



TOWN OF HAMDEN

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Media Release

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Town of Hamden Approves Anti-Smoking Ordinance for Town Parks

HAMDEN – Mayor Curt Balzano Leng is very pleased to announce that an ordinance he proposed was approved last night by the Hamden Legislative Council, which will ban the use of harmful tobacco products at Town parks, recreational facilities, and Public School grounds. The goal of this Ordinance is to enhance the health and safety of our residents and children by ensuring that Hamden’s parks, schools, and recreational areas remain free of the dangers of 2nd hand smoke. The new Ordinance will allow enforcement by the Hamden Police Department and violations will carry a fine of \$100.00. This is part of the Town’s expanded effort to make Hamden “Healthy, Clean & Green”.

Commenting on the Ordinance, Mayor Leng noted, “The health dangers associated with 2nd hand smoke are well known. To be good stewards of our parks and work in the best interest of our residents, we must work together to provide safe, clean, recreation areas. No child should be subjected to 2nd hand smoke when they are trying to play on the jungle gym or participate in a sport.”

Richard Leonardo, Chairman of Hamden’s Parks & Recreation Commission, said, “I whole-heartedly support the Ordinance to prohibit smoking and tobacco products from our parks and recreation facilities, with the hope of keeping our residents safe and healthy.”

In addition to support amongst Town Officials, various public and private community groups have also expressed support of the new Ordinance. Hamden Soccer Association President, Chris Ruggiero, commented, “As President of the Hamden Soccer Association, I fully support the ordinance prohibiting tobacco use within Town parks and recreational facilities. Our players and spectators shouldn't be exposed to 2nd hand smoke while playing soccer. It is our responsibility to

provide a safe environment for our children to enjoy.” In addition to the support from the Hamden Soccer Association President, Vice President of the Hamden Fathers Baseball / Softball Association, Carl Sargolini, who also serves as the President of Hamden Youth Hockey Association, said in response to the new Ordinance, “It is time to take tobacco out of baseball once and for all. Mayor Leng’s initiative is a great way to do that and it is also a great example for all of the kids in Hamden Fathers Baseball and Softball.”

Finally, the new Ordinance has received overwhelming support and praise from Officials at the Quinnipiac Valley Health Department (QVHD). Leslie Balch, Director of QVHD, expressed her position, “QVHD supports the efforts of the Town of Hamden to ban tobacco use in the parks. I believe this effort will not only protect park users by decreasing the risk of exposure to the dangers of second hand smoke, but also set an example for our children by establishing tobacco use as an unacceptable behavior in our community. The positive impact of this smoking ban can also be projected to include parks with less litter resulting in cleaner parks with decreased maintenance costs, teaching our children about healthy behavior, attracting residents to the parks to partake in increase physical activity, and improving the general well-being by providing attractive, healthier places to gather.”

The Town will be posting “Tobacco Free Zone” signage this summer. The Ordinance is effective October 1, 2016, which allows for the summer months to complete a positive publicity campaign to let residents know why the ban was approved and how it and where it will be enforced. The Mayor asks residents and guests who are aware of the new Ordinance to start following the spirit of the new law immediately so that the goals of health and safety for our park participants can start as soon as possible.

For further information, please contact Information & Research Officer, Patrick J. Donnelly at (203) 287-7009 or by email at pdonnelly@hamden.com.