

## ORDINANCE 2019-17

### **AN ORDINANCE OF THE TOWNSHIP OF CHATHAM, COUNTY OF MORRIS, STATE OF NEW JERSEY, PROHIBITING THE USE OF PLASTIC BAGS AND REGULATING THE USE OF PAPER BAGS BY RETAIL ESTABLISHMENTS WITHIN THE TOWNSHIP OF CHATHAM BY AMENDING CHAPTER III, TITLED “POLICE REGULATIONS”, BY ADDING A NEW SECTION 3-13, TITLED “PLASTIC BAGS PROHIBITED AND PAPER BAGS REGULATED”, TO THE REVISED GENERAL ORDINANCES**

**WHEREAS**, on average, one person uses 500 single-use disposable bags each year, 4.4 billion single-use shopping bags are used annually in New Jersey, and 102 billion are used nationwide; and

**WHEREAS**, windblown plastic bags degrade the Township of Chatham land and waterways, and 80% of the plastic and trash that finds its way into the oceans comes from the land; and

**WHEREAS**, 12 million barrels of oil are used annually to manufacture the plastic bags that Americans use; and

**WHEREAS**, according to the United States Environmental Protection Agency, seabirds, fish, and other marine and land-based wildlife mistake plastic for food, while others can become entangled in the plastic trash, leading to exhaustion, starvation, and eventual death; and

**WHEREAS**, plastic breaks down into microplastics that measure 5 millimeters or less, which are ingested by shrimp, plankton, fish, birds, turtles, and other sea creatures. Microplastics absorb toxic chemicals, harms marine life, and can be consumed by humans via seafood and potable water; and

**WHEREAS**, 5% or fewer single-use carryout bags are actually recycled; and

**WHEREAS**, the Township of Chatham taxpayers currently bear the costs associated with the negative effects of plastic, single-use carryout bags on the solid waste stream, drainage, litter, and the negative consequences of the foregoing environmental impacts; and

**WHEREAS**, the Township of Chatham taxpayers currently bear the costs associated with improper placement of plastic bags in recycling containers resulting in increased costs for contaminated recycling; and

**WHEREAS**, all single-use carry-out bags are wasteful, and while paper carry-out bags present adverse impacts on the environment, these impacts are less than single-use plastic carry-out bags because they naturally decompose in the environment while plastic bags degrade at a much slower rate, estimated at hundreds of years, and release toxic materials during that process as well as pollute waterways; and

**WHEREAS**, Township of Chatham residents understand that reusable bags consume far less energy and natural resources than single-use plastic carry-out bags and paper carry out bags; and

**WHEREAS**, the Township of Chatham desires to reduce the number of disposable paper and plastic checkout bags that are being burned, used, discarded and littered and to promote the use of reusable checkout bags by retail establishments located within the Township of Chatham; and

**WHEREAS**, the Township Committee of the Township of Chatham finds that the

reduction in the use of disposable paper and plastic checkout bags by retail establishments within the Township of Chatham promotes a legitimate public purpose; and

**WHEREAS**, in accordance with N.J.S.A. 40:48-2, a municipality in New Jersey may enact such ordinances "as it may deem necessary and proper for the good government, order and protection of persons and property, and for the preservation of the public health, safety and welfare of the municipality and its inhabitants" and regulating the use of plastic bags and paper bags will preserve the public health, safety, and welfare of the municipality.

**NOW, THEREFORE**, be it Ordained by the Township Committee of the Township of Chatham, County of Morris, State of New Jersey as follows:

### **Section 3-13. PLASTIC BAGS PROHIBITED AND PAPER BAGS REGULATED**

#### **Section 3-13.1 DEFINITIONS**

The following definitions apply to this Ordinance:

- (1) The term "customer" means any person purchasing goods or services from a retail establishment.
- (2) The term "operator" means the person in control of, or having the responsibility for, the operation of a retail establishment, which may include, but is not limited to, the owner of the retail establishment.
- (3) The term "person" means any natural person, firm, corporation, partnership, or other organization or group however organized.
- (4) The term "reusable bag" means a durable carryout bag with stitched handles for reinforcement made from any natural or synthetic material other than plastic film including, but not necessarily limited to, woven or nonwoven plastic or cloth, that is at least 10 mils thick, and that is specifically designed and manufactured for multiple reuse, and that is washable or is made from a material that can be cleaned or disinfected regularly.
- (5) The term "single-use plastic carry-out bag" means any bag made predominantly of plastic that is not made or intended for reuse that is provided by an operator of a retail establishment to a customer at the point of sale. This definition specifically exempts the following from the category of "Single-Use Plastic Carry-Out Bag":
  - (a) bags provided by operators and used by consumers inside retail establishments to:
    1. Package bulk items, such as fruit, vegetables, nuts, grains, candies, or small hardware items;
    2. Contain or wrap frozen foods, meat, or fish, whether packaged or not;
    3. Contain or wrap flowers, potted plants, or other items where dampness may be an issue;
    4. Contain live animals, such as fish or insects sold in pet stores;
    5. Contain unwrapped prepared foods or bakery goods;
    6. Contain pharmacy prescriptions or medicines; or
    7. Function as "produce bags" or "product bags," which shall mean bags used exclusively to carry produce, meats, or other food items to the point of sale inside a retail establishment or, for reasons of public health and safety, to prevent such food items from coming into direct contact with other purchased items.

(b) Newspaper bags for home delivery, door-hanger bags, laundry and/or dry-cleaning bags, or bags sold in packages containing multiple bags intended for use as food storage bags, garbage bags, yard waste bags, or pet waste bags.

(6) The term "retail establishment" means any store or commercial establishment that sells perishable or nonperishable goods including, but not limited to, clothing, food, and personal items directly to the customer and is located within or doing business within the geographical limits of the Township of Chatham. Retail establishments include: a business establishment that generates a sales or use-tax; a drug store, pharmacy, supermarket, grocery store, convenience food store, food mart, or other commercial entity engaged in the retail sale of a limited line of goods that include milk, bread, soda, and snack foods; a public eating establishment (i.e., a restaurant, take-out food establishment, or any other business that prepares and sells prepared food to be eaten on or off its premises); and business establishment that sells clothing, a hardware store, or any other non-perishable goods.

### **Section 3-13.2 SINGLE-USE PLASTIC CARRY-OUT BAGS PROHIBITED**

#### **EFFECTIVE March 1, 2020**

Effective March 1, 2020, no retail establishment shall provide to any customer, or to any person, a single-use plastic carry-out bag, as defined above. The point of sale in such transactions is deemed to be at the retail establishment, regardless of where payment for the transaction physically occurs.

### **Section 3-13.3 PAPER BAGS SUBJECT TO A FEE EFFECTIVE MARCH 1,2020**

Effective March 1, 2020, all retail establishments shall make available to customers, upon request by the customer, for a fee to be set by the retail establishment for each paper bag for the purpose of carrying goods or other materials away from the point of sale, subject to the provisions of this Ordinance. The fee charged shall be reflected in the sales receipt and shall be subject to applicable tax. The fee charged shall be retained by the retail establishment.

The following bags shall be exempt from the fee and are provided by operators inside retail establishments to:

- (1) Package bulk items, such as fruit, vegetables, nuts, grains, candies, or small hardware items;
- (2) Contain unwrapped prepared foods or bakery goods;
- (3) Take home uneaten food that has been served in a restaurant;
- (4) Take out foods intended for consumption away from the retail establishment for reasons of public health and safety during the transportation of such food products;
- (5) Contain pharmacy prescriptions and medicinal products; or
- (6) Function as "produce bags" or "product bags", which shall mean bags used exclusively to carry produce, meats, or other food items to the point of sale inside a retail establishment or, for reasons of public health and safety, to prevent such food items from coming into direct contact with other purchased items.

### **Section 3-13.4 PROMOTION OF REUSABLE BAGS**

- (1) Each retail establishment shall be strongly encouraged to educate its staff to promote the use of reusable bags and to post signs encouraging customers to use reusable bags rather than paper carry-out bags.
- (2) Each retail establishment shall be strongly encouraged to educate its staff to make

inquiry to a customer whether the customer desires a paper carry-out bag or has supplied his/her own reusable bags before offering the paper carry-out bags to the customer.

- (3) Each retail establishment shall inform customers that if they choose a paper carry-out bag they will be charged a fee for each paper bag.
- (4) Nothing in this Ordinance prohibits customers from using bags of any type that they choose to bring to retail establishments themselves, in lieu of using bags available for a fee from the retail establishment, or from carrying away goods that are not placed in a bag.
- (5) Nothing in this Ordinance shall prohibit a retail establishment from providing a credit to a customer who has supplied his/her own bags.
- (6) Nothing in this Ordinance shall prohibit a retail establishment from offering for sale reusable bags as defined in this Ordinance.
- (7) The Township of Chatham shall undertake a reusable bag education program that includes:
  - a. Distributing information and free reusable bags as part of a Bring Your Own Bag (BYOB) campaign; and
  - b. Maintaining "Give One Take One" reusable bag collection boxes in municipal and other facilities.

### **Section 3-13.5 EXEMPT CUSTOMERS**

- (1) Any customer who states that she or he participates in, or is a beneficiary of, any United States government federal welfare program, including but not limited to the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC) or any local or County welfare assistance program, or any New Jersey State welfare program, including but not limited to the New Jersey Supplemental Nutritional Assistance Program (SNAP) or the New Jersey State Supplemental Security Income Program (SSI) shall be provided paper bags or reusable bags without charge. No further identification is necessary.
- (2) Any person who receives food, household items and/or personal care items from a food pantry or food distribution program shall be provided paper or reusable bags without charge.

### **Section 3-13.6 ENFORCEMENT AND VIOLATION PENALTY**

- (1) The Township of Chatham will provide notice of this Ordinance to retail establishments within the Township no later than January 1, 2020.
- (2) The Township of Chatham Registered Environmental Health Specialist or authorized designee has the responsibility for enforcement of this Ordinance.
- (3) Any retail establishment that violates or fails to comply with any of the requirements of this Ordinance after an initial written warning notice has been issued for that violation shall be subject to a Municipal Court Summons payable to the Municipal Court.
- (4) If a retail establishment has subsequent violations of this Ordinance after the issuance of an initial written warning notice of a violation, the following penalties will be imposed and payable by the operator of the retail establishment:
  - a. \$100.00 for the first violation after the first written warning notice is given;
  - b. \$200.00 for the second violation after the written warning notice is given; and
  - c. \$500.00 for the third and any subsequent violations after the written warning

notice is given.

**Section 3-13.7 NO CONFLICT WITH FEDERAL OR STATE LAW**

Nothing in this Ordinance is intended to create any requirement, power or duty that is in conflict with any federal or state law.

**Section 3-13.8 REPEAL OF INCONSISTENT PROVISIONS**

All ordinances or parts thereof in conflict or inconsistent with this Ordinance are hereby repealed, but only to the extent of such conflict or inconsistency, it being the legislative intent that all such ordinances or part of ordinances now existing or in effect unless the same are in conflict or inconsistent with any provision of this Ordinance shall remain in effect.

**Section 3-13.9 SEVERABILITY**

The provisions of this Ordinance are declared to be severable and if any section, subsection, sentence, clause or phrase thereof for any reason be held to be invalid or unconstitutional by a court of competent jurisdiction, such decision shall not affect the validity of the remaining sections, subsections, sentences, clauses and phrases of this Ordinance, but shall remaining in effect; it being the legislative intent that this Ordinance shall stand notwithstanding the invalidity of any part.

**Section 3-13.10 EFFECTIVE DATE**

This Ordinance shall take effect on March 1, 2020 and publication as provided by law.

Introduced: September 26, 2019

Adopted: October 10, 2019

Attest:

TOWNSHIP OF CHATHAM, COUNTY OF MORRIS, STATE OF NEW JERSEY

BY: \_\_\_\_\_  
Tayfun Selen, Mayor

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Gregory J. LaConte, Clerk