



# Gloucester Daily Times

## Bye bye, Styrofoam

Braga says Cape Ann Dunkin's stores should make switch later this year

By Ray Lamont Staff Writer

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MIKE SPRINGER/Staff photoAn employee puts two Styrofoam cups in a tray Friday at the Dunkin' Donuts on Washington Street in Gloucester. The cups, which have become nearly synonymous with the company, will be completely phased out in favor of double-walled paper cups.

- MIKE SPRINGER/Staff photo



MIKE SPRINGER/Staff photoEmployee Aimee Stuart writes a customer's preferences on a Styrofoam cup Friday at the Dunkin' Donuts on Washington Street in Gloucester. The food chain is being forced by a city ordinance to phase out the use of Styrofoam sooner than it had planned.

- MIKE SPRINGER/Staff photo



MIKE SPRINGER/Staff photo The familiar Dunkin' Donuts styrofoam cup will soon be banned in Gloucester.

- MIKE SPRINGER/Staff photo

The parent corporation of Dunkin' Donuts announced this week that its shops are phasing out the use of the chain's ubiquitous Styrofoam coffee cups by 2020. But in Gloucester, that would still be one year too late in order to conform with the city's new ban that includes polystyrene food and drink containers.

But Deo Braga, who owns eight Cape Ann Dunkin' Donuts franchises, along with a public relations firm representing Dunkin' Brands, said Friday they fully expect the changeover to be carried out in the Cape Ann shops in time. The deadline for the city ban is Jan. 1, 2019.

In its Tuesday announcement from its Canton headquarters, Dunkin' Brands indicated that a new, double-walled paper cup for its medium and larger coffees is in the process of being tested at an outlet in Quincy, with the new cups to be introduced in New York and California in the spring of this year.

With that in mind, Braga — who indicated last fall he knew the company had alternative cup products in the works — said Friday he would like his eight Cape Ann shops to be part of any testing, with an eye toward implementing the change by later this year as well.

"I would like to do that — I would like to be part of the test," said Braga, who also owns the Azorean and Italiano restaurants in Gloucester. "I'm prepared to do whatever needs to be done anyway to meet the Gloucester ordinance deadline. But as they're testing soon in certain markets, I'd like to be part of a test here."

Danielle Alvarado, a manager with the Needham-based RF/Binder Communications firm and speaking on behalf of Dunkin', indicated the company would ensure that Braga and his Cape Ann shops will be able to meet the deadline demands of Gloucester's ordinance, which was approved by the City Council last September. The council similarly approved a ban in December on the distribution of thin plastic bags used by supermarkets and other retailers, with that regulation also set to kick in next Jan. 1.

"Dunkin' Donuts restaurants in Gloucester will be prepared to comply when the new ordinance goes into effect next January," Alvarado said in an email to the Times. She added that the company's move toward paper and away from polystyrene is not specifically tied to changing regulations in Gloucester or elsewhere.

"We are responding to consumer demand with our cup transition," she said. "We know that many customers want us to offer a more environmentally friendly cup and we took their concerns seriously. Our customers were the primary impetus behind our decision.

"We have had alternative solutions to foam in communities that have banned polystyrene for several years," she added, "and, based on those tests, have selected the double-walled paper cup as we transition foam out of our restaurant system."

The move by Dunkin' Donuts on the national and global levels, as well as Braga's local steps, were both hailed by Eric Magers. Magers heads the Essex-based Seaside Sustainability Inc., serves on Gloucester's Clean City Commission, and was a driving force behind generating council support for the polystyrene and bag bans.

"It's super exciting," said Magers, who recalled once viewing the water just off Maritime Gloucester and seeing the ocean's floor widely littered with plastic bags and especially Styrofoam cups.

He noted Braga has to comply with the ordinance or face penalties — and that businesses in other communities that have enacted bans in recent years have met the demands. But he

praised Braga's stand to go public with his plans early in the year, and to try to take a lead in the Dunkin's conversion.

"He's smart to be on the leading edge of this," Magers said. "I think it's great. He really is a (local business) force and a community leader, and this shows he's leading by example. I think it's great — good for him."

Braga said his Cape Ann restaurants here were part of similar tests of paper cups by Dunkin' Donuts a number of years ago. "Customers hated them; they said they felt too hot in their hands."

The new double-walled paper cups will come with a higher cost, as many opponents of the Gloucester bans had cited, he confirmed.

“I would say it will be about 20 percent more costly,” Braga said.

But he added that it’s unclear whether that will translate to an increase in prices to customers, suggesting the company may also adjust its serving sizes as it converts from foam to double-walled paper. Braga noted that a Dunkin’s small hot coffee, as well as cappuccino and latte drinks, are already served in paper cups with cardboard sleeves.

He also noted that the coming city ban on polystyrene already seems to be having one positive effect: Sales of reusable mugs, offered at all of the local Dunkin’ Donuts shops, have been picking up steam.

“People really seem to like them, and I think more and more, customers are ready for this,” he said of the conversion. “That’s why I want to be out front and top of (any company testing), so I know we’ll be ready, too.”