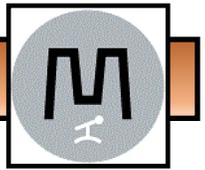


City Council Message



July 2018



Diane Turner

During the cooler mornings and evenings of summer, I relish the opportunity to be outside and enjoy all our city and state has to offer in terms of outdoor recreation. The mountains, hillsides, and valleys contain an abundance of trails, hikes, and leisurely walks for whatever level of activity one may desire. In Murray City we appreciate having the Jordan River Parkway with five miles of paved trail containing recreational and educational resources minutes from the city streets. The newly created Canal Trail is two miles stretching from Fontaine Bleu Drive to Wheeler Farm. Also constructed in recent years are several miles of bike paths throughout the city and we gather at an abundance of neighborhood parks for sports, reunions and picnics.

I don't know about you, but it is very distressing for me when our beautiful environment is littered with garbage, trash and the ever-increasing number of plastic bags caught in streams, fences, grass and along many a trail.

Plastic bags are a global concern poisoning and injuring marine life, entangling and suffocating birds, littering our streams, landscapes, beaches, and highways, clogging storm drains, and whirling around landfills. The plastic bags obstruct recycling machinery and increase the cost of processing recyclables. Synthetic plastic does not biodegrade, therefore, it sits and accumulates in landfills or pollutes the environment.

Senator Jani Iwamoto introduced the "Retail Bag Impact Reduction Program", Senate Bill 244, in the 2018 Legislature. The purpose of the bill was to "encourage the development of recycling programs and education regarding the impacts of, and alternatives to, single-use retail bags." Because disposal of single-use retail bags is a statewide concern, the bill proposed to charge a ten cent fee per bag at the point of sale. The fee was intended to motivate shoppers to utilize reusable bags of cloth, fabric or other durable materials with the fee divided between the retail business, and the municipality, county or Department of Environmental Quality. The proceeds of the single-use retail bags were to be used for promotion of reusable bags; education on the impacts of single-use bags; access to recycling bins and facilities; and implementing strategies to prevent and remediate litter. (A few bags and situations were listed as exempt.) Unfortunately, this bill was never introduced on the Senate floor. We believe it's an issue that will be discussed during Interim Legislative committee meetings and may resurface in the future.

Many countries in the world have already placed a ban or a fee on plastic bags, such as, a number of African and Asian nations, India, Australia, England, Italy, Wales, Scotland and Germany. Areas in Mexico and some Canadian provinces have measures in place. Some South American countries have taken steps to reduce plastic bag use, including Argentina, Brazil, Chile and Colombia. California became the first state to ban plastic bags and charge for paper, and other U.S. locations include Hawaii, District of Columbia, Seattle, Maine, New York, Rhode Island, and Puerto Rico, along with areas in Oregon and Texas, and Park City, Utah.

But! You know..... we don't need to wait for state legislation to do what is right for our environment. Let's take action! Make this a citizen movement! All we need to do is begin today to discontinue using single-use plastic bags and bring our own durable reusable bags when we go shopping. It gives you a chance to make a difference by contributing in a positive way to our environment. Resolve to join me in this crusade!