

## City to ban smoking on all beaches Council to vote on ordinance June 28

LONG BRANCH — Beachgoers may no longer have to worry about secondhand smoke now that the City Council has taken the first steps to ban smoking on city beaches.

Under current regulations, specific smoking areas are designated at various beach locations. At the June 14 meeting, the council introduced an ordinance that would ban all smoking on beaches. The council will vote on the measure on June 28.

The topic was first discussed at the workshop meeting preceding the vote, where Business Administrator Howard Woolley Jr. explained some of the problems of enforcing no-smoking rules at the beach.

“Our ordinance currently says smoking is prohibited on city beaches except for designated areas,” he said. “Due to the amount of people we’ve had on the beach, it has made it basically impossible to maintain a designated smoking area.

“What happened is people were smoking in areas they shouldn’t be smoking in,” he added. “Our recommendation to you guys is we eliminate the designated smoking areas and make the whole beach smoke-free.”

Woolley said the city has set up spots on the beach with stakes, ashtrays and garbage cans in the designated smoking areas.

However, he said that some beach patrons did not follow the rules, leading to complaints.

“We’ve had a lot of complaints from people sitting on the beaches and someone sits down next to them and lights up,” Woolley said. “What we found was most people complied but some didn’t, which made the beach experience unpleasant for others.

“It’s just so crowded down there that if I’m smoking a cigarette, if you are sitting right next to me you are smoking it too whether you choose to or not,” he added. “It’s just a difficult thing to enforce in specified areas.”

He said that smokers can go up to the boardwalk or to their cars if they need to smoke.

Woolley said the city will post signs at the entrance to the beach to alert the public that the beaches are smoke-free.

He also said that the city isn’t likely to be writing a lot of tickets for this offense.

“Our aim is not to start issuing tickets left and right,” Woolley said. “It is basically a pleasant way to let people know not to light up on the beach.”

He said that other Shore municipalities have also banned smoking on the beaches.

According to the ordinance, a first offense for smoking on the beach is \$100, a second offense is \$200 and a third offense is \$300.

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