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City of Ithaca ponders smoking restrictions

BY KRISY GASHLER • JOURNAL STAFF • MAY 21, 2008

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ITHACA — Smoking in the City of Ithaca should be prohibited within 50 feet of schools, public playgrounds, pools, rinks and other recreational facilities used by children, according to a Common Council committee Tuesday night.

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The committee took no votes, and no regulation changes have gone into effect.

The Community and Organizational Issues committee, which includes all 10 members of Common Council, eventually decided to create a sub-committee to study a law restricting smoking in the city.

In straw polls during the meeting, all 10 members of Common Council favored stronger city restrictions on smoking within 25 feet of places like schools and playgrounds.

Eight of the 10 favored a prohibition up to 50 feet.

As Common Council has considered a smoking ban this year, discussion in city hall and in the community has centered on The Commons, but the areas being considered for

a smoking ban include most public locations in the city, including:

- * Public sidewalks;
- * Pedestrian and bicycle trails and walkways, including the Cayuga Waterfront Trail and the Six Mile Creek Walkway,
- * City parks;

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- * City natural areas;
- * City parking lots, garages, bus shelters and bus stops;
- * Golf courses;
- * City cemeteries;
- * City facilities leased or rented by others, including the Ithaca Farmers' Market, Community Gardens, Dock Slips, the Hangar Theatre and Cascadilla Boathouse;
- * Non-enclosed outdoor dining areas; and
- * Outdoor seating areas for things like concerts, parades, sports and festivals.

Considerations for bans range from very broad — all city parks and anywhere in city natural areas — to fairly narrow — within a certain number of feet of pavilions or picnic areas in city parks.

The committee overwhelmingly favored some further restrictions but became mired in specific details, such as whether it is legal or appropriate to ban smoking within a certain number of feet from entrances to child care facilities.

Alderman Joel Zumoff, D-3rd, said that could make it illegal for a person to walk past on the sidewalk near a home child care facility with a lighted cigarette. Unless Common Council favors a smoking ban on all public sidewalks, that could be unfair, he said.

Specifics of legality and enforcement will be discussed over the next month in a sub-committee chaired by Alderman Eric Rosario, I-2nd.

Aldermen Dan Cogan, D-5th, and Svante Myrick, D-4th, and Ted Schiele, coordinator of Tobacco Free Tompkins with the county health department, will also serve on the committee.

Rosario said the committee will also need individuals with scientific and legal expertise.

Contact Rosario at erosario@cityofithaca.org or 273-2417.

The issue is scheduled to come back to the Community and Organizational Issues committee next month.

kgashler@ithacajournal.com

in your voice

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Raptor119 wrote:

Ithaca's city and county governments are run by the special interests. The council representatives represent the special interests, not the average tax payer. The council will continue to put issues like clean drinking water behind more pressing issues like smoking bans, dog parks, and support of Tibetan deserters.

What a festering black hole this city is.....

5/21/2008 12:23:02 PM

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manns wrote:

This is funny. So are cops going to be called everytime some non-smoking advocate spots a smoker in the park? This would be a ridiculous waste of thier time, but a great source of revenue if they could actually enforce it! Oh wait I forgot that Ithaca cops don't ticket you for anything other than a DWI or public urination. More cops on foot patrol!!

5/21/2008 10:55:31 AM

Tompkins Cortland Comm
ceremony Thursday

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berryslog wrote:

Tobacco is legal and the proposes law would be unenforcible. This is from a non-smoker.

5/21/2008 8:36:26 AM

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Winifred wrote:

When will Common Council start working on issues that REALLY effect the city? The resolutions from supporting talks between China and the Dali Lama to the ones telling people how to live their lives is out of line. They need to start looking at what matters, such as the infrastructure of our city. Maybe even make a decision about the future of the water plant! Now there's an idea!

5/21/2008 8:23:00 AM

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