

SUBURBAN TRENDS (Bergen Record)

## **Pompton Lakes' outdoor smoking ban still up in the air**

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### **Boro could become 2nd in county to reject expansion to public property**

New concerns over the proposal to ban outdoor smoking on all publicly-owned properties have prompted the governing body to postpone adopting the measure.

The Borough Council was scheduled to adopt the new smoking ban ordinance at its Oct. 23 meeting.

During the meeting, resident Sharon Saranovic said she did not agree with the inclusion of electronic cigarettes in the ban. Electronic cigarettes, or e-cigarettes, utilize a heating element to vaporize a liquid solution. Some release nicotine while others release a flavored vapor.

Saranovic said there is nothing in e-cigarettes that can harm anyone, therefore to include them in the ban would not make sense.

"There is absolutely nothing in there, except nicotine, which is, as my doctor said, no more harmful for you than caffeine in coffee. There is nothing in that vapor. There is no odor. There's nothing that will harm anyone from that vapor," said Saranovic.

Resident Helen Martens said prohibiting people from smoking outdoors would infringe upon their civil rights.

Resident Lisa Riggiola said she understands the dangers of smoking, but there are more important pollution issues in the borough.

"If you have made the issue of outdoor cigarette smoking a priority," Riggiola said, "where is the urgency to create some sort of enforcement, including fines and compensation to the Borough of [Pompton Lakes](#), for the lethal poisons that have been dumped in our soils and waterways that contaminated 540 homes in the DuPont Plume neighborhood?"

Councilman Mike Serra also questioned the inclusion of e-cigarettes in the ban, and asked where people who want to smoke will go.

"Does that mean they have to walk down the street? That in itself is going to be a problem because where do we stop with what we own?" asked Serra.

While there are those that support the use of e-cigarettes over regular cigarettes, there

are also groups that are concerned about the possible health ramifications of using e-cigarettes.

The American Medical Association (AMA) is urging the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) to regulate e-cigarettes like it would regulate other drug delivery devices.

"Very little data exists on the safety of e-cigarettes, and the FDA has warned that they are potentially addicting and contain harmful toxins," said AMA Board Member Edward L. Langston, M.D.

"Because e-cigarettes have not been thoroughly tested, one cannot conclude that they are less harmful or less dangerous than conventional cigarettes," said Dr. Langston. "The fact that they come in fruit and candy flavors gives them the potential to entice new nicotine users, especially teens."

In considering the ordinance, Councilman Mike Simone questioned where exactly the boundaries for municipally-owned properties lie.

"Where the building is easily defined, the property is not, and I would like to have more definition on what we are asking people to do," said Simone.

Councilman Lloyd Kent said he was not in favor of the ordinance as it was written.

Kent also said that right now there is a container outside of the municipal building where people can place cigarette butts, but if the ordinance were adopted, smokers would go out to the street to smoke where there is no container.

Councilman Serra said the ordinance needs to be fine-tuned a bit more.

New Jersey state law already prohibits smoking inside public buildings. This ordinance would have expanded the ban outdoors to all publicly-owned properties, as well as parks and recreation areas.

The Passaic County Integrated Municipal Advisory Council (IMAC) and the Global Advisors Smokefree Policies (GASP) group have brought this campaign to ban outdoor smoking on publicly owned properties to Pompton Lakes and every municipality in Passaic County.

So far every municipality, with the exception of Totowa, has agreed to expand the ban.

In nearby New York, a similar ban was put into effect in 2012 by the state Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation.

But on Oct. 11, a Superior Court in New York struck down the agency's ban after a lawsuit was filed by a New York City group called Citizens Lobbying Against Smoker Harassment (CLASH).

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