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Franklin Lakes council has variety of issues on the table

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Franklin Lakes – A lot of talk and no action, at least for now.

The governing body has been discussing deer fences, solar panels and a public smoking ban, but has declined to act due to concern it would do more harm than good.

For months, the council has been on the fence about whether to allow deer fences. Code allows 5-foot fences; deer fences are 8-foot high.

"You can't protect all shrubbery even with a deer fence," Mayor Frank Bivona said at last week's council meeting.

Some council members said such a fence would only force deer onto neighbors' properties.

Meanwhile, Borough Administrator Gregory Hart said, not a lot of people have been asking to install deer fences.

"Well, I can still see both sides of this," Bivona said. "People put a lot of time and money into gardens and shrubbery and they want to protect it, but what if the fences are ugly? It could be a case of good intentions that go bad."

Table that discussion and onto solar panels.

Solar panels are allowed but anyone who plans to install them has to appear before the Planning Board, an effort that residents complain is costly, Bivona said.

"We've had two or three complaints about this," Hart said.

"People have to hire an engineer and appear before the board one or two times and before you know, the cost of the solar panel has doubled," Bivona said. Rather than take action, the council decided to "see how things go."

Closer to enactment, perhaps, is a ban on smoking on all public grounds.

Governor Christie vetoed the statewide ban on smoking on public property, saying he wanted to leave control to the municipalities.

"But I think it's a good policy," Bivona said.

"The state may yet pass this ban — maybe we should wait and they'll pay for all the signs," Councilman Charles Kahwaty suggested.

"I think in this case, it's better to be proactive," Bivona said.

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