

Strait sworn in as municipal judge of Montclair

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(excerpted from story)

Smoking tabled

The Montclair Township Council introduced a new ordinance regulating smoking in municipal parks. It was subsequently tabled and referred back to the municipal Services Committee.

The proposed ordinance would have prohibited smoking within 50 feet of playgrounds when children are at play, 50 feet of playing fields when children are at play and 50 feet of anyone participating in recreation.

A smoking ban within 10 feet of entrances at the Municipal Building and Police Headquarters were also included in the ordinance. The ordinance was later amended to prohibit smoking within 10 feet of the front entrance of the Community Services building on North Fullerton Avenue.

Speaking during public comment, Alan Kantz of New Jersey Global Advisors on Smokefree Policy opined that, as written, the ordinance would not necessarily protect all park visitors or all children from second-hand smoke.

Resident Sandy Sorkin described the ordinance as very difficult to enforce. Sorkin added that children found smoking in parks should be penalized with mandatory participation in a smoking cessation program, paid for by the township. Jackson voiced interest in Sorkin's idea. Fourth Ward Councilwoman Renée Baskerville said that she would be in favor of families being obligated to pay for the mandatory cessation.

Baskerville and Deputy Mayor Robert Russo said that they would like to see the ordinance become more encompassing. McMahon described the ordinance, as written, as a compromise.

"Sometimes half a loaf is better than no loaf," noted Russo.

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