

Wyckoff to ban smoking in public parks

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Wyckoff – The Township Committee will hold a public hearing on a ban on smoking in outdoor public areas, including the new Russell Farms Community Park, at its meeting on June 3.

Committeeman Brian Scanlan, liaison for both the Board of Health and the Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee, said discussions on instituting a smoking ban began last year. "When recreation endorsed the idea, I brought it to the [Board of Health]," he said.

Adhering to state law, Wyckoff already bans smoking inside public buildings

The smoking ban would cover all township public areas, including the Memorial Field Complex, the Gardens at Wyckoff, the Zabriskie House/Museum, Zabriskie Pond and Zabriskie Park and Russell Farms.

While Committeeman Kevin Rooney said he favored the ban, he questioned where the township would get the funds to erect signs prohibiting it.

"The state is providing free signs for municipalities that adopt a 100 percent smoke-free parks and recreation area ordinance," Ruth Booruji, associate director of New Jersey GASP, said in an email to Suburban News.

Township Administrator Robert Shannon said he was investigating whether the township would qualify to receive the signs at no cost.

"If we expect it to be effective, we need signs," Mayor Rudy Boonstra said.

Committeeman Haakon Jepsen questioned the necessity of the signs.

"At this point, where can you smoke?" Jepsen asked. "Is it really necessary to say it?"

Scanlan, having donated "No Idling" signs to the township to discourage vehicles from emitting fumes, said he thought so.

"I've been a softball coach for a long time in this town and inevitably, there's someone blowing smoke in the back of the dugout for seven innings," Scanlan said. "You have to tell people it's not permitted."

"We need to have a time frame of when the officers can go out, pick out where the signs need to be and then obtain the signs," Rooney said.

Shannon said it would take about two months, but said with summer vacations, Sept. 1 may be a more appropriate goal for completing the sign installation if the ordinance is approved.

Franklin Lakes, Mahwah and Waldwick, all towns in the Suburban News coverage area, already ban smoking in their public parks.

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http://www.northjersey.com/recreation/events/209459761_Wyckoff_to_ban_smoking_in_public_parks.html