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Smoking Prohibited In Paramus Parks, Playgrounds And Recreational Facilities

By Mel Fabrikant

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In 2011, the Paramus Board of Health adopted an ordinance prohibiting smoking in Borough parks, playgrounds, public swimming facilities and recreational areas, according to Borough Health Officer Judith Migliaccio. The Health Officer advised that the passage of this ordinance is intended to reduce exposure to environmental tobacco smoke and to prevent children from observing and emulating adult behavior which is hazardous to health.

"Exposure to environmental tobacco smoke increases health risk for smokers and non-smokers alike", Mrs. Migliaccio stated. She cited evidence that approximately half of early childhood cases of asthma, chronic bronchitis and wheezing are attributable to second-hand smoke, and that environmental tobacco smoke is a cause of cardiovascular disease in non-smokers. The ordinance prohibits the smoking of any lighted cigarette, cigar, pipe, or electronic cigarette within the boundaries of Borough parks, playgrounds, ball fields, the Municipal Pool, the Band Shell and the Paramus Golf Club Mini-Golf Course. The ordinance designates these areas as "smoke free zones", and signs are in place to advise residents. Penalties for violation of the ordinance range from a fine of \$50 to \$100 for a first violation, \$100 to \$200 for a second violation, and \$200 to \$500 for a third and subsequent violation.

An additional purpose of the ordinance is to help prevent children from observing adults smoking. "Children are very impressionable and often attempt to emulate actions and habits of adults; whatever can be done to discourage children from the temptation of experimenting with tobacco products will be of tremendous help in preventing future disease", Mrs. Migliaccio said.

The Paramus Board of Health has long been a proponent of anti-tobacco legislation. Previous ordinances passed by the Board include a prohibition of cigarette vending machines and self-service displays, and vigorous enforcement of tobacco age-of-sale regulations.

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