

8/25/15 AGENDA, ITEM 3a: BAG BAN ORDINANCE, ITEM 6d: REVISIT OPERATION CLEAN SWEEP
SUPPLEMENTAL LETTER FROM LORI FORD SUBMITTED TO THE CITY MANAGER'S OFFICE ON
8/25/15 AT 5:07AM

From: Lori Ford <Lori@gumtreela.com>
Date: August 25, 2015 at 5:07:59 AM PDT
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Subject: Plastic Bags and A-Frames

Hello Hermosa Beach Council Members,

I plan to attend the council meeting tonight to give my opinion during public comment on both the Plastic Bag ban and the A-Frame sign issues. But with only 3 minutes and a lot to say, I thought it might be helpful to you to have this in an email.

Plastic Bag Ban—

First, let me say that I had always been in favor of the Plastic bag ban as it is written and has been adopted in Los Angeles County and in our neighboring city of Manhattan Beach. Unfortunately, it has been brought to my attention that Hermosa has decided to put a blanket \$.10 surcharge for paper bags on ALL retail establishments, and just to be clear I am completely opposed to this part of the ordinance.

Since the day we opened, almost 7 years ago, I have been purchasing recycled paper bags, wrapping paper and tissue paper for our shop, and eco friendly recycled paper food containers, bags, biodegradable silverware, and cups for our cafe. We spend more money on these products because we care about our environment and this is a choice we have made. In addition during the holidays we give out reusable Gum Tree jute bags, which cost me a small fortune. Then we run a series of promotions throughout the year to reward the customers for coming to shop with their reusable Gum Tree jute tote...

Asking our customers to now pay us a surcharge of 10 cents on a paper bag that we have been giving them for 7 years makes no sense at all.

Furthermore, if we are now charging for these bags, does that bring them into my cost of goods sold instead of my expenses? So now a cost of doing business that was previously a write off, which we need to stay alive in this competitive market, is added to my income sheet instead, and I will be further taxed on it?

How do you intend to police this policy? Will I have to spend even more time filling out forms for the city of Hermosa Beach, and working with my accountant to get you reports of amount of bags sold?

It is hard enough for those of us with small retail businesses to compete with our neighboring cities, and our online counterparts. Why would you take this step to make it harder?

The law was written the way it was, to encourage grocery stores and larger retail shops/pharmacies who sell food products, to charge 10 cents a bag for a number of reasons, not least of which is that the grocery stores lobbied for it to be this way, they now make a profit on their bags. Believe me, I will not make a profit on these bags. They can buy their bags in huge bulk at severely discounted prices, I, and other small retailers, cannot.

It's an insult to my customers to be charged this fee when they are trying to support small business in their own small town. They can head right over to Manhattan or Redondo or El Segundo to shop instead at retailers who are not doing business in a city that makes everything so much harder than it needs to be.

A-Frames—

Speaking of making things harder than necessary we need A-Frame signs in front of our businesses!

I just returned from NYC on a business trip. One of the most charming things about the city is the personality that spills onto the sidewalk from the businesses. And people actually walk everywhere in the city, they are out on the sidewalks! Many businesses used A-Frame signs, and even more were using plants out on the sidewalk to create atmosphere and draw attention to their businesses. See some photos attached.







It is proven that A-Frame signs draw in walking traffic. They can add character to a stretch of upper Pier Avenue, where Gum Tree Kids is located, that is otherwise empty. We can advertise specials, sales, what we have inside, sometimes it's just that little bit of text that brings them in.

Your Hermosa 5-0 program has been putting an A Frame sign out on the community center lawn during this entire ban...they do so because they want people to know what they have to offer inside the community center. Has your code enforcement officer been giving them warnings and citations on her rounds?

I understand there are challenges with A-Frames, but there are solutions too. Make sure to only allow one sign per business, give specific dimensions that the signs need to comply to. Dictate where signs are to be placed, should they be flush with your building or out in the space near the street where there are already trees and parking meters. If you feel you need to be more involved in controlling the look of the signs then make it a permitted process just as you do window signs and banners. I would gladly pay \$50-100 a year for a permit for my A-Frame sign.

Please see a couple of helpful articles below on the benefit of A-Frames on our sidewalks.

<http://www.citylab.com/work/2012/02/sandwich-board-makes-comeback/1277/>

<http://smallbusiness.chron.com/benefits-sidewalk-signs-39316.html>

I hope you will consider my thoughts when you vote this evening. I sat in a meeting the chamber facilitated for Retailers back in April...Every retailer in the room said they wanted A-Frames back, we represented about 17 downtown businesses in that room, your economic development director was present, and every single business wanted signs back.

Look at your Community dialogue tool, being business friendly is one of Hermosa Beach's top priorities. It comes up in nearly every General Plan meeting I attend, it came up in every

Community Dialogue meeting. Our community wants independent small businesses in town, these kinds of regulations only make it harder for our kind of businesses to survive and thrive here.

I am writing this email at 4:40am because that's when I'm awake and not at work or spending time with my family. I do not have time to attend meeting after meeting to discuss the same things over and over again. I believe I have now attended no fewer than 8 chamber or city meetings specifically about A-Frames in the last 5 years, and it looks like even if you decide tonight they are a good idea I will sit in at least another 2 or 3 meetings with the planning commission, city staff and back to council...we have missed the summer season and risk missing the holiday season too.

I am running 3 businesses on Pier Avenue, sitting on the Board of the Chamber of Commerce and working on your General Plan. I am a stakeholder in this community, and I love Hermosa Beach. I hope you know that I am not only speaking for my small business, but for many others in the community as well.

Thanks for your time.

Lori Ford

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