

**CITY OF AUGUSTA
COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION**

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Any Committee at Mayor's discretion | <input type="checkbox"/> International Code Council |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Airport Advisory Committee | <input type="checkbox"/> Joint Audit Committee |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Assessment Review Board | <input type="checkbox"/> Lithgow Library Board of Trustees |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Community Development Advisory Committee | <input type="checkbox"/> Mill Park Advisory Committee |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Conservation Commission | <input type="checkbox"/> Parking District |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Dog Park Advisory Committee | <input type="checkbox"/> Parks & Recreation Advisory Board |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Fort Western Trustees | <input type="checkbox"/> Planning Board |
| <input type="checkbox"/> General Assistance Fair Hearing Authority | <input type="checkbox"/> Registration Board of Appeals |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Greater Augusta Utility District | <input type="checkbox"/> Strategic Communications Committee |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Housing Authority | <input type="checkbox"/> Tree Board |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Historic Preservation Commission | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Zoning Board of Appeals |

Name: J. GREGORY JOLDA

Street Address: _____

Mailing Address: _____

Telephone: Home: _____ Work: _____ Cell: _____

E Mail Address: _____

Education: TWO MUCH - MS ELECTRICAL ENGINEERING

Occupation: AVIATION PROGRAM COORDINATOR, UNIA

List other activities:
PRESIDENT, WOMAN MONTHLY LAKE ASSOC
VOLUNTEER INSTRUCTOR PILOT, CLUB ACFT PATROL
INSTRUCTOR PILOT, MAINE CONSOLE FLIGHT

Why do you wish to serve?
TO REPRESENT THE LAKE (TOBUS POND) RESIDENTS,
AND TO SERVE THE CITY THAT IS MY HOME
AND PLACE OF EMPLOYMENT.

**COMPLETED APPLICATION MAY BE FAXED TO 620-8174, OR SEND VIA E-MAIL TO:
loretta.lathe@augustamaine.gov**

MAIL TO:

THE CITY MANAGER'S OFFICE AT: 16 CONY STREET, AUGUSTA ME 04330

Move to amend agenda item 19-040 as follows:

Strike "Now therefore, the City Council of the City of Augusta adopts the following ordinance regulating the use of single-use bag."

And replace with:

The qualified voters of the City of Augusta will be given the opportunity to approve or reject said proposed ordinance at the next possible citywide election.

Move to amend to add the following language under section 3:

Strike the words "During the first year"

Add the following: Nonprofit organizations operating within the City of Augusta to distribute food, grocery products, clothing or other household items.

My name is Andrew Hill, a current resident of the City of Augusta and I am here tonight to stand in opposition to the proposed ordinance to charge a 5 cent fee for single use plastic bags at Augusta retail locations.

I have followed the debate and considerations by the City Council on this issue over the last several months. I oppose this ordinance because the Council is proposing this ordinance with little community wide or public input to establish this "feel good", and "symbolic" ordinance. The City Council has no data on single use plastic bag use, pollution or recycling within the boundaries of Augusta. Any information out of Hatch Hill is biased by the other four municipalities that are permitted to send their plastic bags to the landfill. What is this ordinance in the context of sustainability and recycling within the City? The City has no stated goals for recycling within the community. Yes, the Council has taken commendable actions with ecoMaine recycling bins and methane derived electricity, but what is next? A ban or tax on polystyrene containers? Plastic straws? Paper bags? Have retail businesses that are to be affected been surveyed? How does the average Augusta citizen feel about paying additional monies to shop at Augusta businesses?

This proposed Council ordinance imposes a 5 cent fee, but I would view it as a tax, because it is a government mandated taking of my money. Now these proposed fees are "currently" planned to remain with the retailer, but a government fee on a transaction is a tax.

Let's look at the impact this tax may have on an Augusta family of four, residing in an Augusta home valued at \$ 140,000. Assuming 35-45 bags for 2-3 grocery trips per week, can add up to over 1,800 plastic bags per year or \$ 90.00 per year in

new fees or taxes. On top of a property tax rate of 20.97 mils per \$ 1,000; this additional \$90.00 represents an additional 2-3% tax increase by government mandate.

What are the alternatives the City Council recommends to shoppers? Data show paper bags have almost four times the carbon footprint of a single-use plastic bag and result in 50 percent more water pollution and 70 percent more air pollution than plastic bag manufacturing. If the environment is the issue, then paper bags are not the better choice and the fee sends the wrong message. Also, the proposed ordinance allows heavier plastic bags, greater than 2.25 mils in thickness. Studies on the impact of similar ordinances or bans in other states have shown consumers migrate to heavier plastics as a substitute, which are more persistent in the ecosystem, more costly to consumers and cause more pollution in manufacturing. Does this not conflict with the ordinance preamble? Also, this proposed ordinance does not exempt "compostable and biodegradable bags" from the tax. Such compostable or biodegradable bags are gaining US market acceptance but the ordinance precludes their use.

Interestingly, there is an "Enforcement" provision in this ordinance. Code officers will impose fines on stores based on what? Missing an opportunity to charge a five cent fee on a bag? Not displaying a sign promoting the five cent fee? Does the City have the resources to monitor this? Are we to budget and hire more enforcement officers? What is the anticipated annual cost? What is the annual cost in three years? How will store management respond knowing they may incur a \$ 250 or \$ 500 fee for each instance? Do we know? Suddenly, this ordinance has a less "feel good", or "symbolic" tone to it.

Some members of this Council want to "lead" in environmental initiatives by adopting this ordinance, this tax, as have some 15 other municipalities in Maine. A famous organization development consultant once said you can't manage what you can't measure. So I looked for measurable City Council efforts in recycling? Are there recycling goals established for the Augusta community? Moreover, are there recycling goals for the City Government? I searched existing City Council ordinances for citywide recycling goals but found none. Does City procurement mandate recyclable content? If not, why not? In a recent City Council meeting, Council members mentioned their own use of plastic bottled water at Council hearings, but as yet, I observe no "leadership" changes imposed on itself. Perhaps these are some early areas to exhibit "leadership" for the Council.

Hannaford's, Shaw's, Walmart, Home Depot, CVS, Best Buy, RiteAid and other Augusta retailers are ALREADY bound by Maine's Dept of Environmental Protection mandates to provide plastic recycle bins within 20 feet of an entrance. (Title 38, Chapter 16, Section 1605) And many of these retailers are "Leading" in plastic recycling and sustainability initiatives.

For example, Hannaford's web site addresses how the company is tackling Plastic Waste which can come from a variety of sources, including clear film in plastic bags or product packaging. They have a goal and measure their achievement. In 2017, Hannaford recycled nearly 24 million lbs. of plastic film from their stores and distribution centers. They partner with Trex Company, Inc., a manufacturer of composite lumber that is commonly used for decking, railings and other commercial purposes, to create a market for their plastic recycling program. By their data, it takes approximately 1,000 lbs. of plastic film to manufacture one

500-square foot composite deck. Last year alone, the plastic Hannaford recycled helped create more than 24,000 composite decks.

I relate this Hannaford example because to me, it offers a preferred and proactive approach to recycling. The elements include a program, a process and a measurable goal. It encourages customers to recycle without fees or bans but rather by easy access and education. And this is what I do. I periodically gather up the overflow of plastic bags in my home, place them in my car and deposit these bags at Hannaford's or Shaw's recycling bin to be recycled into PVC decking. How might Augusta leverage into the recycling programs of Hannaford's or Shaw's? How might Augusta educate the community to use these existing resources better? How might Augusta measure any success from these and other efforts?

In conclusion, I believe Augusta should not rush a decision on this ordinance without looking at the possible consequences, community impacts and the larger picture. There are implementation questions that remain and perhaps recycling programs in Augusta that could be developed for which plastic bag recycling is part of a solution. Even the State Legislature may yet provide direction this year on single use plastic bag use in Maine. I ask the City Council work with its retail business partners to promote better awareness of existing recycling programs, develop a rationale, effective recycling program that embraces personal responsibility and personal choice and take steps to determine what the Augusta citizenry think?