

## Willingboro considering smoking ban on township-owned land

By Rose Krebs Staff writer | Posted: Wednesday, February 19, 2014 4:30 pm

WILLINGBORO — The municipality is considering joining other Burlington County communities in banning smoking on township-owned land, including parks.

At Tuesday's Council meeting, Township Manager Joanne Diggs presented officials with a model ordinance to consider. An ordinance may be scheduled for introduction in March.

According to the model ordinance, the measure is intended to "benefit all residents" by protecting their "general health and well-being."

If the council does approve an ordinance, it would ban smoking "on all lands owned by the township," including parks, playgrounds, active and passive recreational facilities, and the municipal complex.

It also would prohibit inhaling or exhaling smoke or burning a cigar, cigarette, pipe or "other paraphernalia that can be used to consume tobacco or a tobaccolike substance."

Violators would be subject to fines of between \$100 and \$500, depending on the number of offenses.

The council would need to introduce the ordinance and then advertise it. A public hearing for residents and final vote would follow.

Diggs told the council that more than 200 municipalities across the state have adopted "smoke-free" ordinances. In Burlington County, Beverly, Bordentown Township, Burlington Township, Delran, Edgewater Park, Evesham, Mansfield, Mount Holly and Palmyra have established smoking bans.

Also, the county's parks are now smoke- and tobacco-free.

Diggs provided the council with a fact sheet from Tobacco-Free for a Healthy New Jersey, an organization that provides information to municipalities interested in smoking bans.

According to that information, about 85 percent of New Jerseyans do not smoke, Diggs said.

"We're not inconveniencing as many people as you might think," she said.

After the meeting, Deputy Mayor Jacqueline Jennings said that officials are concerned about the impact of secondhand smoke on residents and that she supports the measure.