

Petaluma City Council Meeting – September 19, 2024

Public General Comments

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Topic – Protecting Our Environment and Our Health

Good Evening Mayor and Council Members:

My name is Jesse Bradman and my wife and I have lived in Petaluma since 2005. Over the last three weeks, I have submitted oral and written general public comments at a City Council meeting and a Climate Action Commission meeting. I have communicated with several members of the CAC, and other city officials including Vice-Mayor John Schibbs, and Patrick Carter in the City Manager’s office. We all share the same optimism that we can improve Petaluma’s systems with respect to improving Zero-Waste objectives. As such, I will continue to advocate and assist in any way I can (on a volunteer basis) to further those objectives.

I desire to assist City of Petaluma with reducing single-use plastic and waste associated with food carry-out containers and utensils, and improving recycling and compost diversion. I am impressed with Carbon Neutrality Blueprint and the 2019 Zero-Waste Resolution, but I am advocating for specific action plans for reduction and diversion including the expansion of reuse programs for bulk food service programs and City of Petaluma events.

Concerns:

My concerns come from seeing so much waste with respect to food service carry-out containers and utensils. Other than polystyrene, I am not aware of any City policies that control the composition of these containers and utensils, or standardized policies that regulate local food service business practices.

Generally: Plastics disposal and degradation adversely affects the environment **and** our health. Greenhouse gases are emitted during the entire life cycle of plastics – from manufacturing to disposal. Roughly only 9% of plastic is recycled. Those GHG’s affect all of us with respect to climate change. Furthermore and importantly, studies show that 80% of us currently have **micro-plastics** in our blood. In fact we ingest them daily through the paper coffee cups lined with plastic coatings every day (approx 25,000 micro plastic particles per Starbucks cup). And these particles are linked to serious illnesses. Thus, the harm from plastic is not merely an “abstract issue” as some people might consider climate change to be – It is an important “health issue” as well – **right here right now!**

So - We are all are at risk - We are all stakeholders. Moreover, due to the GHG emissions, micro plastics in our bodies, and the continued growth of the plastic industry, I suggest that **any** conversation about Climate Change, which does **NOT** include an action plan to reduce single-use plastic and improve diversion, **is patently incomplete**. So let's expand the current conversation!

My Questions

Q1: Petaluma is a member of Sonoma Zero-Waste Joint Powers Authority. Can we adopt the model ordinance?

Q2: Can Petaluma at the least restricted PFAS which are a proven health hazard?

Q3: What specific policies and controls can be developed and implemented to further the objectives of the 2019 Zero Waste Resolution?

Q4: Currently, recycling bins in the city are often useless due to inadequate signage and contamination – Most of the items go to landfill! Can we improve public awareness?

Q5: Can we utilize reusable (Ex: Sparkl) for bulk food-service programs (Ex: seniors & school lunches) and City of Petaluma events?

I am glad to share other suggestions for restaurants & coffee shops – please reach out to me!

Closing: I understand these issues are complex, but I strongly believe we have an individual and collective duty to protect the health of our families, our neighbors, our community and the environment. I believe we can engage our community members, the business community, and our elected officials and together develop strategies and action plans to achieve positive change. And I suggest we should **not** avoid working on Zero Waste objectives because the issues have been classified as “complex”. We simply need to start with what we “**CAN DO**” and expand those boundaries - which is exactly the essence of the human spirit!

I desire to see Petaluma become a policy leader in this area via its policies, controls, and implementation of effective community and business outreach programs. It is my hope that our city leaders will prioritize this important issue such that the understanding of the urgency is developed and the waste from food carry-out containers and associated utensils is significantly reduced or even eliminated.

Thank you,

Jesse Bradman

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