

NORTHERN VALLEY SUBURBANITE

Harrington Park considers ban on smoking at facilities

THURSDAY, MARCH 13, 2014

BY MARC LIGHTDALE

STAFF WRITER

Harrington Park – The borough government will consider a pitch to ban smoking at select places in the community.

The Mayor and Council on March 10 entertained representatives from the Bergen County Department of Health and Global Advisors on Smokefree Policy, an organization that promotes "smokefree and tobacco-free lives."

In meeting with the governing body, Albert J. Ferrara, coordinator of the Health Service's community tobacco program, said enacting anti-smoking laws gives children a clear message about the health risks, and allows them to utilize public parks without breathing in second-hand smoke. And, he said, it can also help to beautify a community by cutting down on litter generated from cigarettes.

Mayor Paul Hoelscher said he believes the council would give the policy "a lot of consideration."



BERNADETTE MARCINIAK/STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Albert J. Ferrara Jr., of the county' Department of Health Services, at the March 2 Harrington Park Board of Health meeting shows a sign that would be given to the borough for free if they adopt a smoking-ban ordinance for public parks.

According to the American Lung Association, second-hand smoke causes approximately 3,400 deaths from lung cancer per year and 22,700 to 69,600 deaths from heart disease

each year.

Ferrara also noted that second-hand smoke has been linked to sudden infant death syndrome and young children developing more middle-ear infections.

"Again, we're emphasizing the importance of making communities smoke-free, in particular where people should be recreating or enjoying themselves," Ferrara said.

The borough's Board of Health recommended that the council craft anti-smoking laws in public places, but did question the data that Ferrara and GASP presented.

This was the second meeting both entities had with municipal officials this month to discuss anti-smoking laws.

On March 2, GASP and Ferrara met with the Harrington Park Board of Health.

At that meeting, Ferrara and GASP Executive Director Karen Blumenfeld provided board members with a host of facts about smoking, and information on borough's that have adopted smoke-free laws for parks and recreational areas.

Councilman Joon Chung, the council's liaison to the Board of Health, said the trustees favor establishing an outdoor smoke-free law.

Twenty-four municipalities in Bergen County have passed laws on smoking in public places outdoors, including Tenafly and Closter.

Blumenfeld, who has been involved with this cause since the 1990's when her parents were charter members of GASP, said that 234 communities, including counties, across the state have restricted smoking in parks.

Blumenfeld added that 85 percent of the adult population in New Jersey doesn't smoke and of the 15 percent who do, she said 70 percent would like to quit.

Email: lightdale@northjersey.com

http://www.northjersey.com/news/250010191_Harrington_Park_considers_ban_on_smoking_at_facilities.html?page=all