



Ship Bottom Limiting Smoking on Beaches

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While in recent years, Long Beach Island municipalities have taken measures to prohibit smoking at bay beaches and playgrounds, Ship Bottom is extending the ban to ocean beaches, and Harvey Cedars may follow suit.

According to an ordinance adopted at last week's Ship Bottom Council meeting, the use of tobacco products is forbidden between the swim area flags.

"We're going to try it and see if it works," said Mayor William Huelsenbeck.

The mayor acknowledged that enforcement could be difficult, and said the borough will "probably have to rely on people cooperating."

"We're not going to have the smoking police out on the beaches," said Huelsenbeck. "If someone has a problem (with someone smoking), they can bring it to the attention of the lifeguards. This going to be like an experiment."

During a public hearing on the ordinance, resident Dorothy Jedziniak said, "I realize enforcing it may be hard, but I admire you for trying it."

Last October, Ship Bottom had discussed the ordinance, but then Superstorm Sandy put that and other matters on the back burner.

Ship Bottom sent copies of the ordinance to other Island communities, and got a favorable response from Harvey Cedars. Mayor Jonathan Oldham said the ordinance would be discussed at its next meeting, on June 7.

"I think we may do this," he said. "It seems like a fair compromise. I can

understand people wanting to enjoy the beach without cigarette smoke blowing around.”

In Long Beach Township, Mayor Joseph Mancini was receptive to the ordinance, but said the commissioners would probably implement it in 2014.

Beach Haven Mayor Robert Keeler said the ordinance had been discussed, but the borough had other priorities.

“We’re trying to resolve our budget and the Advisory Base Elevation Flood Zone maps,” he said. “If we do anything, it won’t be until next year.”

Gail Wetmore, Barnegat Light administrator/clerk, said the borough council has no plans to propose an ordinance.

“We haven’t gotten any complaints about smoking on the beach, so the mayor and council feel it’s best that we not act on this,” she said.

Surf City Mayor Leonard T. Connors said, “We’ve discussed it and don’t have any plans for the ordinance. But if all the other towns do it, then we probably will, too.”

Karen Blumenfeld, executive director of New Jersey Global Advisors on Smoke-Free Policy, said the decision “is a step in the right direction.”

“I would hope that all the Island towns would follow suit and adopt measures,” she said.

Blumenfeld said Long Branch and Ocean Grove (Monmouth County), Seaside Park (Ocean), Somers Point (on the bayfront in Atlantic County) and Sunset Beach (Cape May County) have “complete, 24/7 bans” on the beaches. She said there are other beaches that have set up small areas for people to smoke that are far from the crowds.

“All of New York City’s beaches, boardwalks, marinas and parks are smoke-free all the time,” she added.

Blumenfeld said cigarette butts are usually high on the list of items that get picked up on the beach during cleanup operations.

“Then there are also wrappings, packs and lighters that are frequently

discarded,” she said. “Only 100 percent smoke-free recreational policies give a clear and concise message to kids that it’s not OK to start smoking outside or be exposed to second-hand smoke.”

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