



**CITY OF ROCK ISLAND
CITY COUNCIL STUDY SESSION
July 11, 2022 - 5:00 p.m.**

**Location:
City Council Chambers, City Hall, 3rd Floor
1528 Third Avenue, Rock Island, IL**

[Watch Live](#)

CALL TO ORDER

THIS MEETING WILL BE CONDUCTED BY AUDIO AND VIDEO CONFERENCE WITHOUT A PHYSICALLY PRESENT QUORUM OF THE ROCK ISLAND CITY COUNCIL DUE TO THE DISASTER DECLARATION ISSUED BY GOVERNOR PRITZKER.

Because of this order related to COVID-19 health concerns affecting the State and the City, the Mayor has determined that an in-person meeting at City Hall with all participants may not be practical or prudent.

Alderspersons and Staff may not all be physically present at City Hall due to the disaster and physical attendance at City Hall may be limited. To participate remotely during the Public Comment or Public Hearing portion of the meeting, please join by phone at 1 470-241-4750 PIN: 223 759 260#

ROLL CALL

PUBLIC COMMENT

PRESENTATION FROM NICOLINA PAPPAS ON REDUCING PLASTIC WASTE

Documents:

[STUDY SESSION PRESETNATION - NICOLINAS TURTLE CO.PDF](#)
[STUDY SESSION PRESENTATION - STRAWS.PDF](#)
[STUDY SESSION PRESENTATION - NICOLINA PLASTIC BAGS.PDF](#)

MOTION TO ADJOURN.

Motion to Adjourn to July 11, 2022 6:45 p.m.

RC: Roll Call vote is needed.

This agenda may be obtained in accessible formats by qualified persons with a disability by making appropriate arrangements from 8:00 am to 5:00 pm, Monday through Friday, by contacting the [City Clerk's Office](#) at (309) 732-2010 or visiting in person at: 1528 Third Avenue, Rock Island, IL 61201.

Nicolina's Turtle Co.★

- Founded in 2019 when Nicolina Pappas was 8 years old, we are currently a group of 6th graders.
- Our goal is to reduce single-use plastics and to provide conservation education to kids.
- We sew & sell straw pouches with metal straws to raise funds for conservation efforts, donating all profits - \$4,500 to-date.
- We give presentations to environmental summits, schools and classrooms, encouraging people to find their own solutions to reduce single-use plastics.
- We have paid for classroom outreach from Niabi Zoo and Nahant Marsh for at-risk schools, established a camp scholarship at Niabi Zoo, and have funded river cleanups through Living Lands & Waters.
- Nicolina's Turtle Co. is a member of the Quad Cities Earth Coalition, QC Plastic Free and QC Straw Free, all who support and partner with our current efforts to reduce single-use plastic in the Quad Cities.
- Nicolina Pappas was a recipient of the Sun Foundation's 2022 Making Waves Award, given to individuals or organizations who go above-and-beyond to protect and preserve clean water and the environment.

We also help to clean up the Quad Cities.

- We have picked up trash from streets, parks, parking lots, and storm drains.
- We have recruited friends and family.
- We have survived poison ivy, dirty diapers, so many Fireball bottles and bad weather.
- We firmly believe in loving where you live and being a part of the solution.



Proposal for Rock Island to Pass an Ordinance to Ban Plastic Straws from Food and Drink Service Businesses.

by Nicolina's Turtle Co.

The purpose of this ordinance is to eliminate the use of plastic straws, to combat plastic waste and litter within Rock Island.

Why are plastic straws a problem?

Plastic straws are one of the most common types of litter found in the Quad Cities. They cannot be recycled and are often found in waterways and throughout neighborhoods and the downtown. Their small size makes it easy for birds, animals and fish to mistake them as food, with single-use plastic killing over a million of these creatures every year.

Plastic straws do not decompose, but instead break down into microplastics that are ingested by wildlife and humans over hundreds of years, and they leak chemicals into our environment.

Why ban plastic straws?

The first thing to note is that this is a ban on plastic straws, not all straws. Plastic straws are bad for the environment and harmful to wildlife and humans, and there are many alternatives to plastic straws including inexpensive plant-based straws that look and feel like plastic, as well as straws made from grass, hay, bamboo, wheat, and cookie. Yep, cookie.

Will this cost businesses more money?

It doesn't have to cost a business more money. There are many reasonable alternatives to plastic straws. It's also important to know that straws are not a necessity for most people – not offering a non-plastic straw to a customer unless it is requested will greatly reduce straw costs for a business. When we asked our school to stop giving out straws, they did it and we all have grown used to it. There are a few school districts in the Quad Cities that are now completely straw-free.

There is also a growing trend of people carrying their own re-usable straws.

What if someone has a disability and needs to drink with a straw?

This is a ban on plastic straws, not all straws. Businesses should keep re-usable or non-plastic straws in stock, even if they decide to not offer straws with drinks.



Proposal for Rock Island to Pass an Ordinance to Ban Plastic Straws from Food and Drink Service Businesses, Continued

Where has a plastic straw ban been successfully implemented?

There are several states and cities across the US that have banned plastic straws. Many countries, as well as the entire European Union, have successfully implemented plastic straw bans with very positive results.

Why don't we just recycle plastic straws?

Plastic straws cannot be recycled in our local facilities since they are too small and fall through the sorting machinery. As a result, they wind up in a landfill or littering our streets and waterways. Most plastic straws are petroleum-based. These straws do not decompose, but instead break down into microplastics that are ingested by wildlife and humans over hundreds of years, as well as leaking chemicals into our environment.

Even if they could be recycled, recycling is not the best solution. Plastic can only be recycled a few times before the quality degrades and it cannot be recycled again. The solution is to ban plastic straws from food and drink businesses. Americans use 500 million straws every day, and the 15-minute use can stay in the environment for generations to come.

What type of straws are included in this ban?

Plastic drinking and cocktail straws and plastic stirrers will be included in the ban. Small plastic straws packaged with drink boxes would not be a part of this ban.

Will reducing plastic straws really make a difference?

Yes. Many Quad Cities mayors belong to the Mississippi River Cities & Towns Initiative, which recently conducted an extensive litter survey as part of the Mississippi River Plastic Pollution Initiative. This survey was completed with the help of the United Nations Environment Programme and the University of Georgia, in addition to hundreds of volunteers along the Mississippi River. The results for the Quad Cities showed that over 75% of the litter tracked and collected was plastic.

Nicolina's Turtle Co. has organized and participated in many cleanups in our area, and we see the same thing – plastic is the most common trash we pick up. We pull so many plastic bags and straws out of storm drains, out of trees (when we can reach them!) and off streets and sidewalks. We want to help clean up the Quad Cities and reduce the plastic that will affect each of us, wildlife, and the environment, for generations to come.

Banning plastic straws is only part of the solution, but it is an essential part.



Proposal for Rock Island to Pass an Ordinance to Collect a 7¢ Tax on All Disposable Bags

by Nicolina's Turtle Co.

The purpose of this ordinance is to reduce the use of all disposable bags, to reduce plastic waste and litter within Rock Island.

Why are we choosing a bag tax to reduce the use of disposable bags?

Many studies have shown that a small tax on a disposable bag greatly reduces the use of all disposable bags, and greatly increases the habits of using re-usable bags and skipping a bag when possible.

Where has a bag tax been successfully implemented?

Many countries, states and cities have successfully implemented bag taxes with very positive results. In Illinois, the cities of Chicago, Edwardsville, Evanston, Oak Park and Woodstock have already passed disposable bag taxes, and St. Charles and Batavia have recently proposed passing bag tax ordinances.

Why don't we just recycle disposable plastic bags?

Plastic bags cannot be recycled in our local facilities. As a result, they wind up in a landfill or littering our streets and waterways. Plastic bags are petroleum-based, using billions of barrels of oil each year in the U.S. These bags do not decompose, but instead break down into microplastics that are ingested by wildlife and humans over hundreds of years, as well as leaking chemicals into our environment.

There are some facilities in the U.S. that can recycle plastic bags, but recycling is not the solution. Plastic can only be recycled a few times before the quality degrades and it cannot be recycled again. The solution is to greatly reduce the amount of disposable plastic, including the 365 disposable plastic bags per person per year that are used an average of 15 minutes and then stay in the environment for generations to come.

Why not just ban disposable plastic bags?

Banning disposable plastic bags has been shown to have negative effects. One example is Chicago, who originally banned disposable plastic bags and switched to a tax when studies showed some retailers were not complying or were distributing thicker single-use plastic bags not designed for re-usability. The number of paper bags being used increased drastically during the ban. Switching to a tax greatly reduced the number of disposable bags used in Chicago, and other cities with bag taxes are reporting the same results.

But why tax non-plastic disposable bags, such as paper and other compostable bags?

Though paper and compostable bags are better for the environment, the purpose of this ordinance is to reduce the overall use of disposable bags. Paper bags take much more energy to produce than plastic bags, and many chemicals are used during the process. The best bag to use is a re-usable bag or no bag at all.



Proposal for Rock Island to Pass an Ordinance to Collect a 7¢ Tax on All Disposable Bags, Continued

Will this ordinance cost me more money?

It doesn't have to. If you cannot afford re-usable bags, the city will give them to you at no cost with the help of corporate sponsors and grants. Re-usable bags, with the goal of being used for hundreds of shopping trips, will be much stronger than disposable bags and have more-comfortable handles. If you are only purchasing a few items and do not have re-usable bags with you, consider skipping a bag at the checkout.

How will this tax be used?

This tax is not meant to be a revenue-generator for the city. In fact, the hope is that the city will collect less tax as people change habits at the check-out. The city will retain 5¢ of the 7¢ tax, and it will be used for costs related to administering the tax, including purchasing re-usable bags as needed, or other sustainability-related city projects.

The retailer will keep 2¢ of the 7¢ tax, to help cover any expenses they might have related to this ordinance, though there are no requirements as to how the retailer portion should be used.

Are there exemptions to this tax?

Yes, there are exemptions. Plastic bags used within grocery stores to prevent damage or contamination, for items such as meat, fish, poultry, produce, deli, floral and bakery will be exempt. There will also be exemptions for prescription pharmacy medications, dry-cleaning bags and newspaper bags. Multiple plastic bags sold in packages and intended for garbage, food storage and pet waste are also exempt. Bags that are designed and manufactured specifically to be re-useable, including durable plastic bags thicker than 4 mils, are exempt.

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