

# Town boosts smoking age to 21

*Joins NYC, Suffolk County; Bosworth urges villages to pass similar laws*

BY JOE NIKIC

The North Hempstead Town Board approved a new law Tuesday that raises the legal age to purchase cigarettes, electronic cigarettes and other tobacco products from 18 to 21 years old.

Town Supervisor Judi Bosworth said the intent of the law was to limit access to tobacco products for youth in the town and deter them from starting to smoke cigarettes.

"Today we're taking a very important step towards protecting our young people's health," Bosworth said.

The law applies to unincorporated areas of the town.

Town officials rejected a proposal in September that would have limited the advertising of electronic cigarettes, liquid nicotine and other tobacco products in any outdoor area that is within 500 feet of a park or school to a 5-by-8-inch, black and white advertisement.

Bosworth had said that the law was "well-intentioned," but



North Hempstead Town Supervisor Judi Bosworth

the town would have faced legal troubles and youth would still be able to purchase tobacco products.

She cited a report from the Public Health and Tobacco Policy Center stating that 96 percent of smokers begin smoking before the age of 21 and that 90 percent adults who provide cigarettes to minors are younger than 21.

Bosworth said the town's efforts aligned with the efforts of county Legislator Judy Jacobs, who died in September, in attempting to restrict tobacco use in Nassau County.

"While we can't do it for the whole county, we in North Hempstead agree with Judy Jacobs and will do our part to make tobacco products and e-

cigarettes harder to buy for our youth," she said.

Bosworth also urged elected officials in the incorporated villages within the town to take similar measures in raising the legal age to purchase tobacco products.

"I sincerely hope that the villages within our borders will follow our lead and will also change their laws by raising the age to 21," she said.

New York City and Suffolk County have already raised the legal age to purchase tobacco products to 21.

"This is a very proud day," Bosworth said.

Also at the meeting, the board passed a resolution allowing a disabled resident to request an on-street reserved parking space "immediately adjacent to his or her residence."

Disabled residents seeking the designated parking space by their home must provide the town with proof of residency, have a disabled state-issued license plate or disabled parking

permit and submit a doctor's note specifying the need for the parking space.

Also, if the applicant does not drive a car, he or she must provide proof that the owner of the vehicle lives with the applicant and that the vehicle is routinely used to drive the disabled resident around.

Applicants who receive the designated parking space must submit a recertification of their doctor's diagnosis every two years proving that there is a continued need for the space.

Those seeking a reserved parking space have to submit a request and provide all necessary documentation to the Office of the Town Clerk.

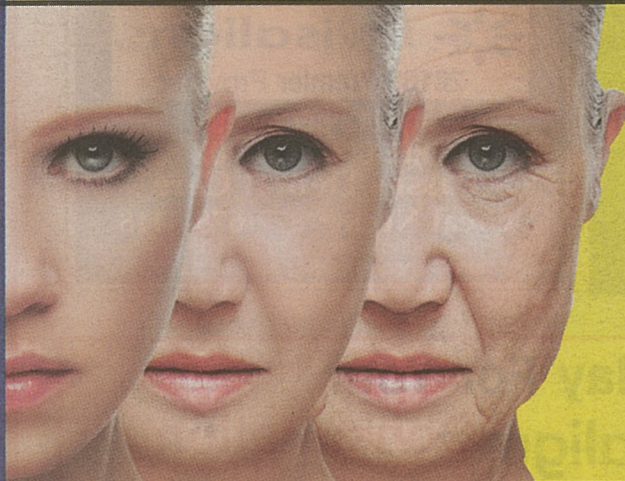
The town's traffic technician will also provide a determination and recommendation to the town on if a reserved parking space is feasible for the location and if so, where it should be located.

The Town Board will then have to approve the parking space after a public hearing.

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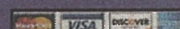
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