

**COMMITTEE ON LIAISON  
FEBRUARY 25, 2019 at 6:06 p.m.  
COMMITTEE ROOM  
WOBURN CITY HALL**

Voting Members present: President Michael Anderson, Alderman Michael Concannon, Alderman Mark Gaffney, Alderman Darlene Mercer-Bruen, Alderman Robert Ferullo, Alderman Lindsay Higgins, Alderman Joanne Campbell and Alderman Richard Gately. Absent: Alderman Edward Tedesco

Also present: Mayor Scott Galvin

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Motion made by Alderman Mercer-Bruen and second by Alderman Higgins to take the first item on the Liaison Committee agenda out of order from the posted agenda; approved, 8-0.

**Resolve relative to control of alcohol “nip” bottles:** Mayor Galvin said his resolve is self-explanatory. He said there is also a bill at the state level to include nip bottles in the state redemption program but he is also hoping to enact local legislation. President Anderson said he sees empty nip bottles of Fireball whiskey everywhere in the city. Mayor Galvin said the inclusion of nip bottles in the redemption program is a good move for the city, even though his family is involved in the liquor industry. Alderman Concannon noted the city did not vote in favor of a bill in 2014 to expand the bottle bill to include non-carbonated beverages like water and juice and asked if that was tantamount to a mandate from Woburn’s electorate. President Anderson said Mayor Galvin’s proposed legislation would only apply to single use containers of liquor less than 50 ml. Mayor Galvin reiterated statewide legislation in regard to nip bottles is still being worked out at the Statehouse, and it will be good for the City Council to support a local measure. He said the inclusion of nip bottles will not be a panacea for the elimination of litter, but it will help. Alderman Concannon said it sounds like the City Council is being asked to speak for the voters. He said the council has not heard directly from the voters about this issue. He said the vote in 2014 was to leave the bottle bill alone. Alderman Gaffney said he walks on a daily basis and frequently sees nip bottles. Alderman Gately said there are discarded nip bottles all over the place along the railroad tracks off Main Street. President Anderson said he is in favor of including nip bottles in the redemption program. Alderman Mercer-Bruen said if there is a redemption component involved, someone might collect the nip bottles and return them. She said she also sees discarded nip bottles everywhere. Motion made by Alderman Gately and seconded by Alderman Mercer-Bruen that Mayor Galvin’s resolve to include nip bottles in the redemption program “ought to pass;” approved, 7-1, with Alderman Concannon opposed.

Motion made by Alderman Higgins and seconded by Alderman Mercer-Bruen to return to the regular order of business; approved, 8-0. President Anderson recessed the Liaison Committee meeting at 6:11 p.m.

President Anderson reconvened the Liaison Committee meeting at 6:58 p.m.

**Citizens Participation request from June Mackenzie relative to banning single-use plastic shopping bags:** June Mackenzie, 20 Mount Pleasant Street, Woburn, MA. said 80 communities in the commonwealth have enacted a ban on single-use plastic shopping bags, most recently Burlington. She said similar bans have been enacted in Lexington, Winchester and Somerville. She said there is a bill to ban single-use plastic bags statewide but it has been pending in the legislature for a year. She said single-use plastic bags are bad for the environment because they are not biodegradable. She said only one in five single-use plastic bags are recycled. Alderman Gately asked if the ban would apply to all supermarkets and convenience stores. Ms. Mackenzie said the parameters of the ban would be determined by the City Council. Alderman Mercer-Bruen asked if this is an issue that should be left up to the electorate. Alderman Gately asked if paper bags would replace plastic bags. Ms. Mackenzie said the alternatives would be paper or reusable plastic bags. Alderman Ferullo asked when the ban on single-use plastic bags went into effect in Burlington. Ms. Mackenzie replied the ban was effective in January. She said there is usually a lead time to allow establishments to exhaust their existing supply of single-use plastic bags. Alderman Concannon asked if there was a referendum in any of the 80 communities that have enacted the ban. Ms. Mackenzie said the bans have been enacted by Town Meetings or City Councils. Alderman Concannon asked about the status of the state ban on single-use plastic bags. Ms. Mackenzie said the bill has not made it out of committee. Jennifer Jones, 4 Sherman Terrace, said the state Senate passed the bill, but the House did not. Alderman Concannon said it seems like this legislation would be more effective on a larger scale, and that going community by community is the wrong way to do it. Ms. Mackenzie said there will be fewer single-use plastic bags in circulation as more communities adopt local legislation. Ms. Jones said a ban on single-use plastic bags is similar to what Mayor Galvin is trying to do with nip bottles to reduce trash. She said on windy days like today, the plastic bags will get stuck in trees and become unsightly. Carolyn Youngclaus, 2 Park Drive, said unlike the bottle bill there are no administrative costs for shopkeepers. Alderman Concannon said members of the City Council are elected to speak for the residents. He said sometimes it's clear what they want us to do, other times it's not. He said the council does not have a mandate on the nip bottles issue, but there was something similar on the ballot in 2014. He said sometimes the council struggles with what to do. Gail Page, 8 Washington Terrace, asked what methods the council members use to come up with answers about the wishes of the constituency. Alderman Concannon said he solicits input from the community. Ms. Mackenzie said if legislation comes before the City Council, the public will have an opportunity to address the issue. Alderman Campbell said she believes plastics are a real hazard for the environment. She said she has been going to a supermarket that has banned plastic and uses paper bags. She said the paper bags the supermarket gives her are also single-use. She said she is worried banning plastic bags will result in the killing of more trees to make more paper bags. She said she did reuse her plastic bags. She said she needs more information to make a decision on this issue. Ms. Mackenzie said paper is easier to recycle than plastic. Ms. Youngclaus said switching from plastic bags to paper or cloth bags is just a matter of developing a new habit. Emily Bloch, 18 Lexington Street, said the tree farm industry is in good shape. Ms. Jones said New York City has also banned paper bags. She said some communities have charged a fee of 10 cents for bags. She said her children at the White School are learning about recycling and the impact of plastic on the environment. She said enacting a ban on single-use plastic bags is a way or reinforcing what is being taught to students. Alderman Campbell said she would like to hear from other residents. She said she has a family member who is completely against getting rid of plastic bags. She said she would like to hear more. President Anderson said he thinks the

council has to look at the legislation adopted by other communities. Alderman Mercer-Bruen asked the proponents if they have looked at getting a referendum on the ballot, and if they think it would pass. Ms. Mackenzie thinks there is a ton of support for banning single-use plastic bags. Ms. Bloch said banning single-use plastic bags is the right thing to do. Ms. Mackenzie said plastic bags are not biodegradable. Ms. Bloch said sometimes government has to do the right thing because it's the right thing to do. President Anderson asked if the prohibition would apply to Ziploc bags and the like. Ms. Mackenzie said the ban would apply to any single-use plastic bags. Ms. Jones said the ban would only apply to the point of sale. Alderman Mercer-Bruen said she will have to reach out to her constituents on this issue. Alderman Campbell asked if the industry has looked at plastic bags that are biodegradable. Ms. Mackenzie said it is difficult to make biodegradable plastic. Alderman Gaffney said he thinks most people try to be responsible and bring their own cloth bags. He said people tend to throw out the single-use plastic bags. President Anderson said a lot of people do recycle their plastic bags. Ms. Mackenzie said less than 5 percent of plastic bags are reused. She said most go right into the trash.

**Citizens Participation request from Richard Longland relative to health dangers of 5G network:** Appearing were Richard Longland, 11 Cedarwood Road, Woburn, MA, and Cecilia Doucette, Director, Wireless Service, Ashland, MA. Mr. Longland said he started a non-profit organization to address the 5G issue after he went through a long illness, the cause of which he could not initially determine. He said he learned he had to be his own advocate. He said there are health problems that are caused by the proliferation of 5G networking. He said he is here to help the council understand the ramifications of the expansion of 5G networking. He said he wants to turn his presentation over to Ms. Doucette, who is an expert. Ms. Doucette asked the members of the council to take out their iPhones or smart phones, go to the settings option, scroll down to the about section, scroll down to the legal section, open the RF Exposure tab and read the text. She said there is an advisory to keep the device a certain distance away from you and to use a hands-free feature. She said most of us don't even know that fine print even exists. She said there is evidence that using a wireless device causes serious health problems. She said she has collaborated with state Senate President Karen Spilka about passing legislation regarding the health effects of wireless exposure. She said of the 5,000 bills that are filed with the legislature every session, only about 100 are passed and this is not one of the legislative priorities. Alderman Concannon said the legislature tends to pass the bills that are the most important. Ms. Doucette said she has worked with state Senator Julian Cyr of Cape Cod to raise the consciousness of the public that a smart phone is not a toy to be handed to a child. Alderman Mercer-Bruen asked if there is a difference between the wireless signal from a smart phone and a computer or a tablet. Ms. Doucette replied the difference is whether a device is hard-wired. She said people have no idea there's a risk to their smart phone. She said some of the side effects are genetic toxicity and DNA damage. She said there are more children being hospitalized now more than ever. Mr. Longland said there is evidence 5G technology is even more harmful than its 3G and 4G predecessors. Ms. Doucette suggested people will sleep better if they unplug their wireless devices. She said the Kennedy family is convinced Sen. Edward Kennedy's health problems were due to his phone. She said the tumors John McCain, who was left-handed, developed on the left side of his head were not coincidental. She said there is an issue with phones being stored near parts of the body that are susceptible. She said phones cause sleep disturbances and irritability. She said her message is not anti-technology, it's safe technology. She said all that's left to accommodate 5G networking are short millimeter waves that could be

interrupted by a tree leaf. She said the waves are emitted full-tilt, full-time. Alderman Gately asked about underground lines and said the city has been going through issues with Eversource. Ms. Doucette said Burlington is combatting those issues. She said Burlington formed a small cell committee and in October ratified a policy that the wireless providers cannot drop and run their equipment, but rather they have to come back every year to certify the equipment and pay a fee for an expert to oversee the process. She said when Verizon heard that, it pulled its small cell certificate. She said wireless is crummy technology. She said there is a better solution of going hard-wired. She said on November 1 the U.S. Toxicology Program administered by the FDA released a finding that wireless signals cause heart and brain tumors. She said he was heartbroken when she found out Massachusetts Sen. Edward Markey receives considerable contributions from telecom companies. She said she has reached out to him to stop 5G technology. She said wireless uses 10 times more energy compared to hard-wired technology. Alderman Campbell said the city is involved in a dispute with Eversource, which she said will be putting its equipment 10-15 away from residential homes. She said it is really sad. She said it's very concerning. Ms. Doucette asked Alderman Campbell to ask Eversource if its equipment grounded, because if it's not, your home turns into a radio frequency antenna. Ms. Doucette said Sen. Richard Blumenthal of Connecticut is working to allow for local controls over wireless frequencies. She said that is wonderful. She advised the council members to watch a film called "Generation Zapped," and said she would assist if the council wants to schedule a screening in the community. She said other countries are enacting greater controls. Alderman Campbell asked if Europe is not using 5G. Ms. Doucette said the industry is trying to put this everywhere, but the Germans and especially the French are instituting limitation. Mr. Longland thanked the committee for its time. Ms. Doucette said she knows it's a lot of information but urged the council to do a deep dive. She said to make especially sure to not let children have wireless devices in their bedrooms. President Anderson asked if tinnitus is one of the symptoms of problems due to 5G technology. Ms. Doucette said tinnitus is one of the first symptoms.

**Motion made by Alderman Higgins and seconded by Alderman Mercer-Bruen to adjourn;** approved, 8-0. President Anderson adjourned the meeting at 7:57 p.m.

Attest: \_\_\_\_\_  
Gordon Vincent  
Clerk of Committees