

The Montclair Times

Letter to the Editor: With a smoking ban, self-enforcement works

Last updated: Thursday December 12, 2013, 1:56 AM (Page A10 in hard copy)

With a smoking ban, self-enforcement works

In an editorial titled "Can, and Will, a Tobacco Ban Be Enforced?" The Montclair Times expressed support for smoke-free parks in Montclair, but had questions about how such a policy would be enforced.

More than 120 New Jersey municipalities have 100 percent smoke-free parks ordinances, including eight in Essex County: East Orange, Fairfield, Irvington, Maplewood, Nutley, Orange, South Orange and West Orange. In addition, more communities are doing so each week.

Few citations are issued for violating smoke-free outdoor air ordinances because self-enforcement works if signage is posted. New York City's 100 percent smoke-free parks ordinance reduced the number of observed smoking incidents in parks by two-thirds, while also reducing smoking litter by more than half, according to the NYC Department of Health.

Most residents and visitors abide by laws that ban alcohol use in parks. This is also the case with smoke-free outdoor air ordinances: most people will comply because they are in an open public place where others can ask them to comply, unlike a car driver talking on their cell phone. Over time, people became conditioned not to smoke inside public places and workplaces, even if signs aren't posted.

New Jersey towns rarely enact partial smoke-free parks ordinances as they are difficult to enforce; people don't know where smoking starts and smoke-free begins.

Trending are 100 percent smoke-free parks policies: they are easier to enforce, help protect all people from carcinogenic secondhand smoke, and send our township's children a positive health message wherever they are in the parks.

Montclair is eligible for free "100 percent smoke-free public property" signs if our parks are 100 percent smoke-free, as per Global Advisors on Smoke-free Policy.

The Township Council should act now to designate our entire community's parks 100 percent smoke-free, for our community's children and for adults who want clean air throughout their parks.

Susan German, Montclair

http://www.northjersey.com/news/opinions/235519541_Letter_to_the_Editor__With_a_smoking_ban__self-enforcement_works.html?mobile=1&ic=1