

The Legislature of Rockland County



HARRIET D. CORNELL

Legislator – District 10
Chair, Environmental Committee

MINUTES ENVIRONMENTAL COMMITTEE TUESDAY, February 23, 2016 6:30 PM

Members Present:

Leg. H. Cornell, Chair
Leg. A. Wolfe
Leg. T. Earl
Leg. C. Carey
Leg. L. Santulli

Members Absent:

Leg. J. Hood, Jr.
Leg. N. Low-Hogan

Others Present:

Leg. M. Grant
Leg. D. Jobson
P. Brennan
L. Incalcaterra

Leg. A. Paul
Leg. P. Soskin
B. Gruffi
E. Yeger, Esq.

CHAIR CORNELL CALLED THE MEETING TO ORDER AT 6:32 PM

ADOPTION OF MINUTES FOR DECEMBER 8, 2015 & JANUARY 27, 2016 MEETINGS

MOTION TO ADOPT: WOLFE/SANTULLI

UNAN

1. REF. #4374 - AMENDING THE COUNTY'S PROCUREMENT POLICY AND CHAPTER 140-14.5 OF THE LAWS OF ROCKLAND COUNTY TO INDICATE THAT COUNTY EMPLOYEES WRITING SPECIFICATIONS FOR OR PROCURING PLUMBING FIXTURES FOR COUNTY FACILITIES SHALL REQUIRE WATERSENSE LABELED FIXTURES WHEN AVAILABLE

**RED
DOT
VERSION**

(HON. HARRIET D. CORNELL, LEGISLATURE)

ACTION: Counsel to amend language of resolution according to suggestions by B. Gruffi and P. Brennan

MOTION TO APPROVE: AS AMENDED CORNELL/EARL/LOW-HOGAN

UNAN

ADDED CO-SPONSORS: HONS. WOLFE, EARL, SANTULLI, JOBSON

Chair Cornell described the Water Sense Program, which labels products to help consumers identify products that meet rigorous EPA conservation requirements. Rockland County and the Water Task Force became Water Sense partners and Chair Cornell wanted to have a resolution so that products purchased by the county are Water Sense labeled, when available. Leg. Carey had a concern about the cost. The intent is good, but would feel more comfortable knowing the costs. Chair Cornell said there have been meetings with Suez representatives, who have to submit a conservation plan to the PSC this week, and they have said that the Water Sense fixtures are priced similarly to the older types. Leg. Earl said he was concerned if it was mandatory, but it is not. P. Brennan said that

the use of water reducing toilets has been an evolving market over the years. The price difference is minimal on these fixtures. Sometimes they are not appropriate, depending on the age of the building. B. Gruffi said he's been working with the Water Task Force to survey Rockland County buildings - mostly talking about toilets and urinals, not sinks. There are roughly 1500 fixtures in the County. If they had to be replaced, that would be a big expense, because the fixture and the flushometer have to be replaced, plus labor. People have found that a reduced quantity of water sometimes makes people flush twice. Hard to find a happy medium. Our buildings are old. If water flow/flush is reduced, it may create pipe blockage. If low-flow fixtures are designed right, it may work well. Chair Cornell said that the amendment doesn't indicate that the county should replace all its fixtures at once. She said that Suez has been very complimentary of the Water Sense fixtures. One of the reasons there is less water demand is because of these types of fixtures. Chair Cornell said she thinks it's a good idea, as does the EPA. It's the wave of the future. The Purchasing Department will have discretion to not buy any product that is not appropriate. B. Gruffi said that the wording should also say Water Sense faucets, to address sinks. "Fixtures" does not include sinks or the wording should define the word "fixture." Chairman Wolfe said there could be a provision to waive the requirement by the Legislature. P. Brennan said it could be problematic in maintenance, delaying work for weeks, but not an impediment to new construction. B. Gruffi said that if replacing fixtures, there may not be the right flow in older buildings, but he's not saying that would happen. Leg. Santulli wanted to clarify who decides, rather than coming back to the Legislature. Chair Cornell said that there is policy, so that when something's an emergency, it doesn't have to come back to the Legislature. Leg. Earl says that problems usually arise when increasing water flow, not decreasing it. Leg. Carey asked if a problem would be created by doing this? B. Gruffi said that he didn't foresee a problem, because we don't replace fixtures on a regular basis.

Leg. Earl spoke about a DEC conference he went to on the importance of trees and said a representative from the DEC would like to do a presentation for the committee.

MOTION TO ADJOURN 7:00 PM
WOLFE/EARL

UNAN

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