

Town of Woodstock Town Board meeting held on April 16, 2019 at 7:00 pm

Resolution 119-2019

Ask first resolution

Offered by Supervisor McKenna, seconded by Councilwoman Ricci:

Whereas, recognizing that plastic products have caused and continue to cause significant environmental harm, phasing out plastic straws, stirrers, cutlery and cups will serve the Town of Woodstock's goal of protecting the environment while affirming the interconnectedness of all life forms and supporting the "triple bottom line" of "people, planet, profit;"

Whereas, the Town of Woodstock recognizes the positive value of a thriving, plastic-free ecosystem and the negative cost of transporting single-use plastic and other disposables from their places of manufacture to their points of consumption and then to landfill (plastic straws, stirrers and cutlery are not recyclable, and neither are paper coffee cups or single-use chopsticks) or to recycling facilities (plastic cups are recyclable, but at high cost);

Whereas, scientists have determined that there will be more plastic than fish, by weight, in our oceans by the year 2050 at the current rate of plastic pollution;

Whereas, scientists estimate that one million seabirds and 100,000 marine mammals die every year from plastic ingestion and entanglement; and the worldwide work to "stop plastic pollution" benefits from every step taken by any municipality to reduce or ban single-use plastics;

Whereas, the endocrine disrupting chemicals used as plasticizers have been found to cause fertility reduction and feminization in men, to harm fish, and to create other negative human health impacts amounting to a public health crisis as these chemicals are widely found in surface and groundwater;

Whereas, Ulster County has banned single-use thin plastic checkout bags, but has not yet acted to ban single-use plastic straws, stirrers, cutlery, cups or other disposable items;

Whereas, eco-tourism for Woodstock in particular and the Hudson Valley in general means that customers expect and appreciate environmental "best practices";

Whereas, the extreme levels of plastic pollution affecting our communities has become a matter of general public concern throughout New York State. Despite a deluge of scientific information, individual voluntary action has not proven to be an adequate means to addressing the plastic pollution problem. In the absence of county, statewide or national action, local governments are left to act, and must act, to move our residents, businesses and guests quickly away from single-use plastics;

Whereas, money as well as GhG (greenhouse gas) emissions can be saved; for instance, a school that switched from plastic cutlery to stainless steel reusable cutlery saved \$23,000 over three years even when taking into account the price of stainless steel and the costs of extra washing and lost silverware;

Whereas, there are already more microplastic particles in our oceans than plankton, plastic gyres defy cleanup attempts, and the scale of plastic pollution is staggering. Because most plastic straws, plastic stirrers, and plastic cutlery as well as coffee cups and single-use chopsticks are not recyclable, they

accumulate in landfills, our communities, and the environment. In the United States, we use approximately 500 million single-use plastic straws every day—enough to wrap the earth in plastic straws two and a half times daily;

Whereas, the Town of Woodstock urges businesses, institutions and individuals to "rethink disposables" and consider reusable, durable products such as stainless steel and bamboo cutlery; stainless steel and bamboo straws; ceramic mugs and glass cups; and reusable instead of single-use chopsticks. For the businesses that must continue to provide "disposable" straws, stirrers, chopsticks, cups and cutlery, compostable alternatives are available.

Whereas, plastics synthesized from petroleum and natural gas do not biodegrade. Even with the emergence of bioplastics, which are derived from renewable biomass sources, such as plants and microorganisms, there is no certified type of bioplastic that biodegrades in a marine environment. The Town of Woodstock is committed to ensuring that environmental marketing claims, including claims of biodegradation of plastics, do not lead to an increase in environmental harm associated with single-use plastic use by providing consumers with a false belief that certain plastic products are less harmful to the environment than others. Most "compostable" plastic is neither composted nor recycled, but goes to landfill.

Whereas, plastic straws, stirrers, and cutlery are generally made from polystyrene or polypropylene. While Ulster County has already banned polystyrene, Woodstock intends to make clear, through the adoption of this Resolution, that it urges commercial use of all plastic straws, stirrers, and cutlery be phased out in the Town's jurisdiction within six months. These non-recyclables must go!

Whereas, institutions require time to implement changes. The Town of Woodstock 1) urges that the "Ask First" policy become effective on Earth Day [April 22], 2019 and 2) offers institutions six months to phase out their use of single-use plastic beverage straws, stirrers, cutlery and chopsticks, and one year to phase out single-use plastic cups. Meanwhile residents, businesses, educational and nonprofit institutions are encouraged to "rethink disposables" as much as possible and interrupt the habit of single-use disposables, including recyclable items;

Whereas, similar to the policy already adopted by the European Union, the Town of Woodstock envisions a community entirely free of single-use plastics, sending a clear signal to Ulster County, to New York State and the entire United States.

Therefore Be It Resolved the Town of Woodstock hereby resolves that all local businesses and institutions should:

1. ASK FIRST before inserting, placing or otherwise providing single-use items:
 - a. "ASK FIRST" do not place any straw or stirrer in any beverage unless it is requested.
 - b. "ASK FIRST" before providing a beverage in any to-go cup, especially plastic but also paper cold or hot cups with plastic lids;
 - c. "ASK FIRST" before providing any single-use cutlery, chopsticks, clamshell takeout containers, or other single-use items that will go to landfill.
2. PHASE OUT SINGLE-USE straws, stirrers, cutlery, chopstick and cups:

- a. Offer reusable (stainless steel, glass, bamboo, ceramic) items instead of single-use items;
- b. Encourage, through signs, educational materials and incentives, a “bring your own” culture;
- c. If “to-go” items are required, offer compostable items that are compostable in backyard facilities, and that don’t require industrial compost processing.

Further, the Town of Woodstock encourages families and individuals to eliminate, as much as possible, single-use plastic—except for bulk, emergency or necessary medical use—from everyday life:

1. Avoid buying items packaged in plastic—from thin-film to clamshells;
2. Carry reusable cups, thermoses, cutlery, straws, and chopsticks as needed;
3. Say aloud when dining out: “No plastic cup,” “no plastic straw,” etc.

creative cooperation to protect it.

All voted 5-0: Supervisor McKenna - aye

Councilman Rose - aye

Councilman Heppner - aye

Councilwoman Ricci - aye

Councilman Earls – aye