

The Alternative Press

Livingston Council Bans Smoking in Public Parks

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LIVINGSTON, NJ - The Livingston Township Council voted unanimously to approve a proposed ordinance that bans smoking in all outdoor public parks and recreational areas that are owned, leased or used by the township at its meeting Monday night.

Karen Blumenfeld, executive director of Global Advisors Smoke free Policy (GASP), spoke to the council about the benefits of a 100 percent smoke-free environment in public parks.

"We're really proud that Livingston is taking that next step," Blumenfeld said. "It's super important because we've found that the partial policy doesn't have the same amount of effectiveness as the 100 percent policy."

Blumenfeld went on to explain how the 100 percent policy sets a healthy example for children by sending the message that smoking is prohibited in all areas of parks rather than just certain parts of it. The policy also encourages a clean and "green" outdoor recreational environment by minimizing the amount of tobacco waste in these areas. Blumenfeld also presented a sign that would be posted in these areas with the message "BREATHE EASY" displayed across the top to indicate that the park is a 100 percent smoke free environment.

[UNRELATED] During the public comment portion of the meeting, concerned residents spoke about the lack of upkeep and overall cleanliness of some of the homes in the town.

Nick Pulitano noted that more and more residents in Livingston are disregarding the rules for garbage pickup, and are leaving their garbage out multiple days before the designated day for garbage pickup.

Robert Hunter said, "There are so many rundown houses that it's disgusting," and asked the council, "Who is enforcing? How did it get so bad?"

Township Manager Michele Meade responded by explaining that the enforcement process takes time because there are certain steps that need to be taken and there is also a lack of resources and manpower when it comes to finding and enforcing the violators. "We've never seen this in Livingston," Hunter said. "Livingston sells."

All resolutions on the agenda were passed without discussion on a 5-0 vote. Deputy Mayor Michael Silverman recused himself from Resolution 14-142, authorizing a contract with Mooney-General Paper Company.

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