

South Jersey Times

E-cigarettes included in West Deptford smoking ban

By Jasan Lasay/South Jersey Times

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WEST DEPTFORD TWP. — There will be no more smoking outside township buildings, electronic or otherwise.

The township committee on Thursday gave final approval to a **smoking ordinance banning the use of tobacco products anywhere within 25 feet of a municipal building.**

Debate over the ordinance among the public centered on language in the measure including electronic cigarettes in the ban.

Resident Mary Iacopi-Schomer — who had puffed on her E-cigarette from the back of the township court room in protest when the committee first introduced the ordinance — returned Thursday to argue that the township “might as well also ban nicotine patches and gum” if electronic cigarettes are no longer allowed.

“My lung doctor is happy to see me using an electronic cigarette — you see the vapor, and you have the physical hand-to-mouth motion, and it helps people to quit,” she said, reading from a hand-written statement before the committee.

“There is no scientific proof that (electronic cigarettes) are harmful,” she later added. “If you’re going to ban E-cigarettes, then under the same argument you should also ban the patches, gum, lozenges and everything else.

“People are also irritated by perfume and cologne, and there is actual scientific proof that they can be toxic for people. Now, it bothers me, but I can walk away. I believe it’s my right to drag on an E-cig.”

However, Cathy Butler, a representative from Tobacco Free for a Healthy

New Jersey, a statewide anti-smoking group offering resources to those trying to quit, pointed out that electronic cigarettes have not been approved by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA).

“We don’t know what’s inside them,” she said.

Another representative from the group offered programs for free signage the township could use to mark non-smoking areas around municipal buildings.

West Deptford’s smoking ordinance is largely in line with the statewide Smoke-Free Air Act, which was adopted in 2006 and bans public indoor smoking.

In 2010, legislators in Trenton amended the act to also bar the public indoor use of electronic cigarettes.

According to officials, West Deptford’s ordinance takes the state law one step further by also banning smoking within 25 feet of a municipal building.

Penalties for violating the ordinance include a fine of between \$50 and \$100 for a first offense. A second offense carries a \$100-\$200 fine, and all subsequent violations will result in a \$200-\$500 penalty.

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http://www.nj.com/gloucester-county/index.ssf/2014/03/e-cigarettes_included_in_west_deptford_smoking_ban.html