

# EAC proposal: an ordinance that would ban single-use plastic bags

The Bethlehem Gadfly Climate Action Plan, Environment, Environmental Advisory Council, Serious Issues March 24, 2019

*(The latest in a series of posts relating to the environment, Bethlehem's Climate Action Plan, Bethlehem's Environmental Advisory Council)*

**Free showing of and panel discussion about the documentary [Paris to Pittsburgh](#) Wednesday, March 27, 7pm (reception at 6:30), STEPS building (catercorner from the Chapel on Packer Ave.), Lehigh University.**

*Beth Behrend is a member of the Bethlehem Environmental Advisory Council and head of the Waste Reduction Committee of the EAC.*

Gadfly: Here is what I said at the [City Council town hall meeting](#) on Tuesday.

First, I want to start off by thanking the mayor for attending the Mayor's conference on sustainability and showing a commitment to our planet.

The EAC recently submitted a proposal to city council to pass an ordinance that would ban single-use plastic bags and apply a fee on all paper bags given to customers at the point of sale. I would like to see city council move forward with this measure and ask for your support for a ban on plastic bags.

The majority of the world already lives in a place where these bags are banned or levied. We are the ones that are behind. Narberth became the first borough in Pennsylvania to ban plastic bags back in October 2018, and I think it is important that we put more effort into caring for our environment.

Most plastic bags are made from nonrenewable energy sources, thus contributing to air pollution and climate change, and while some can be recycled, they are not easy to recycle and they never fully break down. In terms of costs, it is expensive to remove them when they get caught in storm drains or recycling facilities that are not designed to handle that type of recycling. It's the tax payers that end up paying those costs. Research shows

the passing of an ordinance like the one we proposed will drastically reduce both plastic and paper bag usage.

While our committee was putting together information on the proposal, we surveyed business owners in Bethlehem, and the response was overwhelmingly in support of eliminating plastic bags. Eighty percent of business owners who responded were either in favor of eliminating plastic bags or are neutral on the subject. Bethlehem is ready for this change, and I ask that you follow the lead of Narberth, Pennsylvania, and ban these unnecessary items. Thank you.

Beth

*You can see Beth make this presentation to City Council at their March 19 meeting via the link above or on YouTube <City of Bethlehem Council> starting at min. 5:50.*

*Stay tuned — in the next post in this series, we'll post the EAC proposal to which Beth refers (note how craftily Gadfly avoided ending this sentence with a proposition).*

*It's Sunday, March 24, do you know where your local Climate Action Plan is?*