

## **Maplewood Considers Ban on Smoking in Parks and at Township-Sponsored Events; Maplewoodstock Beer, Wine Garden Approved**

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MAPLEWOOD, NJ - It may soon be illegal to smoke in parks and at public events in Maplewood, but for this year at least it will be okay to have a little beer or wine when you attend Maplewoodstock.

The township committee, sitting as the board of health, on Tuesday requested Township Attorney Roger J. Desiderio to draw up language for a possible park and event smoking ban in time for the committee's next meeting, scheduled for Tuesday, Jan. 17.

Most of the members of the governing body favored a ban on smoking up to the curb line in the area of township parks and at all township-sponsored events.

Testifying in favor of a ban was Fred Jacobs, a pulmonologist, former New Jersey commissioner of health and the recently retired executive vice president of the St. Barnabas Healthcare System.

Jacobs, one of the moving forces behind the New Jersey Smokefree Air Act, noted that a report by the Surgeon General of the United States said that there is no safe level of exposure to tobacco smoke.

He added 40,000 to 50,000 non-smokers die every year from exposure to secondhand smoke—more than the total number of Americans killed in the Vietnam War and more than the number of people killed in car accidents every year.

Death from the effects of smoking is the most preventable cause of death, he said, adding that if children do not begin smoking by 18 or 19 years of age they most likely will not start.

One of the ways of preventing children from smoking, he noted, was "denormalizing" smoking by, for example, banning it in public places.

He also said although the effect of secondhand smoke on people depends on the concentration of the smoke and the condition of their health, sometimes people are subjected to a greater concentration of smoke in outdoor areas than they are indoors.

While Mayor Vincent DeLuca and Deputy Mayor Kathleen Leventhal were enthusiastic supporters of a total ban on outdoor smoking in the township, Committee Members Gerard W. Ryan and India Larrier felt a total ban would be difficult to enforce.

Ryan suggested the township might have more success with enforcement if it made smoking particularly restrictive in areas where children gather, while Larrier favored trying to prevent students from Columbia High School, for example, from smoking at the service station across from the school.

Also at the board of health meeting, Larrier was unanimously elected to a one-year term as president of the board. The next board of health meeting will be Feb. 7.

Back in its regular session, the Township Committee heard a presentation by Drew Dix and Gary Shippy of Maplewoodstock on a proposal to allow a beer and wine garden in a cordoned-off section of Memorial Park during this July's edition of the music festival.

Dix said the beer and wine garden would be set up and broken down by staff of St. James Gate Pub in Maplewood under the supervision of John Meade.

He added there would be two entrances to the garden with tickets issued only to those over 21 years old and identification checked at the entrances and when beer or wine is purchased. There also would be a limit of two to three drinks per person.

The mayor noted Police Chief Robert J. Cimino was concerned about intoxicated people leaving the garden and roaming the rest of the festival, and Shippy also said the chief was hesitant to allow drinking in the park when it normally was not legal.

Shippy said, however, what his group was seeking was, in effect, a two-day liquor license for the park.

Dix added sponsorship of the garden and profits from beer and wine sales would enable Maplewoodstock to attract more high-end entertainment to what is, in effect, one of the township's most popular, family-friendly events.

Larrier suggested, however, that the group do more research on the possible effects of having the garden and hold off until next year to actually institute.

Committee Member Marlon K. Brownlee added he was concerned that beer and wine would be served within the sight of children and this would interfere with the family-friendly intent of the festival.

DeLuca, however, favored the garden as a "one-year experiment" with a restriction of two drinks per person, service stopping some time before closing of the garden, a single entrance, no admission of children to the garden and no food served.

Ryan also suggested that the chief meet with the festival sponsors and those who had sponsored similar festivals in other communities around the state to see if he could be convinced that the garden could operate satisfactorily.

Leventhal, although concerned about the chief's objections, agreed to go along with approval for the garden if the resolution approving it called for the township administration to map out restrictions with the sponsors. The committee approved the resolution on the condition that the sponsors agree to restrictions after discussions with and review by Township Administrator Joseph Manning. Brownlee and Larrier voted against the measure.

In another action, the committee approved application to the Essex County Community Block Grant Program for a \$69,883 grant to make the first floor restroom in the Burgdorff Center for the Performing Arts compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act and to construct an ADA-compliant access ramp to the building.

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