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Public smoking prohibited

Township bans smoking in parks, recreation areas, municipal buildings

by Vanessa Cruz

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The Board of Commissioners has adopted an ordinance banning smoking in North Bergen-owned parks, recreational facilities, and municipal buildings. The measure, adopted at Wednesday's meeting, provides for a fine of \$50 for the first offense, \$100 for the second, and \$150 for each additional offense for anyone smoking a lighted cigar, cigarette, pipe, electronic smoking device or any substance containing tobacco.

The ordinance is effective immediately.

The ordinance was introduced Feb. 27.

At a previous commissioners' meeting, resident Gerald Reiner suggested prohibiting smoking in parks. Reiner, who lives near a park, cited the damage that cigarettes pose for children. He said a healthier environment would not expose people to second hand smoke.



“This ordinance is going to make North Bergen a cleaner and better community.” – Resident Gerald Reiner

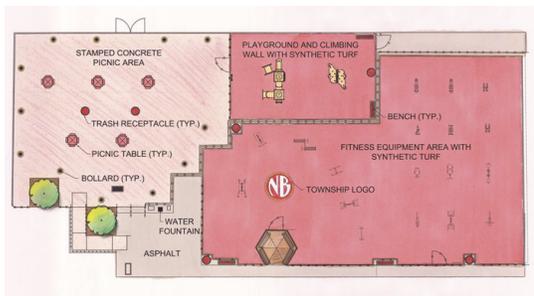
“It's not about taking away people's rights, as it is providing a safe environment for children when they're most vulnerable,” said Reiner. “This ordinance is going to make North Bergen a cleaner and better



community.”

With the new regulations, North Bergen has followed the lead of many other Hudson County municipalities that have implemented smoke free parks and recreation areas.

“[The ordinance will] make the park a better place for people and children,” said Mayor Nicholas Sacco. “The time has come that we do this.”



NJ Global Advisors Smokefree Policy (GASP) will provide SmokeFree signs that will be dropped off within the week.

New regulations are popular with some

Many residents, students from North Bergen High School’s student council and the environmental club, were in favor of the ordinance to prohibit smoking on public property. High school students who have been discussing the possibility of creating a smoke-free environment attended the meeting to witness its adoption.

“When you’re practicing and there are people smoking around you it makes it difficult, and breathing in that air feels disgusting,” said athlete Giovanna Noguera. Noguera also brought up second-hand smoke and said the ordinance will alleviate those concerns.

Student Stephanie Tejada, who has younger siblings, said she was looking out for their well being.

“I feel like the environment which I’m a part of should be a clean and healthy environment,” said Tejada. “I feel like supporting this [ordinance] is really important and having a young voice is important. We’re glad the park will be a healthy place for ourselves and children of the future.”

“I look forward to the day when smoking is prohibited anywhere,” said resident Gary Pollack. “[It’s] a filthy habit and should be stamped out with no ifs, ands, or buts.”

Resident Herb Shaw, a former smoker, opposed the ordinance because he doesn’t agree with the “totalitarian” control.

Street changes enacted

Three ordinances were introduced to erect street signs, including a No Left Turn Sign on 52nd Street and that would prohibit left turns onto Tonnelle Avenue, a Stop Sign for westbound traffic on 86 Street and Durham Avenue, and a Stop Sign for northbound traffic on Gehr Place and Grand Avenue.

A resolution was authorized to eliminate a bus stop on Kennedy Boulevard southbound on the western side of Bergen Turnpike, and to add a bus stop along Kennedy Boulevard southbound on the western side between Bergen Turnpike and mid block on 31 Street.

Bar bouncers to be licensed

An ordinance was adopted to require licensing for security personnel at establishments licensed to sell alcoholic beverages. Security personnel will be required to undergo a background check and wear identification. The licenses will have a one-year term.

The ordinance is modeled after one the city of Hoboken implemented, and was followed after a suggestion by Chief of Police Robert Dowd.

“I wanted those that are providing security at these establishments to be identifiable and known to the police department to both assist us in investigations and also know who they are if and when there is some altercation,” said Dowd.

Expenditures approved

An ordinance was adopted setting salary ranges for the road repair supervisor with a minimum of \$60,000 and maximum of \$85,000.

Avalon Bay Communities requested the return of the check issued for the cash performance guaranty in the amount of \$59,160 as well as the release of the performance bond issued by Travelers Casualty and Surety Company of America in the amount of \$532,440. The release of the performance bond and check is contingent upon the developer posting a maintenance guaranty in the amount of \$73,950.

A resolution was awarded to the lowest bidder JC Landscape Construction & Mgmt Co, Inc from Pequannock for the amount of \$456,000 in order to make improvements to the Braddock Park fitness center. Township Administrator said the project will most likely take six months until completion. The project is fully funded through the Township Community Development Block Grant Program.

An emergency temporary appropriation was made in the amount of \$1,091,474 to provide for the payment of the tax appeal amounts and to cover any previous inter-fund transfers.

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