

Cliffside Park officials passed an ordinance Nov. 19 which now will ban smoking in all of the town's public parks and restrict smoking at the entrances and exits of all municipal buildings.



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The affirmative vote was unanimous and the provisions will go into effect in late December.

The passage of the ordinance makes Cliffside Park the 12th town in Bergen County to make their parks smoke-free, according to Karen Blumenfeld, Executive Director of Global Advisors on Smokefree Policy (GASP).

Cliffside Park joins Carlstadt, Closter, East Rutherford, Elmwood Park, Franklin Lakes, Lyndhurst, Mahwah Township, Moonachie, Paramus, Ridgefield and River Vale, who all enacted similar smoking bans.

More than 150 towns across New Jersey restrict smoking in public parks and 40 towns also restrict outdoor smoking at the entrances and exits of municipal buildings.

Blumenfeld said "[GASP} thanks Cliffside Park for making their community healthier by helping kids to not start smoking and for protecting people from secondhand smoke,"

Cliffside Park's smoke-free ordinance was initially introduced by Councilman Thomas Calabrese with a first reading Oct. 16. The impetus for the restriction was an ever-increasing concern for the potential effects of second-hand smoke to individuals as well as the environment.

The smoking restriction is expected to decrease exposure to second-hand smoke as well as abate the amount of smoking-related waste at borough parks. The anticipation is that this, in turn, will diminish maintenance costs associated with keeping the parks free of litter.

Councilman Kenneth Corcoran said, "It is important that our parks are as healthy an environment as possible. I am glad [we] enacted this ordinance."

The goal of notifying the public of the new smoking restriction will be achieved, at least in part, by the borough availing itself of free metal signs emblazoned with "100 percent Smoke Free Park."

The signs are being provided, at no cost, by Tobacco-Free for a Healthy New Jersey (TFHNJ), a state-wide tobacco control effort under the New Jersey Department of Health and Senior Services.

Enforcing the smoking ban may pose a challenge. The ordinance prescribes that the ordinance shall be enforced by the Borough of Cliffside Park Police Chief, Fire Officials, Health Officer, Recreation Coordinator and/or Director of Public Works and/or their designees.

The ordinance provides the following penalties: a fine of not less than \$50 but not exceeding \$150 for the first violation; a fine of not less than \$150 but not exceeding \$300 for the second violation, plus community service of not less than two days and not greater than ten days; and a fine of not less than \$300 but not exceeding \$500 for the third and subsequent violation, plus community service not less than ten days and not greater than 30 days.

Calabrese, who serves as liaison to the Recreation and Parks Departments said, "I am proud of the continual improvements that Cliffside Park has made to its parks. This newly passed ordinance will further enhance the usage of our recreational space for all the residents for many years to come."

