

The Glen Ridge Voice (The Record, northjersey.com)

A proposed new "vape shop" has a number of residents blowing smoke out their ears.

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The Arcade building on Bloomfield Avenue has a vacant section that is slated to become the home of a vape shop.

In response, residents have started a petition asking the borough to revise its zoning laws in order to prohibit similar shops from opening in a commercial district in the future.

"Quite frankly, this isn't what the community wants," said resident Kimberly Curtis, who along with her husband Craig began circulating the petition this month.

As of March 14, the petition had gathered more than 270 signatures. What has several parents worried is that the new store is going to be in the Arcade, which is within walking distance of Glen Ridge High School, Ridgewood Avenue School and two of the borough's athletic fields.

"We're not all naïve. Our kids are going to be exposed to things, but we don't think it should be so blatant," Curtis said.

During the most recent borough council meeting, Borough Attorney John Malyska said that there wasn't anything the borough could do to keep the business from opening, since all of its paperwork was in order.

The Bittan Group, the Englewood-based owners of the Arcade, could not be reached for comment by phone Monday afternoon.

"Vaping" is a slang term for the use of electronic cigarettes, or electronic nicotine delivery systems. The devices do not contain tobacco, but generally contain other chemicals, including nicotine and various flavorings.

Because the devices are relatively new, the health issues associated with electronic cigarettes are uncertain. There have been some claims that the devices may be used to help tobacco smokers quit. However, both the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the American Academy of Pediatrics have raised concerns about e-cigarettes and similar devices, especially their use among children and teens.

Glen Ridge's commercial zoning requirements do not permit certain businesses, including:

- * Tattoo parlors and body-piercing establishments
- * Manufacturing, wholesale trade, warehouse establishments and bus and truck depots
- * Storage establishments and mini-storage warehouses
- * Pawn shops
- * Check-cashing shops

The ordinance determining the prohibited businesses has been on the borough's books since 1963; the ordinance has been revised several times since then, the last time being in 2006.

Borough Administrator Michael Rohal said that there was no indication on the permit application what kind of business was being considered for the space; the borough found out about the proposed use as a vape shop at the same time residents did, he said. He said that Glen Ridge would have a discussion of its zoning laws at the next planning board meeting on April 20.

The borough of Highland Park in Middlesex County is considering an ordinance that would require vape shops and similar shops to pay a licensing fee. Rohal said that Glen Ridge had asked Highland Park for a copy of the ordinance.

<http://www.northjersey.com/news/business/borough-looking-at-laws-in-response-to-shop-1.1532220>