

# Burlington County Times

## Delran could be next town to snuff out smoking in parks

Posted: Friday, October 30, 2015 5:15 am

By Todd McHale, Staff writer

609-871-8163; email: [tmchale@calkins.com](mailto:tmchale@calkins.com); Twitter: @toddmchale

DELRAN — A smoking ban at every township park soon could be the law of the land.

The Township Council has introduced an ordinance to prohibit smoking at all parks and playgrounds, joining a growing list of municipalities in Burlington County and the state to institute bans.

If approved next month, the local law would make it illegal for anyone to light up in more than a dozen parks in town. Mayor Ken Paris supports the measure, which was suggested by members of the township's Green Team. "It's a health issue," Paris said. "There's no reason to smoke, especially around the ballfields, where the kids are playing."

Given the public health risks of smoking, as well as the potential fire hazards from improperly disposing of cigarettes or other smoking devices, the governing body decided to act. The move comes just over a decade after a previous council approved banning smoking at all tot lots in 2004. If the latest ordinance is adopted, anyone caught smoking in parks or playgrounds could face fines of up to \$500, depending on the municipal court judge's discretion.

However, Paris said the municipality isn't looking for the police to spend too much time looking for smokers. "The police will be enforcing the smoking ban based on people calling to complain," he said. "Really, the police have enough to do, so if someone calls, that's when they will come out and enforce it."

Being an ex-smoker, the mayor said he understands the frustrations of those who may be opposed to further restrictions. "It's a tough one," Paris said. "I can see why (smokers) feel that they have no rights anymore."

To date, anti-smoking advocates indicate that more than 220 of the 566 municipalities in New Jersey have instituted bans in parks. In Burlington County, the list includes Beverly, Bordentown Township, Burlington Township, Cinnaminson, Delran, Edgewater Park, Evesham, Mansfield, Maple Shade, Mount Holly and Palmyra, along with all county parks.

"I think it's very much understood, looking out there, that a lot of towns are banning smoking in their parks," Paris said. "People don't want to be around smoking, and you've got to respect that." He said he wouldn't have a problem if smokers went out to their cars and lit up. A designated smoking area has not been created.

The council will hold a public hearing on the proposed ordinance at its Nov. 10 meeting, which will be at 7 p.m. at the municipal building.

[http://www.burlingtoncountytimes.com/news/local/delran-could-be-next-town-to-snuff-out-smoking-in/article\\_43bb60fe-7e5f-11e5-841e-bf9dbe61f70d.html](http://www.burlingtoncountytimes.com/news/local/delran-could-be-next-town-to-snuff-out-smoking-in/article_43bb60fe-7e5f-11e5-841e-bf9dbe61f70d.html)