

Regular Meeting

Agenda Item #	1
Meeting Date	June 7, 2010
Prepared By	Jessie Carpenter City Clerk
Approved By	Barbara B. Matthews City Manager

Discussion Item	Resolution Regarding the Purchase of Polystyrene Food Service Ware
Background	<p>The Piney Branch Elementary School Young Activist Club has drafted a resolution to prohibit the use of City funds to purchase polystyrene food service ware. Club members and their advisors have researched the issue and concluded that the negative environmental impact of the manufacture and disposal of polystyrene outweighs the convenience of use of polystyrene food service ware.</p> <p>The City purchases a limited amount of food service ware (such as disposable plates, cups, bowls and cutlery). Little or no polystyrene foam is currently purchased. If the Council adopts the resolution, the largest impact would be on the purchase of plastic cutlery, which is used for Council dinners, City receptions and events, and certain Recreation Department programs. Staff estimates that it will cost an additional \$400 to make the change to compostable or biodegradable disposable cutlery.</p>
Policy	The City Council wishes to ensure that the City is environmentally sustainable.
Fiscal Impact	Staff has conducted some preliminary research on the fiscal impact of the purchasing limitation. The purchase of plastic cutlery would be the most notable change. Through various departments, the City probably spends \$200 - \$400 per year on plastic cutlery made of polystyrene. If the City selects a biodegradable or compostable alternative, the cost would likely be an additional \$400.
Attachments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Draft Resolution Regarding the Purchase of Polystyrene Food Service Ware • Table of Polystyrene Types and Uses
Recommendation	None.
Special Consideration	

Introduced by:

**CITY OF TAKOMA PARK, MARYLAND
RESOLUTION 2010-**

CONCERNING THE PURCHASE OF POLYSTYRENE FOOD SERVICE WARE

WHEREAS, the City of Takoma Park has a duty to protect the natural environment and the health of its residents; and

WHEREAS, items of polystyrene food service ware are common environmental pollutants, yet there continues to be no meaningful recycling of these items; and

WHEREAS, compostable or biodegradable food service ware is a safer, more ecologically sound alternative; and

WHEREAS, polystyrene foam is notorious as a pollutant that breaks down into smaller, non-biodegradable pieces that are ingested by marine life and other wildlife, thus harming or killing them; and

WHEREAS, polystyrene is made from the monomer styrene, which is a suspected human carcinogen and known neurotoxin which potentially threatens human health; and

WHEREAS, the general public is not typically warned of any potential hazard related to the manufacturing and use of polystyrene in food service ware, particularly in the immigrant and non-English-speaking community; and

WHEREAS, due to these concerns, a number of U.S. cities have banned polystyrene food service ware, and many local businesses and several national corporations have successfully replaced polystyrene foam and other non-biodegradable food service ware with affordable, safe and reusable or compostable products; and

WHEREAS, effective ways to reduce the negative environmental impact of throw-away food service ware include reusing food service ware or using compostable or biodegradable materials made from renewable resources such as paper, bamboo, cornstarch and sugarcane; and

WHEREAS, restricting the purchase of polystyrene food service ware by the City of Takoma Park will further protect the public health and safety of the Takoma Park residents, the natural environment, waterways, and wildlife, and will advance the Council's goal of developing a sustainable city.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF TAKOMA PARK, MARYLAND THAT the City shall cease purchasing polystyrene (resin code #6) food service ware; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT organizers of public events, businesses, families and individuals in Takoma Park are encouraged to seek and use alternatives to polystyrene (resin code #6) food service ware.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT this resolution shall become effective on September 1, 2010.

Adopted this ____ day of _____ 2010.

Attest:

Jessie Carpenter, CMC
City Clerk

Table 1: Polystyrene Types and Typical Products

Polystyrene Type	Description	Typical Products
Crystal (rigid)	Transparent, can be injection molded or extruded, rigid, good clarity and stiffness.	Audio equipment, dust covers, clear audiotape cassette, and CD jewel cases; office supplies, computer disk reels, tumblers, flatware, housewares, display cases, petri dishes, pipettes, bottles.
Impact (rubberized)	Opaque, higher strength, less clarity and stiffness than crystal PS	Electronic appliance cabinets, business machine housings, video cassettes, small appliances, smoke detectors, furniture, refrigerator door liners, luggage, horticulture trays, and dairy and yogurt containers.
Non-foamed PS sheet	Extruded or oriented, melted plastic is forced through a flat-faced die, extruded sheet is then thermoformed. Can use impact PS or crystal PS (for clear).	Glazing, decorative panels, cookie trays, document wrap, blister pack, salad containers, lids, plates, and bowls.
Foamed PS sheet	Extruded, thermoformed, made by extruding crystal PS with a foaming agent (usually pentane), material is extruded through an annular die and foamed as the material exits the die, sheet thickness and density is varied to meet end-use requirements, has excellent thermal insulation qualities.	Egg cartons, meat and poultry trays, food service trays, fast food packaging, insulation, protective covers for glass bottles, plates, hinged containers, cups.
Expanded PS (EPS)	Made from PS resin granules impregnated with a blowing agent (typically pentane). Expanding beads fuse together to form the finished product, which is white, and 90 to 95 percent air (99.6 percent for loose fill). Small beads are used for cups and containers, medium beads for shape-molded packaging, and large beads for the expanded loose-fill packaging (peanuts). It insulates, is lightweight, and resists moisture. Loose-fill peanuts sold in California that contain recycled material are often colored green.	Insulation board, molds for metal casting, flotation devices, packaging (molded shapes, peanuts), cups, and containers.