

Woodstown Borough Council investigates smoking guidelines in public parks

By [Brittany M. Wehner/South Jersey Times](#)

on July 13, 2013 at 7:00 AM, updated July 13, 2013 at 7:07 AM

WOODSTOWN — Concerned with how second-hand smoke can impact residents enjoying the public parks in the borough, council members say they are investigating whether the parks should be smoke-free.

Within Woodstown, there are three public parks — Marvin L. Watson Memorial Park, Memorial Lake Park, and Garrison Park. Elected officials are questioning whether to create guidelines that would prevent smoking in public parks.

“If second hand smoke affects people, we want to do what we can to eliminate the conditions that might occur. If people are in a group in one of our parks, we should try to protect them from second-hand smoke,” Woodstown Mayor Don Dietrich said.

According to the mayor, the problem is not regarding an adult choosing to smoke, but how the second-hand smoke impacts other residents or visitors enjoying the park.

“Adults smoke and make a conscious choice knowing the facts. They are consuming in a legal way, and we are not here to stand in their way. It is only the second-hand smoke that is an issue,” Dietrich said.

“We don’t want children or other people to be affected.”

According to borough officials, MAPSA (Municipal Alliance for the Prevention of Substance Abuse) suggested the concept of “smoke-free” parks to council.

Although borough council is looking into several possibilities — whether a smoking ban in public parks, designated smoking locations, or any other option — the mayor said that it is a process that needs to be thought through carefully.

Dietrich added that the borough will look into whether any other towns have an ordinance or other rules regarding public smoking in parks.

The mayor stressed the importance of being mindful of what lines can or cannot be crossed "in any conversation about constraining the ability of some people to do the things that might impact negatively on other people."

“Any time you do that, you want to be careful to think through all the possible

implications.”

While Woodstown investigates other municipalities with smoking guidelines, Pennsville Township has one non-smoking ordinance set in place.

According to the ordinance, no person is permitted to smoke on athletic fields or sports complexes in the township including the soccer complexes/fields located on Wingate Drive, Babe Ruth and Midget Football complex, located between Tufts Road and Industrial Park Road, and Little League complex, located on Churchlanding road.

Non-smoking policies are also enforced at Parvin State Park in Pittsgrove Township.

While smokers are permitted to smoke outside or on a trail, there is no smoking allowed of any kind in the parks' public buildings or facilities.

“Before action, we want to do some research and discuss the boundaries and conditions in perspective. We are going to investigate how to develop this before we attempt to write it. We want to try and learn from other municipalities who have done this, try and get a copy of their ordinances,” Dietrich said.

“You get into a question of what are the boundaries of a public park. We want to be very clear on everything we want to do — we are trying to reinvent the wheel. The consensus of council is to support the concept,” the mayor said.

http://www.nj.com/salem/index.ssf/2013/07/woodstown_borough_council_investigates_smoking_guidelines_in_public_parks.html