

- Elm Park – Task Force & Update
 - Bridge
- Logan Field – NA
- Holmes Field - NA
- Greenwood Park - Update
- Rockwood Field – NA
- Vernon Hill – NA
- Newton Hill – Update
- East Park – NA
- Knights of Columbus – Update
- University Park – Update
- Crompton Park – Update
- Cookson Park – NA
- Blackstone Gateway Park – NA
- Bell Pond - NA
- Lake Park Synthetic Field - NA
- Open Space and Recreation Plan – NA
- North Lake Ave Linear Park – NA
- Beaver Brook – Update
- Indian Lake – Update
- Burncoat Park / Holland Rink – NA
- Castle Park – Update
- Grant Square – Update
- Betty Price Playground – Next meeting February 5, 2015
- South Worcester Playground – Master Plan
- Coes Pond - Update
- Community Development Block Grant - NA
- Art-in-the-Park – NA
- Dog Park, Licensing & Control of Dogs – Update
- Misc items:
 - Keep Worcester Clean –
 - October & November 2014
 - City Council Orders
 - ALB Request for DCR
 - ALB Request for USDA
 - ALB School Program
 - ALB Program Review
 - Petitions
 - Tree Hearing 53 Mary Ann Drive
 - ALB - NA
 - Forestry Operations – NA
 - Budget Update – Operational & Capital -
 - Parks, Recreation & Cemetery Division – Update
 - Capital Improvement program - Update
 - Summer Youth Employment Program – NA
 - Wheels to Water - NA
 - Holiday Tree – Update
 - Worcester Common Ice Skating Rink - Update
 - Waterfowl in Park – NA
 - Out-to-Lunch – NA
 - Trash – NA
 - ESCo – NA
 - Park Permits – NA
 - Access/ ADA – NA
 - Misc Information –
 - Blackstone Gateway Park – Middle River Article
 - ALB Articles
 - Newton Square Article
 - Worcester Common Oval Article
 - Smoking Regulation Article
 - Sledding Article
 - Playground Article

- City Council Youth Parks & Recreation Sub Committee
 - NA
- Golf Course:
 - NA
- Golf Course Donations
 - NA
- Tabled Items: - Smoking in Public Parks – NA

THE CITY OF WORCESTER
DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS AND PARKS
PARKS, RECREATION, & CEMETERY DIVISION
50 Skyline Drive, Worcester, MA 01605

Robert C. Antonelli, Jr. CPRP, Assistant Commissioner

Phone: (508) 799-1190

Fax: (508) 799-1293

PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION MEETING

Thursday January 15, 2015 – 6:30 P.M.

Parks, Recreation & Cemetery Administrative Office

Meeting Room A

50 Skyline Drive, Worcester, MA 01605

ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER'S REPORT

GENERAL

CITY OF WORCESTER

ORDERED: That

The City Manager be and is hereby requested to contact Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) to immediately begin an inoculation program in all ALB infected areas of the city and further, provide to City Council a map and perimeter of the ALB that that was funded by the government.

CITY OF WORCESTER

ORDERED: That

The City Manager be and is hereby requested to consider contacting Congressman James McGovern to request additional federal monies for an educational program relative to the ALB as well as funding for continued resolution of the eradication of the ALB.

CITY OF WORCESTER

ORDERED: That

The City Manager be and is hereby requested to contact the Superintendent of the Worcester Public Schools and area Colleges to establish a summer program relative to the ALB for participating in the educational and field observation of the ALB.

CITY OF WORCESTER

ORDERED: That

The City Manager be and is hereby requested to reassess the effectiveness of the progress relative to the Asian Longhorned Beetle infestation over the past eight years focusing on new measures to resolve the movement of the ALB into Green Hill Park and other areas throughout the city.

Please print out this form, state your name, residential address, telephone number and return to:

Worcester City Clerk
City Hall Room 206
455 Main Street
Worcester, MA 01608-1889.

The undersigned hereby petition the City Council as follows, request

To Please remove dead tree from the
front of 53 Mary Ann Drive.

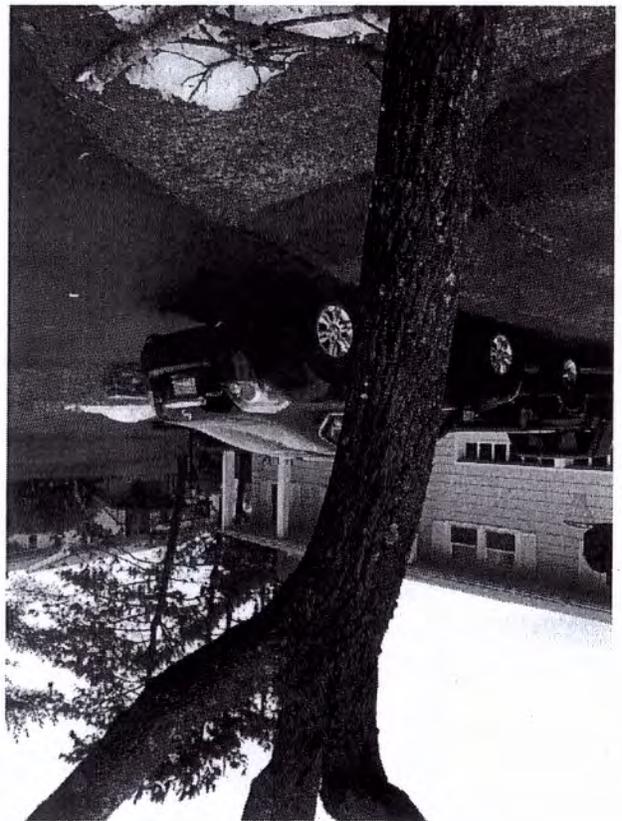
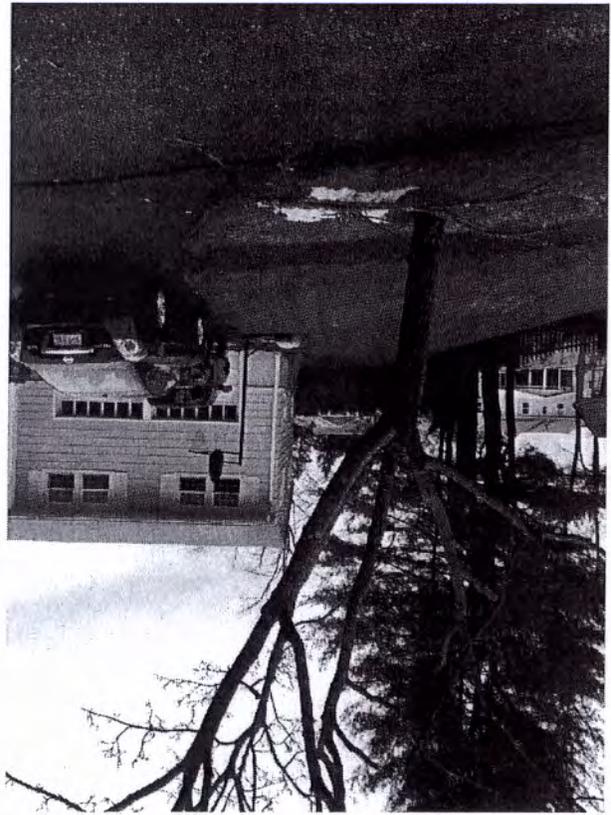
Please note: The tree no longer produces
leaves, and the limbs fall off
onto the side walk where the
elementary school students walk
to + from school.

Sincerely

Concordia Foster

53 Mary Ann Dr

Worcester MA 01606



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Sunday, January 4, 2015

USDA: Setbacks normal in longhorned beetle battles

MORE INFESTED TREES FOUND



A jogger Friday at Green Hill Park, where further tree cutting is expected to eliminate Asian longhorned beetle-infested trees. (T&G Staff/STEVE LANAVA)

By Sara Schweiger TELEGRAM & GAZETTE STAFF
Sara.Schweiger@telegram.com
2 comments | Add a comment

WORCESTER — The discovery of more Asian longhorned beetle-infested trees here may feel like a setback, but it's not altogether unexpected.

"Unfortunately, visual surveys are only up to 70 percent effective, meaning our surveyors do miss lightly infested trees," Ryan Vazquez, the U.S. Department of Agriculture's acting project manager for the Massachusetts ALB Eradication Program, said via email Friday. "It's why we survey trees more than once over various times."

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The invasive beetle, first identified in Worcester in 2008, has necessitated the removal of nearly 34,000 infested and "high risk" trees here and in surrounding communities.

Earlier this week, City Manager Edward M. Augustus Jr. said that "another big wave" of tree cutting would be necessary after fall surveys revealed more than 200 infested trees in and around Green Hill Park in the northeast part of the city.

Last summer, about 500 trees were removed from the perimeter of the park.

Mr. Vazquez said host trees within 48.1 acres in the east and north sections of the park are slated for removal, as well as in a 5.6-acre chunk of state land abutting the park.

Public Works and Parks Commissioner Paul J. Moosey added that the trees were in wooded areas of the Green Hill Park, "not what you would picture as the park proper."

Mr. Moosey on Friday said Mr. Augustus would be organizing a neighborhood meeting later this month in order to talk to park abutters who would be affected.

Mr. Moosey did not specify how many people that entails, but he said it wasn't a big number. He said Mr. Augustus would likely present a full report to the City Council on Jan. 20.

"He wants it to be pretty detailed and pretty final," Mr. Moosey said. "He doesn't want to do any speculating."

Mr. Vazquez said the state Department of Conservation and Recreation would put the removal project out to bid shortly, with the hope that the trees come down before adult beetles start to emerge, typically the end of June or early July.

While some chemical treatments were employed in a few select Worcester areas in 2010 and 2011, such treatments are not currently being considered.

The USDA has used the insecticide imidacloprid to combat the Asian longhorned beetle. The chemical does not kill the beetles, but it prevents infestation of host trees. The USDA has said chemical treatments are only effective if applied in early spring, which allows the chemical to be taken up by the tree and hopefully reach the upper canopy and leaves ahead of the adult beetles emerging.

"The program is not planning to use treatment applications in 2015 in Worcester County," Mr. Vazquez said. "However, we re-evaluate the use of treatment applications on an annual basis, and for treatment in 2016, those discussions have not yet taken place."

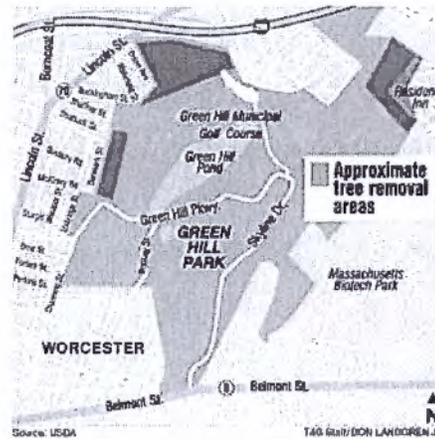
District 2 Councilor Philip P. Palmieri, whose district has been hard hit by the ALB infestation, has said he intends to ask the council to push for chemical treatment of trees.

Mr. Moosey emphasized that a full eradication can take upward of a decade. Such was the case in Islip, N.Y., where the USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service announced in August 2011 the beetle had been eradicated after its discovery in 1999.

"They (USDA) expect this to be a 10-year process before they'd be willing to say there's no more beetles," he said. "They're not going to be happy until there's 'no finds.' So it's not an overnight thing," he said.

Contact Sara Schweiger at Sara.Schweiger@telegram.com. Follow her on Twitter @SschweigerTG

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More trees threatened by beetles, says Worcester manager



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USDA: Green Hill Park find normal in a long-term anti-beetle fight

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Ikleman wrote:

In 2012, I lost my backyard tree, a gorgeous red maple, to the Asian Longhorn Beetle. Prior to that, I had a couple years to learn all about this issue.

The insecticide, imidacloprid, is a very bad pesticide - very dangerous and harmful. It is largely considered to be responsible for the disappearance of the honey bees, a situation which threatens our future. Unfortunately, imidacloprid has many other uses still, but eventually it will be banned - let's hope this happens before it's too late. As well, it has not been shown to have positive results in stemming the tide of the Asian Longhorn Beetle.

While it's sad to have to cut down trees, this is the proper solution to this problem.

Mr. Palmieri: you need to do some research before you open your mouth and suggest harmful activities. I no longer live in Worcester, but I hope that those citizens who live in his district will speak loudly and clearly on this issue.

Posted on Saturday January 3, 2015 at 10:57 AM | Reply
 Agree (1) Disagree

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rdygogo wrote:

"District 2 Councilor Philip P. Palmieri, whose district has been hard hit by the ALB infestation, has said he intends to ask the council to push for chemical treatment of trees. " Pandering to the masses. Let's see how Mr Palmieri reports on his investigation that chemical treatment will work?. This district is hard hit by this natural disaster and Mr Parmieri should be including in his intentions to ask council for help to replant trees ,or maybe put communities gardens in etc etc to help his district and not just take the easy road of asking council to send? A letter to the state requesting chemical treatment in just general terms instead of having specific facts that help.

Posted on Saturday January 3, 2015 at 6:36 AM | Reply
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Article published Jan 2, 2015

With beetles on the move, more trees at risk says Worcester city manager

By Nick Kotsopoulos TELEGRAM & GAZETTE STAFF

nicholas.kotsopoulos@telegram.com

WORCESTER — The invasive Asian longhorned beetle, a scourge that has already claimed about 34,000 trees since it was first found here in 2008, is about to take another bite out of the city's landscape.

City Manager Edward M. Augustus Jr. said "another big wave" of tree cutting will soon have to be done after the discovery of more infested trees. Most of the trees are said to be in the northeast quadrant of the city, especially along the Lincoln Street corridor and areas in and around Green Hill Park.

In a wide-ranging, end-of-the-year interview earlier this week, Mr. Augustus said one of his disappointments during his first year as the city's chief executive was that more trees had to be taken down last year because of the pesky tree-killing insect, and more will have to be taken down this year.

He did not specify the number of trees that will be taken down. He said that and other information will be forthcoming in a report to the City Council for its meeting next week.

"We really haven't quite defeated that (Asian longhorned beetle) yet, and we will have to do some more (tree) cutting," Mr. Augustus said in the interview. "In the next couple of weeks, we will have to do another big wave of cutting."

Last summer, roughly 500 trees were taken down near Green Hill Park as part of efforts to contain the Asian longhorned beetle. City officials said such action was needed to protect the park from future infestation.

But District 2 Councilor Philip P. Palmieri, who represents the part of Worcester that has been hard hit by the Asian longhorned beetle infestation, said he finds it "problematic" that the federal and state agencies overseeing the ALB fight have not been able to curb further infestation, and that more trees will have to be taken down.

He said even though thousands of trees were taken down in the city in the hope of stopping the beetle from its path of destruction, the strategy has failed.

Mr. Palmieri also took aim at the U.S. Department of Agriculture and the state Department of Conservation for not embarking on a more aggressive strategy to protect healthy trees by treating them with chemicals.

The USDA's traditional chemical treatment program to combat the Asian longhorned beetle calls for applying the insecticide imidacloprid annually in the spring. While the application does not kill the beetle, it prevents infestation of so-called "host" trees. Mr. Palmieri said the federal and state government should have been focusing more on protecting healthy trees through such a chemical treatment program.

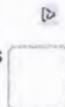
He said he intends to ask the City Council next week to re-assess the policy regarding the fight against the Asian longhorned beetle and have it press for more chemical treatment of trees.

"The Asian longhorned beetle is not an instinct insect in Worcester as some might lead you to believe," he said. "We need to start an inoculation program at once."

Mr. Palmieri said he now fears that Green Hill Park, the city's 450-acre jewel of its park system, could be at risk of losing trees. DodgePark, another park in Mr. Palmieri's district located off Randolph Road, has already lost many of its trees because of the beetle.

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With beetles on the move, more trees at risk says Worcester city manager

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ajp wrote:
Yet another undocumented invasion forever changing local neighborhoods.

Posted on Friday January 2, 2015 at 8:43 AM | Reply
Agree (1) Disagree (2)

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Traveller wrote:
So in Shrewsbury the beetles get counselling and gift cards for a day spa but in Worcester the trees have to come down... 😞

Posted on Friday January 2, 2015 at 8:21 AM | Reply
Agree (1) Disagree (4)

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Real Insider wrote:
Davey Tree must thank God every day for the ALB. They have been reaping the Profits for many years now. They have Purchased or Leased Fleets of Vehicles which you can see parked in the North End of the City and in Holden as well as in other Areas. I can remember when one of the 1st Trees was found on the Front Lawn of the Company that I was working for at the Time, I never expected that this would go this far in as far as devastating the North End of Worcester as it has.

Posted on Friday January 2, 2015 at 7:28 AM | Reply
Agree Disagree (2)

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Red Squirrel wrote:
This is very disappointing given the fairly optimistic article that appeared a short time back in the T&G. It certainly seems to be a setback. Hindsight is 20 20 they say. Still, now we can see what a blunder it was not to put Councilor Philip P. Palmieri in a position of ultimate authority over the government entomologists as they planned and implemented the eradication effort against this unprecedented infestation. His insight and expertise would have put the experts efforts at eradication to shame, seems to be the implication of his helpful statements. Lets all hope his insights can help turn the tide. The Council and Worcester is lucky to have the services of this multi talented man.

Posted on Friday January 2, 2015 at 5:33 AM | Reply
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Sunday, January 11, 2015

Worcester councilor questions beetle fight strategy

By Thomas Caywood TELEGRAM & GAZETTE STAFF
tcaywood@telegram.com
3 comments | Add a comment

WORCESTER — With federal Asian longhorned beetle fighters set to take up their chain saws again to go after newly discovered infestations in the woods of Green Hill Park, at least one city councilor is calling for a resumption of pesticide treatments previously abandoned by the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

Early in the beetle battle, the USDA treated thousands of trees with imidacloprid, a synthetic version of nicotine that's toxic to many insects.

But the agency suspended the pesticide trunk injections after two years in 2011, as the area known to be affected by the beetles grew to include all of Worcester, Shrewsbury, Boylston, West Boylston and parts of Auburn and Holden.

Shocked that significant concentrations of infested trees remained undiscovered in the heart of the city after eight years and millions of dollars spent on the federal eradication effort, District 2 Councilor Philip P. Palmieri said he plans to push for a resumption of imidacloprid treatments.

"When you look at the city and beyond, and you look at the miles of trees that surround us in our neighborhoods and in our parks, we have to know that what we're doing is working. We need a better approach," said Mr. Palmieri, whose district includes Green Hill Park.

The USDA's Asian longhorned beetle eradication czar for Massachusetts, Ryan Vasquez, said the agency might resume imidacloprid trunk injections at some point, but not this year.

Mr. Vasquez acknowledged that the pesticide, while costly to apply, can be effective in killing adult beetles as it spreads through the vascular system of a host tree.

The problem is that there just isn't enough time to inject all of the susceptible trees in the woods of Green Hill Park before July, when Asian longhorned beetles take flight, he said.

"We have all these known infested trees, and we're in a race to get to them before the beetles emerge and disperse," Mr. Vasquez said.

"To remove the trees, that's the only guarantee," he added. "Each tree is its own organism. It might take up the chemical in one side of the tree better than the other, depending on weather or other factors."

Because imidacloprid doesn't bind well to the nerve cells of mammals and birds, it isn't thought to pose a substantial risk to humans in the low doses injected into trees. But a 2012 Harvard School of Public Health study carried out in Worcester County found the pesticide likely has had a role in the worldwide declines in honeybee

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Arthur Engdahl of Hartney Graymont applies treatment to a tree on Inwood Road to help eradicate the Asian longhorned beetle.
(T&G STAFF/ DAN GOULD)
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Richard Callahan of Holden, a member of the Worcester County Beekeepers Association, worked with the Harvard researchers studying the effects of imidacloprid on honeybees.

"There's no doubt that very low levels of this pesticide, when it gets into bees and probably other insects as well, it affects their behavior," Mr. Callahan said.

Some of the behavior changes, such as leaving the hive in winter, can kill affected bees, he said.

Asian longhorned beetles are known to be especially fond of maple trees, which also happen to be among the first sources of nectar for honeybees in the spring when the trees flower.

"There's no question that the pesticide would get into that nectar. It's very effective at controlling infestations, but it's going to get into every single thing that feeds on the plant," Mr. Callahan said.

While he wouldn't oppose focused local use of imidacloprid to help contain an Asian longhorned beetle infestation, Mr. Callahan said he fears worldwide routine use of the pesticide could seriously threaten the health of bee colonies.

He likens imidacloprid trunk injections to the question of whether or not to take a high blood pressure medication.

"You may need it, but you want to know what the side effects are before you take the drug," he said.

Mr. Palmieri, the city councilor, said he never heard a satisfactory explanation from the USDA why it ceased the Worcester pesticide treatments in 2011.

USDA's Mr. Vazquez said the agency simply had to shift its resources into finding the extent of an infestation that was proving to be much larger than first thought.

At last count, the USDA's contractors had cut 34,323 trees in Worcester County, according to an agency spokeswoman. The USDA has spent \$146 million since October 2008 on the eradication effort in Massachusetts, which included a much smaller infestation in Boston.

Now that the agency is confident it has found the boundaries of the infestation in the Worcester area, it may resume imidacloprid treatments in the future, Mr. Vazquez said.

"It's definitely not ruled out. We still find that to be one of the tools we can use in combination with tree removal. It's not off the table," he said.

Mr. Palmieri said he intends to raise the issue of pesticide treatments at an upcoming City Council meeting.

"What the USDA is doing just doesn't seem to be working like our community would expect after all these years and millions of dollars," he said.

Contact reporter Thomas Caywood at tcaywood@telegram.com or follow on Twitter @ThomasCaywood

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Worcester councilor questions beetle fight strategy

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Craig the union man wrote:

Q : Why don't you run for elected office? With all you do for your area , your charity softball benefit and. Such. I might not always agree with you , but I would vote for you!

Posted on Monday January 12, 2015 at 2:56 PM | Reply
Agree (1) Disagree (1)

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-Q wrote:

Rather than continue on with the status quo...looking to try an alternative is appropriate and timely and I would expect nothing less from an elected official concerned about his district. Great job Palmieri!

Posted on Monday January 12, 2015 at 6:47 AM | Reply
Agree (1) Disagree (3)

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Craig the union man wrote:

Let's see. Who. Has more knowledge and expertise in the battle of invasive Species. . Philip P. Palmieri. Or the Czar of the USDA? . It's time for Phil to. Bow out gracefully , (especially after the sound trouncing he received in the State Rep race) and enjoy his. City pension. This is more grandstanding on his part. I for one don't feel he's done a thing for our district , and I firmly believe he only looks out for Shewsbury street . Will someone of real Charector please run against him in the next municipal election .

Posted on Monday January 12, 2015 at 5:25 AM | Reply
Agree (1) Disagree (2)

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Monday, December 15, 2014

Newton Square menorah has a fresh glow



Harding Glass estimator Paul Corron, left, Rabbi Levi Liberow, center, and Harding Glass owner Mark Goldstein, right, teamed up to lead the restoration of the menorah at Newton Square in Worcester. (PAUL CONNORS)

By Brad Petrishen TELEGRAM & GAZETTE STAFF
brad.petrishen@telegram.com
Add a comment

WORCESTER — With the help of a local businessman, Newton Square's large old menorah will soon shine with a brand new aura.

"He's a lamplighter," Rabbi Levi Liberow of Congregation Tifereth Israel said Friday of Mark Goldstein, who has made some improvements to the local landmark that will be on full display Tuesday.

Mr. Goldstein, 63, owns Harding Glass on Harding Street. A congregation member and lifelong city resident, Mr. Goldstein last year noticed that the approximately 18-foot-tall menorah erected annually in the Newton Square rotary had lost some of its luster.

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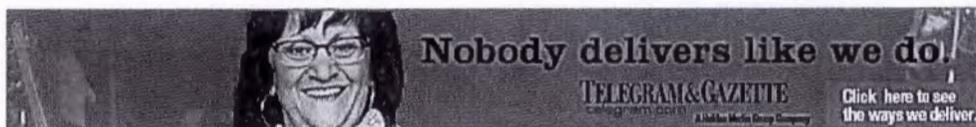


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Friday, December 26, 2014

Early New Year's events set at Worcester Common Oval

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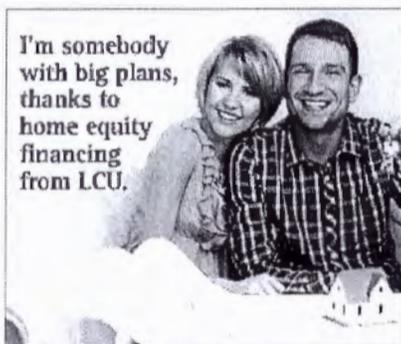
WORCESTER — The city will host free events on New Year's Eve at the Worcester Common Oval ice skating rink behind City Hall.

From 5 to 6 p.m. Wednesday there will be skating, music, face painting, an appearance by Finz of the Worcester Sharks, free hot chocolate for kids and other activities. At 6 p.m., there will be an early New Year's Eve countdown for children who can't stay up for the real thing. Public skating will open at noon.

The New Year's activities are part of a week of activities at the oval, which is open every day next week during school vacation. The oval is open for skating from noon to 5 p.m. Monday through Thursday (plus an extra hour for Wednesday's event), and from 5 to 8 p.m. Friday, Jan. 2.

For more information on schedules and events, visit www.worcestercommonoval.com. In the event of questionable weather, call (508) 929-0777 for updated skating conditions and any schedule changes for the rink.

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Article published Dec 16, 2014

Worcester panel OKs plan for walkway along Middle River

By **Steven H. Foskett Jr. TELEGRAM & GAZETTE STAFF**
steven.foskett@telegram.com

WORCESTER — The Conservation Commission approved an order of conditions Monday night for construction of an elevated walkway that would form the centerpiece of a new city park along the Middle River.

The commission unanimously approved an order of conditions for Blackstone Gateway Park, which will consist of about 1,095 feet of compacted permeable trails and about 1,448 feet of elevated boardwalk that will meander along the Middle River from an area across the street from the College of the Holy Cross' softball diamond to Blackstone River Road.

The only condition imposed above the standard orders — which include items such as security, planting plans, erosion controls, wood removal procedures that adhere to Asian longhorned beetle quarantine zone regulations, and runoff management — were that the commission be notified in advance of the start of construction.

When construction will begin was still unclear after Monday's public hearing, and there is still a long way to go for the project, but the commission had few concerns about the initial proposal Monday night.

The project is subject to the state Wetlands Protection Act and the city's wetlands protection ordinance because it is within bordering land subject to flooding, the 25-foot riverfront area associated with the Middle River, and other wetlands regulations.

The elevated walkway, which will include three bridges that will cross the river at various points, will be about 10 feet high, according to Michael Toohill of BSC Group, the firm that filed the initial application on behalf of the city.

Mr. Toohill said the walkway will rest on helical piers; the height of the walkway will minimize the impact on the wetlands vegetation underneath; the total impact on the wetlands and associated vegetation will be small for the completed project.

The impact on wetlands and vegetation will be higher during construction, Mr. Toohill said. He said temporary "swamp mats" will allow crews to bring equipment to the area to construct the walkway; however, once construction is completed the affected vegetation will grow back, he said.

Commissioner John Donahue said he was concerned about the lack of lighting that could help minimize illegal activity in the area at night.

Mr. Toohill said there are no provisions in the project for lighting.

Commissioner Joseph Charpentier said he was concerned about the lifespan of the of galvanized steel for the helical piers. Christopher Gagné, from the city's Department of Public Works and Parks, said he estimated those types of piers will last 30 to 40 years.

Mr. Charpentier said he was surprised that the commission could not come up with more conditions for a project that is almost entirely being constructed within a wetland area. Commissioner Peter McKone noted that the project isn't something the commission typically deals with; the commission's checklist was created for more routine projects, he said.

"It seems like we should be doing something exceptional, since this is an exceptional project," Mr. Charpentier said.

The park is one component of a vision for the neighborhood that includes plans for the Blackstone River Valley Visitors Center near Route 146, and a spur bike path connecting the complex with the Blackstone River Bikeway.

Contact Steven H. Foskett Jr. at sfoskett@telegram.com. Follow him on Twitter @SteveFoskettTG

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Worcester panel OKs plan for walkway along Middle River

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TTF wrote:

snoo wrote:

What a complete waste of funds!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

=====

Wrong. Anything that encourages people in this country to get off their couches and outside for some exercise is a good thing. We should be more of a walking/biking society and need more and more paths and trails to form a national network of trails.

Posted on Tuesday December 16, 2014 at 8:44 AM | Reply

Agree Disagree

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Finn McCool wrote:

snoo wrote:

What a complete waste of funds!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

Any time Worcester gets anything good the local citizens complain. People in Boston get hoards of money sent to them and they don't bat an eye. We get a token project here and there and people complain about a waste of tax dollars, even it it makes life just a little better for us all. Give me a break.

Posted on Tuesday December 16, 2014 at 8:12 AM | Reply

Agree (1) Disagree

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snoo wrote:

What a complete waste of funds!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

Posted on Tuesday December 16, 2014 at 7:49 AM | Reply

Agree (1) Disagree (1)

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-Q wrote:

Coming on the heels of Congressional approval of the Blackstone River corridor as National Park...this project makes eminent sense

Posted on Tuesday December 16, 2014 at 6:56 AM | Reply

Agree (2) Disagree (1)

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National park status imminent for Blackstone River Valley region

LOCAL TREASURE

By Donna Boynton TELEGRAM & GAZETTE STAFF
donna.boynton@telegram.com

Rumor has it that confetti has been purchased and champagne corks are ready to pop in celebration of the U.S. Senate's expected approval of a bill that includes a national park designation for the Blackstone River Valley, a unique national park in that it would be located in two states — Rhode Island and Massachusetts — and would give national recognition to the area as the birthplace of the Industrial Revolution.

The national park designation is part of the National Defense Authorization Act of 2015. It was passed by the U.S. House of Representatives Dec. 4 and is now before the Senate. If approved, a new unit of the National Park System would be created along the John H. Chafee Blackstone River Valley National Heritage Corridor. "It's all about the river," said Charlene Perkins Cutler, executive director of the Blackstone River Valley National Heritage Corridor, Inc., which manages the area. "It's one valley, it's one environment, it's one history, all powered by the Blackstone River."

The effort to create a national park in the Blackstone Valley has been ongoing for at least a decade, but gained momentum in recent years.

The Blackstone River Valley National Historical Park Establishment Act was introduced by U.S. Rep. David N. Cicilline, D-R.I. and co-sponsored by Democratic Reps. Richard E. Neal and James P. McGovern of Massachusetts and James Langevin, D-R.I., to preserve the natural and historical significance of sites along the Blackstone River Corridor. The legislation was introduced in the Senate by Sen. Jack Reed, D-R.I.

According to the text of the bill, the Blackstone River Valley National Historical Park includes the Blackstone River State Park in Lincoln, Rhode Island; the Old Slater Mill National Historic Landmark District in Pawtucket, R.I.; the Slatersville Historic District in North Smithfield, R.I.; Ashton Historic District in Cumberland, R.I.; Whitinsville Historic District in Northbridge.

Also, Hopedale Village Historic District in Hopedale; the Blackstone River and the tributaries of the Blackstone River; and the Blackstone Canal.

"We are very excited," said Jeannie Hebert, president and CEO of the Blackstone Valley Chamber of Commerce and member of the board of directors of Blackstone River Valley National Heritage Corridor Inc. She added that the national park designation will also open the area up to federal funding and resources from federal agencies.

"This has been a collaborative effort in both states, and we owe a debt of gratitude to the legislators who have been pushing for this."

A general management plan for the park is to be completed within three years, and the plan will include ways to use existing visitors facilities within the National Heritage Corridor, such as the Museum of Work and Culture in Woonsocket, Rhode Island; Riverbend Farm/Blackstone River and Canal Heritage State Park in Uxbridge; and the Worcester Blackstone Visitor Center in Worcester; and the Blackstone River Bikeway.

"Basically this takes some of the most significant areas of the Blackstone Valley National River Heritage Corridor and incorporating them into a national park," Ms. Perkins Cutler said. "The federal government would not come in and take land by eminent domain; instead it is focusing on the historic districts that already exist."

The Blackstone Valley is hailed as the birthplace of the Industrial Revolution and a national park designation would elevate the area's importance in American history.

"This gives recognition to the importance of the entire watershed and the heritage corridor as the birthplace of the industrial revolution," Ms. Perkins Cutler said.

"The story is so important. It is as iconic as Plymouth Rock and Independence Hall."

Ms. Perkins Cutler added that such a designation would be a boon to all local communities, as National Parks draw a lot of tourists.

Once approved by Congress, the bill must be signed into law by President Barack Obama. The John H. Chafee Blackstone River Valley National Historical Park would be run through a special partnership that would allow the National Park Service to manage and operate the facilities and provide educational services in the park in partnership with regional and local preservation groups that would lead the efforts to preserve the surrounding rural and agriculture landscape within the existing corridor, according to the bill.

In addition to the national park designation, the same bill also expands the National Heritage Corridor to include Auburn and an additional section of Providence, and reauthorizes the corridor until 2021.

"A national park is really special.

"It shows the commitment to the story we have to tell and the resources we still have to tell that story," Ms. Perkins Cutler said.

Contact Donna Boynton at Donna.Boynton@telegram.com

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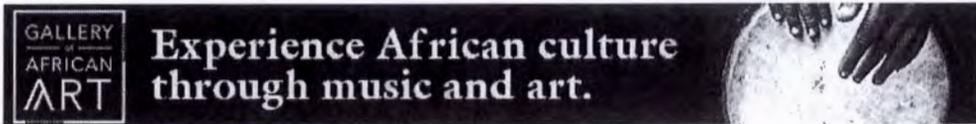
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GMCohan wrote:
Now I can go to Yellowstone or the Grand Canyon and I won't have to fight the crowds...they will all be here.
Posted on Friday December 12, 2014 at 11:08 AM | Reply
Agree Disagree Report abuse



walker wrote:
Good work by RI Congressional delegation of Rep James Langevin, David Cicilline, Senators Jack Reed and Sheldon Whitehouse and Massachusetts Rep Jim McGovern and Dick Neal and Senators Elizabeth Warren and Ed Markey for bringing a national park to the Blackstone Valley. Besides recreation it should also serve as a spark for the tourism industry in both states. Congratulations.
Posted on Friday December 12, 2014 at 11:05 AM | Reply
Agree Disagree Report abuse



Sarcastic Man wrote:
With all of the pressing issues facing our country, I am so pleased to see our Federal Government is dealing with the most important item facing the country....A National Park.
This is why all Americans view our Federal Government with such respect and admiration.
Posted on Friday December 12, 2014 at 10:59 AM | Reply
Agree (1) Disagree (1) Report abuse



Valley wrote:
The view from Lookout Rock (shown in the picture) is spectacular, especially when the leaves are turning. The Goat Hill path on the other side of the Blackstone River is great, too, with lots of opportunities for wildlife sightings.
Posted on Friday December 12, 2014 at 9:27 AM | Reply
Agree (5) Disagree (1) Report abuse



Kat23 wrote:
Score 1 for UN and agenda 21
Posted on Friday December 12, 2014 at 9:22 AM | Reply
Agree (1) Disagree Report abuse



Susan77 wrote:
If anyone hasn't walked the trails do your self a favor and go. Read up on the Indian Wars during the late 1600's that include this area. The trails are kid friendly - not too strenuous - just really enjoyable.
It's really a great treasure we have in our own back yards.
Posted on Friday December 12, 2014 at 9:22 AM | Reply
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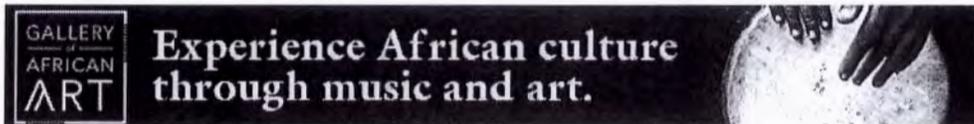
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TTF wrote:

This is great and I look forward to seeing the plans for the park system. Massachusetts has some great parks like Moore, Leominster, Hopkinton, Callahan and the list goes on. If there is anybody that has never visited a state park and hasn't been able to appreciate the unique beauty each one has, like the azaleas and rhododendrons at Moore, then I truly feel sorry for you.

We are lucky to have so many places to enjoy the outdoors with not only the state parks, but local land trusts, the Mid State trail and the Wachusett watershed.

Posted on Friday December 12, 2014 at 7:55 AM | Reply
Agree (8) Disagree (2)

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realist7 wrote:

Oh Boy!!!! More cushy jobs for politicians relatives.... 😏👓👓

Posted on Friday December 12, 2014 at 7:09 AM | Reply
Agree (4) Disagree (8)

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Independent Thinker wrote:

Are there any statistics on how many people actually come here because of the Blackstone River and the Blackstone Valley? Not trying to knock things, but I am curious.

Posted on Friday December 12, 2014 at 6:26 AM | Reply
Agree (4) Disagree (1)

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Worcester#1 wrote:

This is wonderful news. Now let's get the bike path completed and give some real support to the folks in the Canal District

Posted on Friday December 12, 2014 at 6:05 AM | Reply
Agree (8) Disagree (3)

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-Q wrote:

This is terrific news for our city and the Canal District. The next big economic driver to push our city forward is this designation combined with finally opening up the Blackstone Canal

Posted on Friday December 12, 2014 at 6:04 AM | Reply
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Friday, January 9, 2015

Worcester panel wrestles with how much to regulate tobacco

By **Steven H. Foskett Jr. TELEGRAM & GAZETTE STAFF**
steven.foskett@telegram.com
16 comments | Add a comment

WORCESTER — Health officials and city councilors continued this week to try to hammer out recommendations on how to expand the city's tobacco ordinance.

Some aspects of the proposed ordinance, designed to curb the impact of secondhand smoke and to limit access to tobacco by youths, have proven difficult to gain consensus on, prompting the Public Health and Human Services Committee to shift to an a la carte approach to be able make at least some recommendations to the full council.

The proposed ordinance would:

- Regulate the sale of nicotine delivery products (e-cigarettes, etc.) the same way the city regulates tobacco products.
- Require cigars costing less than \$2.50 be sold in packages of two or more at a cost of \$5.
- Expand the enforcement period from 12 to 24 months.
- Ban the redemption of coupons that make non-cigarette products free and make cigarettes cheaper than state-set minimum prices.
- Require cessation signs in retail stores.
- Ban smoking in parks, playgrounds, athletic fields, and beaches.
- Ban non-residential "roll your own" tobacco rolling machines.
- Expand the smoke-free buffer zone on library property and health care institutions to 200 feet.
- Ban e-cigarette use wherever smoking is banned.
- Ban other flavored tobacco products, including e-cigarettes, except in adult-only tobacco stores.

The buffer zone section prompted debate on the committee. Councilors were concerned how it would be enforced, particularly at health care institutions.

Derek Brindisi, the city director of public health, said hospitals have approached him and asked how they can give their officers the authority to enforce the buffer zone, which is currently set at 50 feet.

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Deputy Police Chief Edward J. McGinn told the committee that City Solicitor David M. Moore said that under the current ordinance, buffer zone violations are non-criminal, so the zones cannot be enforced by hospital officers. He said an ordinance could be drafted giving police at hospitals authority to enforce the zones.

District 2 Councilor Philip P. Palmieri said the problem with the buffer zones as they stand now is that there's no enforcement.

"Why pass an ordinance if we can't enforce it?" Mr. Palmieri asked.

He suggested that as the buffer zone proposal moves forward, the council should simultaneously work on drafting an ordinance that puts the onus on the hospitals for enforcement.

Councilor-at-Large Michael T. Gaffney took issue with the section of the ordinance requiring that cigars costing less than \$2.50 be sold in packages of two or more at a cost of \$5. He said he thought it was discriminatory toward poor people who can legally buy the products, and questioned whether price control was an effective tool in youth smoking prevention.

Cheryl Sbarra of the Massachusetts Association of Health Boards said a multitude of studies across the country show that youths are indeed sensitive to tobacco pricing. Mr. Gaffney said he'd like to see more data.

Mr. Palmieri said he was concerned how the ordinance would affect small businesses, and Mr. Gaffney said he couldn't get his head around how the ordinance is even necessary when store clerks are required to ask for identification to sell tobacco products.

But District 4 Councilor Sarai Rivera said it is necessary to start somewhere.

"It's a serious issue that's growing, and creating chronic illnesses," Ms. Rivera said.

Some common ground seemed to exist among the committee members when it came to treating e-cigarettes the same way the city regulates tobacco. The councilors also agreed on having cessation signs posted in stores, and agreed to expanding the enforcement period from 12 to 24 months.

Contact Steven H. Foscett Jr. at sfoskett@telegram.com. Follow him on Twitter @SteveFoscettTG

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Worcester panel wrestles with how much to regulate tobacco

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navigator wrote:

Can you imagine what it would be like to be arrested or fined for having a cigarette or cigar lit up! Good luck with that! Keeping smokers out of public buildings is one thing but in the open air that's another. Stopping the sale of tobacco products can also be counter productive not only in lost revenues and hurting small businesses, just look at what happened up in Westminster.

Posted on Saturday January 10, 2015 at 8:11 AM | Reply
Agree (1) Disagree

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Bella wrote:

remember folks - its an election year - time to throw da bums out

Posted on Friday January 9, 2015 at 10:24 PM | Reply
Agree (5) Disagree

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Traveller wrote:

"?Ban the redemption of coupons that make non-cigarette products free and make cigarettes cheaper than state-set minimum prices."

What's next, ban Papa Gino's from including discount pizza deals in the Sunday newspaper....

Posted on Friday January 9, 2015 at 7:03 PM | Reply
Agree (6) Disagree

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herman38 wrote:

This is just another reason for our glorious city council to dodge the REAL problems of violence, drug addiction and joblessness in Worcester. I say that they should lay off smoking, candy bars and soda and do something IMPORTANT for a change.

Posted on Friday January 9, 2015 at 10:05 AM | Reply
Agree (15) Disagree

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teacher1025 wrote:

Independent Thinker wrote:
Ban smoking. Legalize drugs. Makes perfect sense.

Remember, NH is a quick ride. Go up once a month, do your shopping, and have a nice lunch.

Exactly. Don't even need to go to NH unless it's a major appliance or an urgent need that is purchased locally. Pretty much shop for everything online. Free shipping and best of all no taxes to the commonwealth. Got a little tougher when Amazon started collecting MA tax and we had to go elsewhere, but hey, lots of deals out there to be had. Otherwise, we shop local business and avoid big box stores at all cost.

Posted on Friday January 9, 2015 at 9:46 AM | Reply
Agree (8) Disagree

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Finn11 wrote:

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Just more regulations to keep the Council. 😊
Did someone give Rushton a ball to play with?

Posted on Friday January 9, 2015 at 9:08 AM | Reply
Agree (12) Disagree

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bayleh wrote:

I would love to see tobacco products banned in parks and playgrounds. People who are addicted to cigarettes certainly have a right to keep their addiction but not if the stuff gets into other peoples' lungs. Especially bad is the smoke during outdoor concerts. 😊

Posted on Friday January 9, 2015 at 8:55 AM | Reply
Agree (1) Disagree (8)

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Susan77 wrote:

REGULATE, REQUIRE, EXPAND, and BAN equals CONTROL!

Posted on Friday January 9, 2015 at 8:18 AM | Reply
Agree (11) Disagree

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Publius wrote:

The council has too much time on it's hands. You would think we did not have a \$700 million unfunded retiree benefit or gangs running rampant in the streets and parks.

Posted on Friday January 9, 2015 at 7:46 AM | Reply
Agree (15) Disagree (1)

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-Q wrote:

Just curious?

With all the opposition to the proposed smoking bans and regulations being considered...Why are people not equally concerned that alcohol - a legal and taxable product is banned from consumption in an equal manner as cigs in our parks, etc...?

Posted on Friday January 9, 2015 at 6:57 AM | Reply
Agree (7) Disagree (2)

Report abuse



Independent Thinker wrote:

Ban smoking. Legalize drugs. Makes perfect sense.

Remember, NH is a quick ride. Go up once a month, do your shopping, and have a nice lunch.

Posted on Friday January 9, 2015 at 6:37 AM | Reply
Agree (14) Disagree (2)

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alan44 wrote:

I quit smoking many years ago because I wanted to. I did not need the help of any Liberal panels or lawmakers. It would be nice if these people would stop trying to control people or punish people for doing something that is legal and just plain mind their own business. It is quite foolish to try to legalize drugs that will fry your brain while trying to force people to quit smoking tobacco that is less harmful than drugs. If these panels want to impose on people how about starting a ban on the stupid and dishonest habit of Political Correctness.

Posted on Friday January 9, 2015 at 6:01 AM | Reply
Agree (16) Disagree (1)

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Independent Thinker wrote:

While you're at it, ban all signs, advertising, promotions, and displays, and put even more people out of work.

Leave it alone. It's legal. If it is really so bad, then ban it, but the government doesn't have the nerve to do this because of all of the tax revenue they will lose. Then how will they pay for children's health care?

Posted on Friday January 9, 2015 at 5:31 AM | Reply
Agree (15) Disagree (1)

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membernumber13 wrote:

--But District 4 Councilor Saral Rivera said it is necessary to start somewhere. "It's a serious issue that's growing, and creating chronic illnesses," Ms. Rivera said.--

Smoking has been on the decline among youth for 15 years and every government study backs this up. This person has no business making decisions that affect anyone when they rely on their own opinions over scientific studies.

Also, deeming "flavored" things as "targeting children" is absurd. Not everything is about "the children". Sometimes grown adults want some variety. Either outlaw tobacco completely or mind your own business.

Posted on Friday January 9, 2015 at 3:51 AM | Reply
Agree (14) Disagree (1)

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Money Money Money wrote:

I propose a ban on any further City Council discussion on these silly rules which will accomplish nothing, because they can not and will not be enforced.

It seems that this is the type of nonsense that the council is always discussing. You would think there are no real problems in this city that they should be dealing with.

Posted on Thursday January 8, 2015 at 10:52 PM | Reply
Agree (19) Disagree (1)

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p1pe wrote:

well what about alcoholism and traffic deaths from drunk drivers..ban the sale of alcohol to stop drunk drivers from killing people--oh wait--that would cut into their wallets--how silly of me...gosh I wonder how many smoking drivers have killed due to excessive smoke inhalation..what a bunch of malarkey..

Posted on Thursday January 8, 2015 at 9:53 PM | Reply
Agree (16) Disagree (1)

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Kelsey Clarkson, then 11, of Gahanna, flew off the ramp on her sled at Blendon Woods Metro Park last January. Some cities have banned sledding for fear of being sued after an accident.

By Scott McFetridge
Associated Press • Monday January 5, 2015 6:38 AM

Comments: 0 40 2 286

DES MOINES, Iowa — As anyone who has grown up around snow knows, part of the fun of sledding is the risk of soaring off a jump or careening around a tree.

But faced with the potential bill from sledding injuries, some cities have opted to close hills rather than risk large liability claims.

No one tracks how many cities have banned or limited sledding, but the list grows every year. One of the latest is Dubuque, Iowa, where the city council is moving ahead with a plan to ban sledding in all but two of its 50 parks.

"We have all kinds of parks that have hills on them," said Marie Ware, Dubuque's leisure services manager. "We can't manage the risk at all of those places."

A study by the Center for Injury Research and Policy at Nationwide Children's Hospital in Columbus found that between 1997 and 2007, more than 20,000 children each year were treated at emergency rooms for sledding-related injuries.

In meetings leading up to the ban, Dubuque council members lamented the move but said it was the only responsible choice given liability concerns and demands from the city's insurance carrier. They pointed to decisions in sledding lawsuits in the past decade, such as a \$2 million judgment against Omaha, Neb., after a 5-year-old girl was paralyzed when she hit a tree, and a \$2.75 million payment when a man in Sioux City, Iowa, slid into a sign and injured his spinal cord.

Some cities have opted for less drastic measures in the past several years rather than an all-out ban, including Des Moines, Iowa, and Lincoln, Neb. By banning sledding on certain slopes or posting signs warning people to sled at their own risk, cities lessen their liability if someone is seriously hurt, but they're still more vulnerable to lawsuits than if they had adopted an outright ban.

In Omaha, the city banned sledding at a popular hill as a test one winter after losing a lawsuit but decided to allow it again after most people ignored the restriction.

"It wasn't practical," assistant city attorney Tom Mumgaard said. "People wouldn't abide by the ban."

Instead, the city has posted signs warning of sledding risks and put pads around posts and hay bales around trees. Mumgaard said courts in Nebraska have decided cities must protect people, even if they make poor choices.

Most people realize that cities must restrict potentially dangerous activities to protect people and guard against costly lawsuits, said Kenneth Bond, a New York lawyer who represents local governments. Steve King, who runs a website that promotes sledding, said he understands why cities impose restrictions. He notes that most sledders don't wear helmets, and it's nearly impossible to steer away from trees, rocks or signs.

"We live in a lawsuit-happy society, and cities are just being protective by banning sledding in areas that pose a risk for injury or death," King said.

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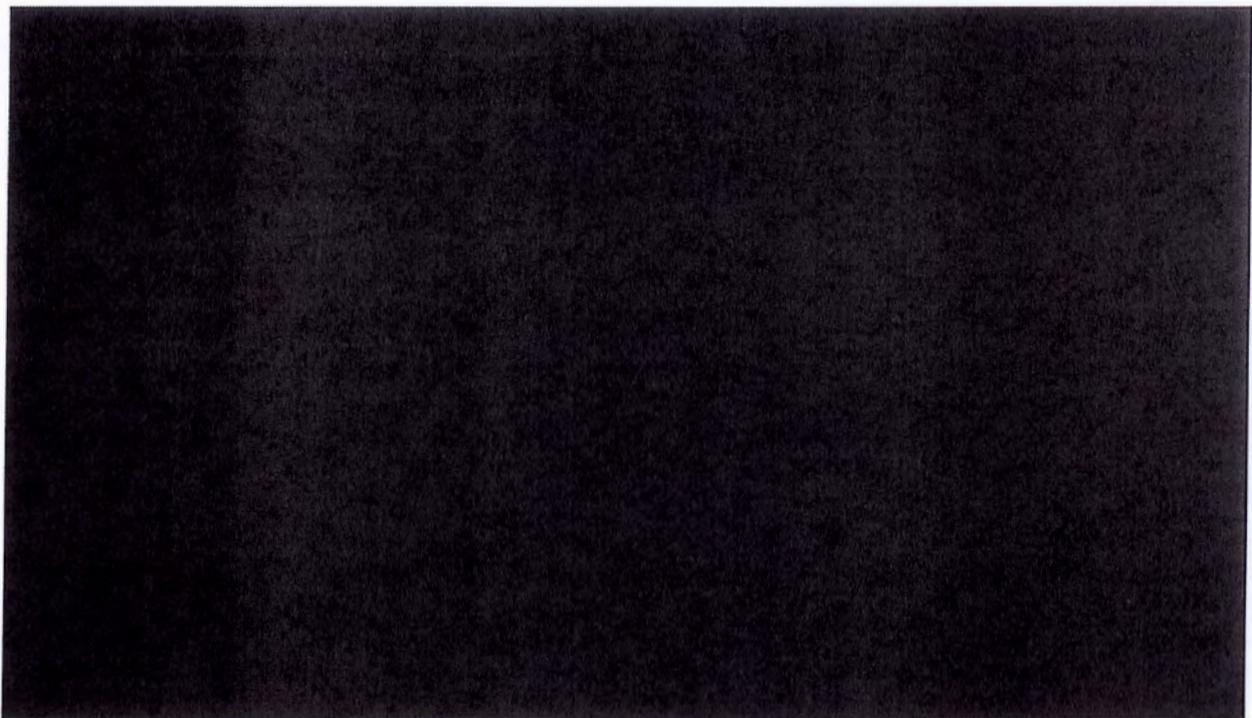
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You may be required to bring kid to use Hollywood playgrounds



Hollywood commissioners are expected to approve new rules that would require adults who enter city-owned playgrounds to be in the company of a child under 13.

By **Susannah Bryan**

Sun Sentinel

JANUARY 6, 2015, 2:22 PM | HOLLYWOOD

Want to hang out at the playgrounds in Hollywood's parks?

Soon, you might need to bring a kid along.

On Wednesday, Hollywood commissioners are expected to approve new rules that would require anyone over age 12 who enters city-owned playgrounds to be in the company of a child younger than 13.

Commissioner Kevin Biederman says Hollywood has been getting complaints for months about homeless people and amorous teens taking over some of the city's playgrounds.

That means less space for little tykes, the very people for whom the playgrounds were designed.

"I think [the proposed rule] a great thing," Biederman said. "It gives police and park rangers that extra teeth to be able to protect our residents."

Signs notifying the public of the new rules would be posted at the entrance to each of Hollywood's 40 playgrounds by the end of January, says city spokeswoman Raelin Storey.

Violators would face a fine up to \$500 and/or up to 60 days in jail.

The signs will help the city's police and code enforcement officers persuade people who don't belong in the playground to move along, Storey said.

"Our parks are for everyone," she said. "But playground equipment is for the children."

Police Chief Frank Fernandez says the new rules will also help safeguard the city's playgrounds from sex offenders.

"We are not looking to go out and arrest individuals — although it is an arrestable offense," he told commissioners in December. "Right now, we can't tell them to leave. If we pass this ordinance, we will be able to tell them to leave."

Miami Beach, San Francisco and New York City have passed similar bans, citing the need to keep playgrounds safe for children.

In 2012, Monroe County commissioners banned adults from a gated playground at Higgs Beach in Key West — unless they are accompanied by a child. The law was criticized as anti-homeless.

But even homeless advocate Sean Cononie says he has no problem with Hollywood's new rules, as long as the rest of the park is open to everyone.

"After all, playgrounds are for children, not adults," he said.

Not everyone likes the new rule.

"I don't agree with it at all," said Hollywood resident John O'Mahony. "I know what they're trying to do. But I don't think that's the right way to secure parks."

But Alan Rich, a Hollywood resident and retired New York City detective, praised the idea.

"It will keep people who don't belong away from children," Rich said. "If they don't belong, there's no reason for them to be there. If there has been a problem, you have to do something about it."

Biederman says he expects the signs may stir up controversy.

"I'm sure some segments of the population won't be happy about the signs," he said. "They feel a playground should be open to everybody. People like the park and maybe they don't understand the scope of it. They may think the whole park will be shut down when it's just a certain area."

sbryan@sunsentinel.com or 954-356-4554

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