

# Wyckoff bans smoking in township parks

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 7, 2013 LAST UPDATED: WEDNESDAY AUGUST 7, 2013, 6:26 PM  
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WYCKOFF SUBURBAN NEWS  
NORTHJERSEY.COM

[Wyckoff](#) - The governing body on Tuesday, Aug. 6, passed an ordinance banning smoking at all parks in the township, excluding parking lots and roadways leading into parks.

The ordinance was introduced June 3, but revisited because some members of the Township Committee felt extending the ban in parking lots would pose an "unjustified burden" on residents.

The ordinance was re-introduced on July 16 and included two additional public areas: Russell Farms Community Park and the Larkin House property.

The ban, which includes electronic cigarettes, covers all township public areas, including the Memorial Field Complex, the Gardens at [Wyckoff](#), the Zabriskie House/Museum, Zabriskie Pond and Zabriskie Park.

"I am very disappointed that you are doing this," Susan Winton of [Wyckoff](#) said during the public portion of the meeting. "This is an abuse of your power over the people. I think it's reprehensible."

Mayor Rudy Boonstra said he thought the term "reprehensible" to describe the committee's actions was strong.

"When I was on the Board of Education in 1979 or 1980, during our meetings, we had an ashtray right in front of us," Boonstra said.

He told the audience how he and another member of the board smoked during the meetings.

"But we decided that was terrible," he said. "What kind of example were we setting?"

He and his fellow board member brought up a resolution to ban smoking at their meetings during a time when it was legal to smoke in offices.

"Just like back then, we did that because it was the right thing to do," Boonstra said. "I don't see how the idea of doing the right thing has changed in the past 30 to 40 years."

Cindy Meekham from the Center for Prevention & Counseling in Newton said she supported the township's efforts to have smoke-free parks.

"You should do this for the children, at least, so they won't start smoking," Meekham

said.

Al Ferrera of the Bergen County Health Services who encourages smoke-free parks with Meekham, enumerated advantages of such a ban.

"The number one source of litter is tobacco," Ferrera said. "And we have to remember, peoples' health is at stake."

Ferrera said there are "7,000 chemicals emitted from secondhand smoke."

"It's a credit to your township that you're doing this," he said.

When Jim Savage asked if e-cigarettes were included in the ban, township attorney Robert Landel said "smoking of any kind" is banned.

Ferrera added that while there is no tobacco in e-cigarettes, there is still nicotine and some types of e-cigarettes have tested positive for carcinogens.

John Unglert said that while he is a smoker, he supports the ban.

"The revisions you made are very good," he said. "I think that sometimes, people forget civility and sometimes we have to make laws to remind them."

The neighboring towns of [Franklin Lakes](#), [Mahwah](#) and [Waldwick](#) all ban smoking in their public parks.

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