



Town of Portsmouth, Rhode Island Plastics and Plastic Bag Workshop November 9, 2017

Workshop Participants,

Thank you for being a part of our Plastics and Plastic Bag Workshop.

We all want to do things that are good for the environment and to also preserve the beauty of our community. Although there are many things that threaten our environment, one of the areas that is most prevalent, and one that appears to be a viable target is the use and disposal of plastics, in particular plastic bags. Plastics have become such an integral part of our way of life it seems that their use has become indispensable. So, the alternatives are to (1) be better stewards of how we use and dispose of plastics, (2) voluntarily come up alternative ways to minimize the use of plastics, and (3) forcefully legislate away the use of them by bans on use or other severe restrictions.

Our workshop endeavors to create an open dialogue to exchange ideas and create a better-informed public to create a "social environment" that can make a positive contribution to the damage plastics do to our "natural environment". But, as we know from things like the use of seat belts, people will not always do what is best for their well-being without being forced to do so. Consequently, as an initial focal point for action, it has been proposed that one of the alternative solutions be to reduce the damage that plastics do to our environment by enacting a ban on single use plastic bags. We want to make sure that all the consequences of a ban are fully explored. Even though there is a current focus is on single use plastic bags, it is not, in and of itself, a panacea for the many dangers facing our environment. We want the discussion to be a catalyst to look at the larger picture and other initiatives that can be built to create an increased focus on all measures that can be used to improve our environment.

Please keep an open mind in this workshop where there are no "wrong" answers, everyone can express their views and their comments are respected, we can agree to disagree and, hopefully, come to some consensus on how to move forward to make progress in a seemingly impassable quagmire of environmental hurdles and roadblocks.

Again, thank you for your time in participating.

Richard A. Rainer
Town Administrator