

Egg Harbor City tables no-smoking ordinance to gather input from community

By MICHELLE BRUNETTI POST Staff Writer | Posted: Thursday, January 24, 2013 9:43 pm

Egg Harbor City wants community input about restricting smoking in outdoor recreation areas and parks. A committee had written an ordinance proposing such a ban, but introduction of it was tabled at City Council's Thursday night meeting. "We wanted to give the community the opportunity to explore it (the issue) and give time to discuss it and tweak it (an ordinance) to meet Egg Harbor City's needs," Ordinance Committee Chair Ina Duran said.

Mayor Lisa Jiampetti said residents can call City Hall at 609-965-0081 to share their ideas and concerns. She also encouraged residents to attend the meeting when a proposed ordinance is introduced, which she hopes will be the next council meeting 7 p.m. Feb. 14.

"We don't want to restrict people's rights, but we feel (smoking) shouldn't be around children," Jiampetti said of the reason for the proposed ordinance.

Statewide, 150 of 565 municipalities have enacted similar bans, said Karen Blumenfeld, executive director of New Jersey Global Advisors on Smokefree Policy, or GASP. As written now, the ban would cover playgrounds, sports fields and recreational properties that are owned, leased, used or operated by the city. It would include any kind of tobacco smoking and electronic cigarettes. It was not clear if the beach at Egg Harbor City Lake and Campground would be included.

Beach smoking is banned on Somers Point's bay beaches and Lower Township's Sunset Beach, according to GASP. Several towns in Monmouth County restrict smoking on beaches, Blumenfeld said.

The Egg Harbor City health and police departments would be charged with enforcing the ban. Fines for violating the ordinance would start at \$100 for the first offense and rise to \$500 for a third offense and above. Smoking has been banned for years at parks and along the bike path in Northfield, Linwood and Somers Point. It is also banned in recreation areas in Ventnor and Hamilton Township, according to GASP.

Atlantic City expanded the resort's smoke-free zone to include public parks, courts and sports fields last April. The ban already applied to outdoor stadiums, amphitheatres and bleachers, but not the Boardwalk.

An attempt to ban smoking on Cape May City's beaches, promenade and parks failed in 2011, in part because of fears of alienating Canadian tourists, who tend to smoke more. Ocean City bans it on most of the Boardwalk, but not the beach.

In Cumberland County, Bridgeton, Fairfield Township and Vineland restrict outdoor smoking; as do Stafford Township, Little Egg Harbor Township and Ocean Township in Ocean County, along with Beach Haven, Harvey Cedars and Long Beach Township on Long Beach Island, according to GASP.

Contact Michelle Brunetti 609-272-7219, MPost@pressofac.com

http://www.pressofatlanticcity.com/communities/hammonton_egg-harbor-city/egg-harbor-city-tables-no-smoking-ordinance-to-gather-input/article_caef538c-6698-11e2-af45-001a4bcf887a.html