

Fair Haven looks to ban smoking in parks

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FAIR HAVEN — A smoker lighting up near the grassy Fair Haven Fields would run contrary to what a day in the park should be all about — participating in healthy activities, says Marion Carolan of the borough.

“I don’t think people should smoke around little children, whether it’s at a park or elsewhere,” Carolan said. She was at the fields Wednesday coaching kids on a Fair Haven soccer travel team as parents looked on.

Smoking would be eliminated here if a proposal to ban the act in certain sections of Fair Haven’s parks gets a go-head from borough leaders next month. Fair Haven Councilman Rowland Wilhelm was the sole member of the governing body to vote against introducing the measure.

A final vote on the ordinance is scheduled for the Oct. 15 meeting.

The proposal before Fair Haven council would limit smoking to the impervious areas of parks, essentially paved parking lots and sidewalks. Smoking would be banned everywhere else in parks, including alongside the soccer fields, ball diamonds and on gravel and wood chip-lined walking trails.

Violators would be fined \$25 for the first offense and \$50 for subsequent infractions.

“The idea is to keep (the) sight and smell of smoke away from kids,” Fair Haven Mayor Benjamin Lucarelli said.

The borough would join 208 New Jersey municipalities and counties that have policies on smoking in parks, of which 119 ban the habit outright, according to figures reported by the Global Advisors on Smoke Free Policy, a Summit-based anti-smoking organization. Municipalities with policies include Manalapan, Marlboro, Manasquan and Middletown in Monmouth County, and Jackson, Brick and Toms River in Ocean County.

But the ban goes too far for Fair Haven Councilman Rowland Wilhelm, who voted against the proposed ordinance when it was introduced.

Wilhelm has said in previous meetings that the smoking ban impinges on individual rights and could open the door for other bans, according to council minutes. He was unavailable for comment Wednesday.