

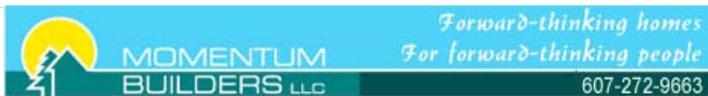
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Dec 18 2009

**No Smoking Law Passed in Lansing**



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BY DAN VEANER



The Lansing Town Board passed a No Smoking law Wednesday in a 5-0 vote. The law forbids smoking anywhere on the Town Hall campus, including the Town Hall itself, library, Community center, historical buildings, ballfields, and parking lot, as well as at the highway department and the ballfields at that location.

"Basically it's a health issue for our employees," says Deputy Supervisor Connie Wilcox. "Second hand smoke is really bad. A lot of other towns are looking at doing this, and the city. We feel it's a health issue and it's a good thing."

While two other municipalities have passed no-smoking resolutions, Lansing is the first municipality in Tompkins County to put it into law. The Board held a public hearing Wednesday at which three people spoke enthusiastically in favor of the law, and nobody spoke in opposition.



Ted Schiele

One of the speakers was the Tompkins County Health Department's Ted Schiele, who also coordinates Tobacco Free Tompkins.

"I enthusiastically commend the Town Board for proposing Local Law number 9, regarding smoking upon certain property owned and under the care of the Town of Lansing, and for holding this public hearing," he said.

Schiele spoke to the effect of second and third hand smoke in terms of the science and community issues. The science was chilling: exposure to second hand smoke increases the risk of coronary heart disease by 25% to 30%. A 2004 study showed that second hand smoke produces 10 times more pollution than an idling ecodiesel engine. Third hand smoke that settles on clothing and is then breathed in by someone else is associated with cognitive defects among children.

Lansing High School students Robin Presthus and Joanna Barrett also spoke in support of the law. Presthus said that he is excited about a law that will protect future children from the effects of second hand smoke, and that he hoped Lansing would be a leader by passing the law. Barrett presented a litany of statistics proving the negative effect smoking has on

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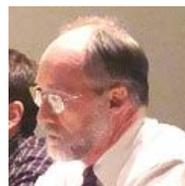
Joanna Barrett

health.

The law was unanimously passed after the public hearing. However, some were concerned about extending the law to the Town's two public parks.

"It was mentioned (as we developed the law), but it's a pretty wide open area down there," Wilcox said. "People come in to camp and things like that. I think most people are pretty careful about smoking around children. A lot of people don't smoke any more, and that's a good thing."

But Councilman Bud Shattuck said he doesn't think the law goes far enough.



Bud Shattuck

"My vote is going to be yes, but I want to let everyone know that I have been adamantly opposed to this," Shattuck said. "I think it's not strict enough. We have two playgrounds in two other parks that are not protected, and there is no reason that we couldn't put something in about a 100 foot perimeter around those playgrounds."

Enforcement is an issue for a town that does not have a police department. While it does employ town constables, enforcement will generally come down to letting people know that smoking is forbidden. Town employees will be required to not smoke on the Town properties. Wilcox says that there is not a large percentage of smokers among the approximately 40 employees, but the law will help protect all the people who work for the Town.

"It's not good to have a smoking area outside the door," she says. People come in and the you are still smelling the smoke. You open the doors and the smoke is coming in. It's going to be tough for a while, but I think it's a good move on our part."

The law will officially go into effect almost immediately, after it is filed with the State Comptroller's office.

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December 2009



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