

NORTHERN VALLEY SUBURBANITE (Bergen Record)

## Tenafly bans smoking in public areas

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BY STEPHANIE SIMONE, STAFF WRITER

**TENAFLY** — After adopting an ordinance on Nov. 12, **Tenafly** became the 22nd municipality in **Bergen County** to ban smoking in public areas including borough buildings, parks and athletic courts.

Council members unanimously adopted the smoking ban during the Nov. 12 public meeting.

The move comes after Borough Administrator Jewel Thompson-Chin discovered that the borough lacked such a policy.

Consensus from the council was to move forward with a plan to safeguard borough employees, residents and children from the harmful effects of tobacco smoke.

Smoking and/or the carrying of a lighted cigarette, cigar, pipe or other combustible substance, in any manner or any form, including vapor from an electronic smoking device, shall be prohibited at all times, in all borough parks, playgrounds, playing fields, recreation facilities, and recreational areas, according to the ordinance.

This includes all public areas adjacent to such parks and facilities, including but not limited to the seating areas, parking areas, paths, walkways, driveways, or drive aisles.

One resident asked if the ban extended to the public sidewalks in which the borough attorney said it did not. "I just wanted to clarify my right to smoke cigars," David Simpson said.

Officials will have signs posted by all restricted areas with enforcement coming from a police officer, municipal employee or elected official. Fines for violating the ordinance begin at \$200. Any person found tampering with or removing "No Smoking" signs are subject to a \$200 fine plus the cost of replacing it, according to the ordinance.

**Tenafly joins, Carlstadt, Closter, East Rutherford, Garfield, Glen Rock,**

Mahwah, Palisades Park, Paramus and a slew of other municipalities that banned smoking in parks or recreational areas.

More than 160 municipalities in 12 counties statewide restrict smoking in outdoor public areas. That includes 14 Passaic County municipalities and 21 in Bergen County, according Global Advisors on Smokefree Policy (GASP) which advocates for such laws.

GASP Executive Director Karen Blumenfeld attended the meeting and thanked the council for passing the policy.

"We're so thankful that you are interested in this public health initiative," Blumenfeld said. "We do really believe it will help kids live a tobacco-free life, which is so important."

She also offered the borough free signs to illustrate to residents that they can "breathe easy" while in a park.

"Thank you very much for pushing this along not only within our borders, but beyond our borders," Mayor Peter Rustin said. "It doesn't make that much sense if we have no smoking here but we go to the next town and there's smoking in that park."

Several residents also applauded the move and said it will set a precedent for children to not engage in the activity.

According to GASP, the shift to ban smoking is in part because people saw the success of New Jersey's Smoke-Free Air Act of 2006, which banned smoking in indoor public places and workplaces. Another turning point came in 2011, when New York City banned smoking in all its parks and beaches, inspiring New Jersey towns and cities to do the same.

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