

MIAMI BEACH

City Commission Meeting

ADDENDUM MATERIAL 1

City Hall, Commission Chambers, 3rd Floor, 1700 Convention Center Drive
May 11, 2016

Mayor Philip Levine
Commissioner John Elizabeth Alemán
Commissioner Ricky Arriola
Commissioner Kristen Rosen Gonzalez
Commissioner Michael Grieco
Commissioner Joy Malakoff
Commissioner Micky Steinberg

City Manager Jimmy L. Morales
City Attorney Raul J. Aguila
City Clerk Rafael E. Granado

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ATTENTION ALL LOBBYISTS

Chapter 2, Article VII, Division 3 of the City Code of Miami Beach entitled "Lobbyists" requires the registration of all lobbyists with the City Clerk prior to engaging in any lobbying activity with the City Commission, any City Board or Committee, or any personnel as defined in the subject Code sections. Copies of the City Code sections on lobbyists laws are available in the City Clerk's office. Questions regarding the provisions of the Ordinance should be directed to the Office of the City Attorney.

ADDENDUM AGENDA

C4 - Commission Committee Assignments

- C4P Referral To The Sustainability And Resiliency Committee - Discuss Charging A 5¢ Fee On Plastic Bags Similar To That Approved By The New York City Council.
(Sponsored by Commissioner Kristen Rosen Gonzalez)

¹ The sponsor of the addendum agenda item deems that such item either constitutes a public emergency affecting life, health, property, or public safety and should be considered immediately; or does not constitute a public emergency, but should be considered immediately. See Miami Beach Code Sec. 2-12 (c)(3).

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Granado, Rafael

From: Rosen Gonzalez, Kristen
Sent: Friday, May 06, 2016 7:24 AM
To: Granado, Rafael
Subject: NYTimes: 5¢ Fee on Plastic Bags Is Approved by New York City Council

Can you please place this item as a referral to the sustainability committee? I think Miami Beach should follow NYC and charge for plastic bag usage.

<http://www.nytimes.com/2016/05/06/nyregion/new-york-city-council-backs-5-cent-fee-on-plastic-bags.html?smprod=nytcore-ipad&smid=nytcore-ipad-share>

The measure, which also covers paper bags, is intended to reduce their use; Mayor Bill de Blasio has expressed his support for it.

Sent from my iPad

The New York Times <http://nyti.ms/1q2kNUe>

N.Y. / REGION

5¢ Fee on Plastic Bags Is Approved by New York City Council

By J. DAVID GOODMAN MAY 5, 2016

The ubiquitous, easily torn, often doubled-up plastic bags from the grocery store — hoarded by dog owners, despised by the environmentally concerned and occasionally caught in trees — will soon cost at least a nickel in New York City.

The City Council voted 28 to 20 on Thursday to require certain retailers to collect a fee on each carryout bag, paper or plastic, with some exceptions. Mayor Bill de Blasio has expressed support for the measure.

Passage of the bill came after two years of debate and at least one other attempt by the city's elected officials to charge a fee or tax on disposable bags. The legislation, modeled on similar laws in California and Washington, D.C., encountered an unusual amount of resistance and resulted in what council members said was one of the closest votes in years, on par with the extension of term limits passed during the tenure of Mr. de Blasio's predecessor, Michael R. Bloomberg.

The vehemence of the opposition could perhaps be traced to plastic bags' daily presence in the lives of New Yorkers, who often shop for groceries spontaneously and then lug the crinkly bags home to be reused as trash-can liners or to pick up after pets. As with previous measures adopted by the 51-member Council to prohibit smoking in bars and to include calorie information on restaurant menus, the impact of the bag bill, which would take effect in October, is likely to be immediate for millions of people.

That many will be unhappy about paying for bags that have always been free is the point.

“The fee is irritating, which is precisely why it works,” said Councilman Brad Lander, a Brooklyn Democrat and, with Councilwoman Margaret Chin, a Manhattan Democrat, a main sponsor of the legislation. “We don’t want to pay it so we’ll bring bags instead. So the fact that it’s irritating irritates a lot of people.”

The debate that preceded the bill’s approval on Thursday provided a rare sight in the Council Chambers, where most bills pass by large margins. At least one member called the bill “stupid,” prompting another to object. Mr. Lander, in his remarks, promised to show a colleague opposed to the measure where he could buy plastic bags in bulk online. There was also a fair amount of canine scatological humor.

To the bill’s proponents, the goal is not to collect the fee but to nudge New Yorkers into bringing their own reusable bags when they shop. Other cities that have introduced similar fees have seen a sharp drop in the use of plastic bags, petroleum products that can linger in landfills for centuries.

In New York City, the Sanitation Department has said it collects roughly 10 billion single-use plastic bags a year.

The Council settled on a 5-cent minimum fee after an earlier version of the bill called for 10 cents; stores, which will collect and keep the fees, can charge more if they choose.

Mr. de Blasio, a Democrat, said during a radio interview last week that people “must stop using plastic bags, for the good of our environment.”

“I think it’ll change the behavior quickly and not hit people’s pocketbooks in any meaningful way,” he continued.

Under the legislation, restaurants, including those that deliver and serve takeout, and street vendors of prepared food will not have to charge for the plastic bags they give to customers. Among the other exemptions: plastic bags used for produce, small paper medicine bags at pharmacies, bags used at state-regulated

liquor stores and bags used by soup kitchens. Those buying groceries with food stamps are also exempt from paying the fee.

Paper bags were also included in the bill, sponsors said, because they have an environmental impact; if paper bags were not included, shoppers would simply switch from plastic to paper, resulting in no change in overall waste.

New York is hardly in the forefront in regulating plastic bags, though not for lack of trying. Mr. Bloomberg offered a proposal in 2008 for a 6-cent bag fee — 5 cents for stores; a penny for the city — before dropping it several months later amid strong opposition. At the time, one of the opponents on the Council was Simcha Felder, a Brooklyn Democrat who is now a state senator. Last month, Senator Felder introduced a bill that would prohibit the levying of local fees on bags; it passed a committee this week.

In discussing his opposition this week, Mr. Felder traced the 200-year history of how people have carried their groceries home, progressing from cloth bags to boxes to paper to plastic, and said that reusing bags presented a health hazard. He said he would hold a hearing on his bill in the city next month.

“That’s nothing less than a tax on the poor and the middle class — the most disadvantaged people,” he said.

Opposition to the measure has also come from the plastic bag industry — via its lobbying arm, the American Progressive Bag Alliance — as well as from those who, like Mr. Felder, said the fee amounted to a regressive tax, disproportionately affecting low-income and minority New Yorkers while failing to provide positive benefits for residents.

“I was in Washington, D.C., when the bag fee happened, and you know what? It was to clean up the river,” said Bertha Lewis, a social justice activist and longtime ally of Mr. de Blasio’s. “These funds are being dedicated to the pockets of the retailers.”

Ms. Lewis’s group, the Black Institute, collected thousands of signatures in opposition to the bill and received support from the American Progressive Bag

Alliance — which, according to its chairman, changed its name in recent years from the Plastic Bag Alliance.

Some who had expressed early support for the bill were said to be wavering amid what council members described as a torrent of robocalls and fliers in certain districts in opposition to the measure, which would cover retail stores, grocers, bodegas and many street vendors.

The Council speaker, Melissa Mark-Viverito, who voted in favor of the bill, was asked at a news conference before the vote was taken if she used reusable bags when she went shopping. “Right now I don’t,” she said, adding that the bill would push her to do so. “And I’m more than happy to do that.”

A version of this article appears in print on May 6, 2016, on page A18 of the New York edition with the headline: Council Approves a Fee on Checkout Bags.

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