

NorthJersey.Com/ Northern Valley Suburbanite Englewood Council Discusses Smoking Ban

Chris Perez, May 29 2014

ENGLEWOOD – The city council discussed two ordinances May 13 that would create new restrictions against smoking.

The first ordinance would raise the minimum age of purchasing tobacco-related products from 19 to 21 years old. Once an underage sale is made, the vendor would be punished rather than the person who actually bought the cigarettes.

The second ordinance would ban smoking and the use of electronic cigarettes from all public parks and recreation areas in the city. The Department of Health would participate in a free signage program to allow for self-enforcement, with a fine of \$250, \$500 and \$1,000 being implemented for first, second and third offenders.

"What we are doing is de-normalizing smoking," said Board of Health member Dr. Lisa Wisotsky, who attended the meeting to present the ordinances to the council. "We want to be good role models for the kids and de-normalize this behavior."

The Board of Health approved and suggested both policy changes during an April 9 meeting. The seven-member board, which was missing one member, voted unanimously to adopt the first resolution. The second resolution passed 4-1-1.

"You are a very strong advocate, and a confident one," Mayor Frank Huttie told Wisotsky.

On May 8, Fort Lee became the 240th municipality in New Jersey to establish a form of tobacco policy.

On that same day, The Assembly Higher Education Committee approved a bill that would ban the use of all tobacco products in outdoor areas of college campuses around the state. Supporters said the bill would give New Jersey the strictest college smoking ban in the nation.

In addition, Assemblywoman Valerie Vainieri Huttie, D-Englewood, has been working with county and municipal officials about continuing the effort to prohibit outdoor smoking at all public beaches and parks in the state.

On March 20, the Assembly overwhelmingly passed Huttie's bill that would ban smoking at all state, county and local parks and recreational areas.

A date was not set for when these two ordinances would be added to the city agenda, but the council suggested it would be some time in June.

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