

LWVOPRF ENVIRONMENTAL COMMITTEE MEETING
September 10, 2018

Members Present:

Beverly Graham
Marsha Borders
Leigh Eicher
Kathy Balk
Marilyn Cantisano
Tara Joyce

The committee discussed the goal of reduction of straw use in Oak Park. Our recent partnership with the Environmental and Energy Commission of Oak Park was the focal point. The work of Stephen Morales and his sub-committee has enabled us to move in the direction of bringing our concern before the Village Board of Trustees. A review of market research has revealed that Oak Park Residents are:

- very active in sustainability programs.
- aware of some of the challenges that straws represent for the environment.
- are less likely to know what other cities have done.

Jen Packheiser, an EEC Board Member, contacted the town of Malibu Beach, California, and sent this memo:

I just spoke with the Environmental Sustainability Analyst in Malibu and learned some great things. I also think that Malibu should be our model, not Seattle. The city has 13,000 residents and at least 70 restaurants.

Their ordinance is for straws, stirrers & utensils and includes ALL beverage providers like 7-11 and other stores. I've attached both the ordinance and the lovely graphic doc with exactly what's allowed and what's not. To recap:

The law was passed in late Feb and started June 1. Only one person protested and they have close to 90% compliance. They have two big national chains, Jack in the Box (compliant) and McDonalds (got a waiver but should be compliant in Sep). Malibu considers putting non plastic straws on the counter at these places upon request because they are not automatically being handed to the customer.

Enforcement has been by both customers and city health/water inspectors and there have been warnings issued but nothing further. There's no fine on the books yet, but they are considering it. They are also considering a fee for the bio straws/stirrers since they are so expensive.

Her best advice was outreach to the restaurants. City staff stopped at each location with info and samples of paper straws after the law was passed. Not everyone knew about it. The graphic has websites available on where to buy these products.

She invited us to contact her with further questions and wished us well.

We should add stirrers to this debate too. And do we consider 7-11 and such?

Our committee agreed with her assessment.

In addition to the EEC, the League, the Interfaith Green Network, School District 97, and others have a vested interest in moving away from use of straws, plastic stirrers and plastic utensils.

Other ideas include a vendor by vendor approach, a community event in Scoville Park, collection of straws from the community, an alternative straw testing food fair, and showcasing restaurants that are going to have challenges with their straw bans. Also, public recognition for early adopter companies, making the replacement of plastics with paper or other compostable material less of a requirement and more of a recognition, and public recognition of groups that support the move were discussed as strategies to encourage eliminating plastic straws.

The co-chairs of our committee have met with the EEC Commission as well as with their committee. We discussed various options, such as charging 10 cents for straws; but this seemed like it would be a logistical nightmare and further confirm the generally held view that OP is not business friendly. We also talked about the village's responsibility with regard to alternatives and the length of time that should be provided for accommodation (3 months, 6 months or 1 year.); monitoring and attestation and penalties for missing the deadline. It was agreed upon that we should speak to the Chamber of Commerce prior to attending a Village Board Meeting.

Our committee co-chairs will be the guest speakers at the Second Tuesday Meeting on October 9, along with Mindy Agnew, Sustainability Coordinator for the village.

Our next meeting will be on November 5 at 6:30 p.m.

Submitted by Beverly Graham