

## OUR TOWNS

### PATCHOGUE

# Forum to push for bag ban

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Patchogue Village trustee Joseph Keyes is continuing his fight to ban plastic shopping bags and plans to sponsor an educational forum about the issue on Wednesday.

"We want to get the word out as to why the village is proposing to ban plastic bags," Keyes said after last Monday's board meeting.

In addition to the educational forum, he said he hopes to have an April 27 public hearing to discuss the proposed ban.

East Hampton and Southampton towns voted in December to ban the plastic bags. Those bans go into effect later this year. Town officials in Riverhead, Southold and Shelter Island have also discussed banning the bags.

The 7 p.m. forum at the Patchogue Theatre for the Performing Arts, 71 East Main St., will focus on how disposable bags hurt wildlife, waterways and communities.

Plastic pollution impacts hundreds of species of marine life and U.S. retailers spend \$4 billion annually on disposable bags, according to literature Keyes handed out at the board meeting.

Village stores that carry plastic checkout bags include 7-Eleven and Bravo Supermarkets on South Ocean Avenue. Village restaurants also carry them.

There is support from some board members to ban the bags. "I'm all for it. Plastic bags don't break down. It's just pollution. It's hard to get rid of," trustee Salvatore Felice said after the meeting.

Adrienne Esposito, executive director of Citizens Campaign for the Environment, and Larry Swanson, a Stony Brook University professor with the School of Marine and Atmospheric Sciences, are scheduled to be guest speakers at the forum.

Keyes said he expected more than 100 people to attend.