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FNR6061

Summary of Meetings and Interviews

This assignment will include the following components:

1. *Summary of a meeting where conflict is discussed*(e.g., city council meeting, organization meeting on issue, protest, etc.)

<https://www.gainesville.com/news/20190517/gainesville-to-vote-on-plastic-straw-ban>

On May 27, 2019, the City of Gainesville Commissioners agreed to schedule a vote in June on whether they should ban single use plastic straws. It is July now, and the meeting still wasn’t scheduled. Once the meeting takes place, the City of Gainesville will decide if the straw ban will be enforced along with the city’s plastic bag and Styrofoam ban. Those bans are to be enforced by January 2020. There is still no news on when the meeting to discuss this.

After the reviewing the captions and videos for the meetings in June, the single use plastic straw ban was mentioned (<http://gainesville.granicus.com/TranscriptViewer.php?view_id=9&clip_id=3717> ), but it was to discuss this at a later time. I had read almost all of the meetings for June 2019, and it seems as though it kept getting pushed back.

* Take notes on what was discussed, tone of discussion (antagonistic or cooperative), etc.

On the meeting of mentioned above, on June 24, 2019, the straw issue was addressed and the conversation goes as follows:

**Mayor:** All right.

**Commissioner Ward:** And then ordinances on second reading, the finley woods cdd and then the clarification and new enforcement date for the prohibition on plastics and polystyrene. And then ordinances on first reading, you continued this one from your last meeting, the prohibition on single-use plastic straws and stirrers. And then there's a voluntary annexation ordinance for 11.18 acres that's south of East University and west of southeast 38th street.

**Mayor:** okay, thank you. We have a couple of questions.

**Commissioner Ward:** Thank you, Mr. Mayor. What do we think about -- since I think there will be some interest in the prohibition of the single-use plastic straws and stirrers, that we make it a time certain.

**Mayor:** We can. I actually don't expect a big group for that. I think we have kind of done the heavy lifting on that. But if you have received information otherwise, I'm happy to do that at like 6:00.

I would say from reading these comments in the captions, and watching the video, it looks as though the main points are:

1. The single- use plastic straw ban vote is still being pushed back.
2. The City of Gainesville doesn’t believe they have a big group of people that are pushing for a final date on the vote.

* Summarize these major points

The summary of the major points are that the City of Gainesville is not taking the single-use plastic straw ban very seriously. They are taking the issue seriously to an extent, but they are pushing the voting, for whatever reason, until probably the last possible date to get the vote in. Also it seems as though, people who are really interested in the ban are not speaking up, or at least not to the City of Gainesville, because Gainesville does not think there will be a push for this ban vote.

1. *Summary of two interviews with stakeholders from differing sides*

Interview in person on 6/30/2019:

Martin Noguera, resident for the Straw Ban

Clinical Research Coordinator II, University of Florida

email: mnoguera@ufl.edu

What do you know about the single-use plastic straw ban for the City of Gainesville?

**I haven’t seen or heard much advertisement, but it is something that can be beneficial to the environment.**

What is it important to have/ or not have a single-use plastic straw ban for the City of Gainesville?

**It is important to have a single-use plastic straw ban for the city in order to create less waste. Every now and then I see plastic waste on our streets and neighborhoods. Plastic straws being among the most common observation.**

What other individuals or stakeholders do you believe have a stake in the single-use plastic straw ban for the City of Gainesville?

**The residents of the city of Gainesville, restaurant/bar owners, the University of Florida, Alachua County.**

What is your perspective of the interest and concerns of the different stakeholders?

**The residents of Gainesville will experience less waste on the streets and neighborhoods, restaurant/bar owners will have less expenses, the University of Florida will experience less waste around campus especially during major sporting events, the county will have less waste to clean up.**

Is there anything that you think you can do to support your perspective on the single-use plastic straw ban for the City of Gainesville?

**Attend town hall meetings and express the need to pass legislation for single-use straw ban. Also, writing letters of support to city council workers.**

What are your main concerns about the single-use plastic straw ban for the City of Gainesville?

**My main concern is the preservation of the environment and ecosystem. Plastic straws are not biodegradable and can be a potential health hazard to different species of animals that call Gainesville home.**

What is your involvement in the single-use plastic straw ban for the City of Gainesville?

**As a resident of this beautiful city, I am raising awareness and setting an example in the community by using a multiple use straw whenever I am dining at a restaurant.**

What do you think is the main pushback for the single-use plastic straw ban for the City of Gainesville?

**I think a major pushback is individuals that are not open to change and/or care for the preservation of the environment.**

What do you think your perspective is for the majority of the residents of Gainesville?

**I think most residents of Gainesville are open to this change. If it improves our city and our neighborhoods, they are for it.**

Do you think that the media is playing a role in single-use plastic straw ban for the City of Gainesville? I would not know.

**I do not use social media, so I am not aware in this format. I have not heard NPR express interest on this, although it might come on during a time where I am not able to listen.**

Do you think Gainesville can support enough scientific evidence to the Florida Senate to show that there will be a positive impact from banning single-use plastic straws?

**Yes, I do believe this is possible. There are a lot of environmental scientists in the community that can provide enough scientific evidence to the Florida Senate to show positive impact from the ban.**

Summary of interview:

This resident of Gainesville, is aware of the environmental need for a single-use plastic straw ban, but they feel that there is not enough media coverage of the issue. I believe that the resident believes that the media is not doing a good job representing this conflict over the radio on NPR. They also believe that they could attend meetings and write letters to get conflict some more advertisement.

Interview in person on 7/1/2019:

Scott Borsum, resident against the Straw Ban

University of Florida Ph.D candidate

email: jscott.borsum@ufl.edu

What do you know about the single-use plastic straw ban for the City of Gainesville?

**I did not even know that there was a single use plastic straw ban for the City of Gainesville. I assuming that it is planned because I still see plastic straws everywhere. I have noticed that more businesses do have paper straws so perhaps they are planning for the change.**

What is it important to have/ or not have a single-use plastic straw ban for the City of Gainesville?

**I don’t really see why it is important for Gainesville. My guess is that the straws will cost more and that cost will just get passed down to the consumers. Also, we are an hour from the coast and my guess is not many plastic straws actually makes it to the coast from runoff due to all the vegetation where it could be stopped. This also seems like a band aide on a much bigger issue of single use plastics. People will feel like this is enough to save the world and this makes them feel like they are doing their part**

What other individuals or stakeholders do you believe have a stake in the single-use plastic straw ban for the City of Gainesville?

**I really think this will be bad news for the smaller local restaurants.**

**Environmental groups are probably pushing to save sea turtles and other wildlife.**

**I’m not certain there is any manufactures of plastic or paper straws in Gainesville but I’m guessing not.**

**Residents (which includes me)**

What is your perspective of the interest and concerns of the different stakeholders?

**The food industry is hard work, with high overhead, and low margins so even little changes may force them to raise prices or make life tougher. My guess is the paper straw makers will not be able to meet demand consistently which could create a volatile, unpredictable supply. This creates inconsistent prices and makes budgeting more difficult.**

**I think environmental groups want to prevent any sort of issues with wildlife like the infamous turtle video. I think the thought is well minded but do we really use that many straws anyway? What about all the other single use plastics and the continued expansion of human developments on natural areas. Seems like a more comprehensive ban would be needed to make actual change and not just make some people and politicians feel good about themselves.**

**The same goes for residents. This seems like a feel-good initiative more than one that is actually seeking to reduce plastic use. Straws are relatively small, thin pieces of plastic compared to say bottles which people use way more of or plastic utensils. I think this creates a bigger problem, complacency. People will begin to feel like they are doing enough to help and stop looking to reduce in other way. They think “I recycle, my city doesn’t have straws, I am doing my part.” Most people don’t even recycle properly and is still just a band aide to a much larger issue.**

Is there anything that you think you can do to support your perspective on the single-use plastic straw ban for the City of Gainesville?

**I think the city could try to take a bigger stand on single use plastics in general. This plastic straw ban seems like a low hanging fruit for a positive political view and jumping on the bandwagon. I think they could do more to educate people or enforce littering fines or taxes. Perhaps putting pressure on the bigger companies which can more easily afford to make environmental friendly changes to their business plans.**

What are your main concerns about the single-use plastic straw ban for the City of Gainesville?

**My main concern is that it will hurt the bottom line of smaller local restaurants by raising their costs, forcing them to pass on to consumers which may affect their decision to go there.**

**I also fear that this will not lead to future legislation to remove other single use plastics which I call the complacency effect.**

What is your involvement in the single-use plastic straw ban for the City of Gainesville?

**I have no real involvement other than as a consumer but I simple chose not to use straws because they aren’t really necessary for most people. They are a convenience that we have become accustom to. How bout this just a straw ban in general.**

**I also consider myself an environmentalist and want to see a healthy environment but I can’t even remember the last time a saw a straw trash on the ground. Usually it is some paper bag, wrapper, or bottle. I want to see bigger more fundamental changes not some pushover weak policy that everyone else is doing.**

What do you think is the main pushback for the single-use plastic straw ban for the City of Gainesville?

**I think the economic argument is the most sound and logical opposition. However, I wasn’t even aware and I’m guessing most people would notice till after it already happens.**

What do you think your perspective is for the majority of the residents of Gainesville? ( the wording is weird here)

**I think most residents are probably for the ban and my perspective is only shared by small business owners**

Do you think that the media is playing a roll in single-use plastic straw ban for the City of Gainesville?

**100% the media and the turtle are responsible for straw bans specifically. It has been fascinating to watch how quickly the responses to this turtle thing happened. I think it says a lot about the state of our society and should be studied by people because it was brilliant environmental marketing.**

Do you think Gainesville can support enough scientific evident to the Florida Senate to show that there will be a positive impact from banning single-use plastic straws?

**I don’t know what evidence they have but I wouldn’t buy it. It seems so trivial amongst a much bigger issue. Straws are such and insignificant part of the plastic trash that I don’t see how any benefit can outweigh the logistical and economic negatives associated with it. The only real argument is that it will help people use less by removing options and be more conscious about plastic use, but obviously I don’t think it will and is difficult to understand how people will behave from a scientific perspective.**

Summary of interview:

This resident feels that the single-use plastic straw ban is a “feel good initiative” because Gainesville is not near the coast, and the straw pollution will never reach the ocean. The resident believes that the turtle video with the straw in its nose (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4wH878t78bw>) is one of the video that is causing the uproar to ban plastic straws. The resident also believes that the straw ban will come at a big expanse for the local restaurants and ultimately the price will come down to the consumers, so it might not be worth it to enact the straw ban.