

**North Bergen adopts ordinance to ban smoking in public parks**

**March 15, 2013**

**NORTH BERGEN** – Mayor Nicholas Sacco and the Board of Commissioners voted unanimously to adopt an ordinance banning smoking on public parks and property Wednesday night at the town commissioners' meeting. Mayor Sacco cited a concern for public health, especially that of the many children who frequent North Bergen's parks, as the driving factor behind the decision.

"The dangerous effects of second hand smoke on children are well known and we feel that protecting North Bergen's youngsters while they enjoy our beautiful parks is an important priority," said Mayor Sacco. "We are proud to adopt this ordinance and join the growing list of smokefree communities in New Jersey. It is a law whose time has come and we are always proud to make North Bergen even more of a healthy, safe and progressive community."

Under the ordinance someone caught smoking inside a park would be subject to a \$50 fine, with higher amounts for repeat offenses. Signage will be placed in each park to inform residents about the ban and will be provided at no cost to local taxpayers by New Jersey Global Advisors on Smokefree Policy (NJ GASP), a non-profit organization with a mission of promoting smokefree air and tobacco-free lives.

"Mayor Sacco has always strived to make North Bergen a safe community and I am proud to have worked with the mayor to help protect our children by ensuring the air they breathe will be a little cleaner while they are at play," said Gerald Reiner, a North Bergen resident who works with NJ GASP and approached the Board of Commissioners to ask for the ordinance at a recent meeting. "This administration is always reachable when residents have a concern. While others will sit back and complain I urge more residents to not only identify a problem but also work with Mayor Sacco to come up with a solution."

The meeting was also attended by several North Bergen High School students who are members of Student Council and the Environmental Club. The students thanked Mayor Sacco and the Commissioners for adopting the ordinance, citing concerns about second hand smoke and saying that many student athletes use the parks for training.

The smoking ban will take effect next month and comes on the heels of the Hudson County Board of Chosen Freeholders passing a similar ordinance that covers county parks. North Bergen is home to James J. Braddock North Hudson Park, a county park that will also now be 100% smokefree.

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