banks, as required by law.

NJBAC reported that they are providing outreach about the enforcement webinar. They sent the invite to State Chambers of Commerce for businesses to attend.

c. DOH report

DOH reported a slow month for referrals, with one complaint forwarded to the local health departments and two complaints requiring follow up by DOH. DOH is drafting changes to regulations to reflect the Law and will include a requirement to ask 2-3 questions related to provisions in the Law during inspections and will also outline annual reporting requirements to DOH.

d. Questions

Several Council members brought up the issue of the accumulation of reusable bags at homes as a result of grocery delivery, which has also received recent press attention. Some suggested solutions include having delivery workers take bags back for either reuse at a grocery store or donation to food pantries/banks, or temporarily allowing delivery in paper bags. From this discussion, it was decided that the PAC will dedicate a portion of its October meeting to a panel

discussion regarding this important issue. Representatives from food delivery organizations like Instacart, food banks and supermarkets will be invited to participate.

V. Old Business (60 min)

a. Updates from Committees (30 min)

i. Education, Assessment, and Compliance (John Weber) (5 min)

In regard to polls to evaluate effectiveness and impact of the Law, the Committee reported that DEP is sending a memo to Monmouth University to request that they do an update of their prior poll on this matter. DEP also funds the Recycle Coach App for use by municipalities throughout New Jersey, and the Committee is requesting DEP work with Recycle Coach to develop questions that will assist in evaluating various aspects of implementation of the Law.

ii. Environment and Public Health (Beth Ravit) (5 min)

This Committee is reaching out to groups such as US Plastics Pact for guest speakers. Their public health literature review and draft is nearing completion. Future committee meetings will host speakers and discuss topics concerning composting, biodegradable materials, and the effectiveness of wastewater treatment plants in removing microplastics. The committee may change their October and November meeting dates and will keep the rest of the Council posted.

iii. Plastic Reduction and Recycling (Judith Enck) (5 min)

This Committee had no meeting in August but submitted speaker names and brainstormed recommendations for reducing plastics. The Committee seeks direction on timeframes for recommendations to be included in the two-year report.

iv. Discussion/Questions (15 min)

160 stores have submitted information on plastic avoidance through a survey by the NJ Food Council. This data is not yet finalized and is still subject to change. The data will be sent to the Education, Assessment, and Compliance committee once it is compiled.

b. Roster of Potential Expert Speakers (30 min)

i. Discussion

Regarding the list of expert speakers, it was discussed that there may be universal interest by the Council in certain speakers, and these should be held via a presentation to the Council. Speakers should be prioritized to reflect the timeline and deliverables needed for the first-year report. Each committee was asked to provide recommendations to improve implementation or effectiveness of the law.

VI. New Business (15 min)

a. OPRA Request

The Council received an OPRA request for Council meeting minutes. A determination was made that these minutes are public documents and are required to be made available after certification by the Council.

b. Ethics with Nick Horiates (10 min)

Nick Horiates, the Department's Ethics Liaison, was present and explained that non-public information cannot be released, while public information can be shared. Most information the

Council works with is publicly available but the data or deliberative information that is not must not be distributed until the Council’s report is published.

In regard to post-service restrictions, Council Members are prohibited from working on specific matters that they were directly involved while on the Council. Once the matter is finalized, members can work on similar matters. If an issue or project comes up for which your organization would normally provide input, best practice is for someone else in the organization to provide comment, so as to avoid the appearance of a conflict of interest. Do not speak on behalf of Council.

VII. Suggestions for next Agenda (5 min)

The Council will discuss reusable bag pileup in detail.

VIII. Adjournment

Meeting Adjourned at 11:10.

Member Attendance

| Members | April 4, 2022 | May 5, 2022 | June 7, 2022 | July 5, 2022 | August 2, 2022 | Sept. 6, 2022 |
|--------------------|---------------|-------------|--------------|--------------|----------------|---------------|
| Christine Cassidy | Y | N | N | N | N | Y |
| Nandini Checko | Y | Y | Y | Y | Y | Y |
| Jeanne Cretella | Y | Y | Y | N | Y | N |
| Judith Enck | Y | Y | Y | Y | Y | Y |
| Tim Fekete | Y | Y | Y | Y | Y | Y |
| Janine MacGregor | Y | Y | Y | N | Y | Y |
| Charles Malaniak | Y | Y | N | N | N | Y |
| Gary McElyea | Y | Y | Y | Y | N | Y |
| Melissa Miles | Y | Y | Y | N | Y | Y |
| Loel Muetter | Y | Y | Y | Y | Y | Y |
| Amanda Nesheiwat | Y | Y | Y | Y | Y | Y |
| Mary Ellen Peppard | Y | Y | Y | Y | Y | Y |
| Beth Ravit | Y | Y | Y | Y | Y | Y |
| Gary Sondermeyer | Y | Y | Y | Y | Y | Y |
| John Weber | Y | Y | Y | Y | Y | Y |
| Cindy Zipf | Y | Y | Y | Y | N | Y |