

Secaucus to tighten smoking rules

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Smoking outdoors in Secaucus may get a little tougher. The mayor and Town Council on Feb. 11 introduced an ordinance that will prohibit smoking in and outside all municipal buildings, and in all public parks and town recreation facilities.

In addition to greater restrictions on outdoor smoking, officials also passed a resolution to support the Fix Gun Checks Act, which calls on the federal government to reduce gun violence in America and help prevent future mass shootings by requiring a background check for every gun sale, among other measures.

Mayor Michael Gonnelli announced he has also joined Mayors Against Illegal Guns, a coalition of over 800 mayors nationwide that shares best practices, develops policies, and supports legislation at all levels to help law enforcement target illegal guns.

Hudson County Mayors Mark Smith of Bayonne, Jerramiah Healy of Jersey City, Dawn Zimmer of Hoboken, Gerald Drasheff of Guttenberg, Brian Stack of Union City, and Richard Turner of Weehawken are all listed as members.

Smoking ban spreads

A public hearing will be held on the smoke-free ordinance on March 12.

The stricter measures were prompted after local officials heard a presentation from the director of Group Against Smoking Pollution (GASP) a tobacco control and legal resource center at a previous council meeting.

GASP Executive Director Karen Blumenfeld proposed enacting smoke-free legislation and also met with county officials. "We already had smoke-free in many of our parks. We amended [the ordinance] to add the ones that weren't," Gonnelli said after the meeting.

While smoking was prohibited in a partial-ban from Buchmuller Park, Shetik Soccer Field, and Mill Ridge Soccer and Softball Fields, the amended ordinance further extends that ban to include all public parks and recreation facilities owned or leased by the municipality. Smoking would also be prohibited within a 35-foot radius of all municipal buildings as well as inside the buildings.

If the ordinance passes, the town plans to place No Smoking signs in all restricted areas. Any person who violates the ban shall be subject to a warning for their first offense, a fine of \$25 for a second offense, and a fine not to exceed \$100 for a third offense.

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