**Information and Tips**

**from the Framingham Plastic Bag Reduction Bylaw, Article 42 who was presented, discussed and voted on at the Framingham Town Hall on 12th May 2016 TMM = Town Meeting Member**

Strategy:

* Find local volunteers to help and support you through the process
  + Share with them research and evidence so they are educated.
  + We used google drive so we didn't had to meet so often, immediate reaction when a document is created
* Outreach to TMMs is best approach
  + Get spreadsheet of all town meeting members
  + Find volunteer citizens in each precinct
  + Gather documentation and prepare an email for every TMM
  + Have Precinct members send stock email to all TMMs
    - who is in support of us?
    - Who is against us and … **WHY??**
    - Track everything on a spreadsheet so everybody is up to date
    - Focus on TMM who are not decided or support us. The ones who are against us are unlikely to change
    - Don't confront or argue unpolite, be friendly all the time ( try)
* Attend Meetings with anyone who will listen, but never go alone
  + Local DPW ( remember their names)
  + Chamber of Commerce
  + Board of Health
  + Gov studies committee
  + Board of Selectmen
* Get ahead of the negativity (large group of volunteers can help with this)
  + Online communities like Facebook
  + Dog walking chats ( poop bag issue)
* Town Meeting
  + Go ahead of time; make friends, show your faces
  + Make an amazing presentation… blow people away
    - Answer opposition right in the presentation
    - Future education, transition plan, bring alternatives for pet use and bin liners
  + Reach out to Town Meeting supporters and try to get them to come to vote

Misc:

* Make some postcards/flyers to give out with contact information, that was the only thing we spend money on for this campaign (other than driving around)
* From our experience the answers that we got from the TMM at the beginning didn't change at the end vote.
* We talked a lot to people and organisations, if they were on our side we asked if we can use their logo on our Town Meeting presentation as sponsors:
  + Local organisations like Framingham Downtown Renaissance ( represents local downtown shops and small stores)
  + Sierra club, Audubon Society ( through the www.massgreen.org network)
  + New England Aquarium
  + Masspirg
  + Senator Karen Spilka and Chris Walsh ( meet at Earth day event)
* Talk to different local shops how much bags they use, how much money they spend, what to they think about not giving out free bags anymore, do they have reusable bags for sale….
* Check on reactions from other towns who already did it
* Be in contact with the www.massgreen.org network ask them questions, they have a lot of knowledge, are very helpful and supportive
* Bad comments are mostly :
  + Will do shopping in other town- hurts business
  + Unsanitary , town will be liable when someone gets sick
  + Where is this information from at the presentation, ( put the source into the slide )
  + Doesn't help against litter, mostly other stuff that lies around is the problem
  + Will hurt low income families
  + Retailer need to be involved so they are prepared when change comes
  + The state should make pressure
  + Education is better than forcing people
  + Don't care about the ocean
  + Not providing plastic bags increases litter
  + Bigger heavier bags are worse for the environment
  + Questions from the Town Member were how much more does a paper bag cost , carbon footprint paper versus Plastic ( cotton bags and paper bags have a higher carbon footprint than plastic bags, “big plastic” has a lot of studies about it …)
* Be informed about the status of the State Bill
* A lot of this information is in the background, at the presentation only the presenter speaks rarely a person, mostly Town Members , but the presenter has to answer if a Town Members asks a question so a “ rebuttal sheet” is important ( write down sources, people like to question “where did you get this information”!
* The presenter should be a “towni” Town Members like it when local people talk about their personal stuff ( shopping habits)
* Make yourself visible on public events ( earth day is a good place) with the plastic bag monster outfit, this helped a lot talking to people and getting in the newspapers, give out sign up sheets for support at the day of the vote . A lot of people remembered the monster weeks later especially the ones who were against the plastic bag reduction
* Public Screening of movies like “Bag it”
* Make sure you know the rules your local Town Meeting. Every town is different. In Framingham we had 10 minutes for the presentation and we needed more than 50% of the vote, no demonstration during the town Hall meeting was allowed. No plastic bags monster suit was allowed. We put handouts about the Article at a table where all the Town Members got their papers for the meeting.
* It is very important to connect with the Town Members it's like a special kind of people, try to get as much as possible on your side, be interested in their other articles and local projects.
* At Town Meeting we gave out free reusable bags, the Town Members loved it.
* Our group of supporters showed up at the Town Meeting all in green shirts and everybody had a reusable bag, they weren't allowed to cheer or speak ( cheered in the end anyway because nobody cared anymore) but it made an impact that the residents of Framingham are concerned about their town.

It took over one hour, a lot of Town Members wanted to speak about this topic. Until the end we were unsure if we would win this

122 Town Members were there ( Framingham has over 200 Town Members, they are never all there at the same time)

6 spoke against us, 12 spoke to support us We won with 78 yes, 34 no, 10 abs

We started the campaign on 20 February at the Mass Green Summit in Wellesley, went public on Earth Day end of April and voted at the Town Hall Meeting on May 2016

**WHEN YOU START YOUR CAMPAIGN, NEVER USE PLASTIC BAG WHEN SHOPPING !!! one picture with you and using plastic bags on social media makes a lot of damage to the campaign.**