

# The Alternative Press

## Millburn Township Bans Smoking in Public Parks and Recreational Facilities

**Patricia Harris Wednesday, October 8, 2014 • 3:44pm**

MILLBURN, NJ - Smoking on municipal property is now banned, following the Township Committee's unanimous adoption of an ordinance to that effect at its Tuesday meeting.

The ban extends to public parks, playgrounds and ball fields owned or leased by the township and all property owned or leased by the township where the public is permitted and individuals gather for recreational activities, including parking areas and driveways. Smoking is also banned in municipal buildings and vehicles registered to the township.

Smoking is defined as the burning of, inhaling from, exhaling the smoke from, or the possession of a lighted cigar, cigarette, pipe, marijuana joint or other substance which contains tobacco, marijuana or any other matter that can be smoked.

The township's new ordinance was suggested by the Environmental Commission and is more restrictive than the state's smoking prohibitions. Enforcement authorities for the ban are the police, fire, recreation, public works and health departments. The penalty for violation is a fine of not less than \$250 for the first offense, \$500 for the second offense and \$1,000 for each subsequent offense. Any municipal employee found in violation of the ordinance may also be subject to disciplinary action.

The committee's passage of the ordinance drew praise from attorney Karen Blumenfeld, executive director of Global Advisors on Smokefree Policy, or GASP. She brought in a stack of metal signs saying "Breathe Easy" that can be posted around town.

In other business, the governing body confirmed through a resolution that the results of a best practices inventory were discussed publicly at a Township Committee meeting. Township Administrator Timothy Gordon explained that the state requires the inventory and a municipality could lose state aid if its practices do not measure up. Gordon indicated local leaders have no cause for concern. "We're always in the 90th percentile," he said.

Gordon addressed four areas where state officials had questioned the township's practices, and noted that in one area, insurance broker's fees, the township will adopt the state's recommendation to pay a flat rate as opposed to a percentage. Committee member Ted Bourke said of the way the township is run, "I have no problem with our performance."

Also at the session, the committee adopted a resolution urging the state to pass a law authorizing the payment of a portion of the realty transfer fee to the municipality. At present all of the money collected when a property is sold goes to the state, and the municipality is seeking to obtain a portion. Local leaders plan to seek support for their resolution at an upcoming League of Municipalities meeting.

Through proclamations, the committee declared October as Domestic Violence Awareness Month and recognized the work of volunteers on the Millburn Crisis Intervention Team and the Millburn Police Department in improving victim safety and holding perpetrators of domestic abuse accountable for their actions.

A second proclamation designated November as Pancreatic Cancer Awareness Month and recognized the work of the Pancreatic Cancer Action Network, a national organization, in helping develop public policy, fund research and educate the public about the deadly cancer. Township resident Michael Weinstein, a nine-year survivor, thanked the committee for its support of his efforts to raise awareness.

<http://thealternativepress.com/articles/millburn-township-bans-smoking-in-public-parks-an>