

City Intends To Ban Hookah Lounges

SUBMITTED BY SAFE, INC.

Residents of Glen Cove should not expect to see any hookah lounges opening in the area any time soon after a unanimous vote by the City Council to refer the matter to the city's planning commission, with the intent of passing legislation to ban these establishments. The decision comes much to the relief of members of the SAFE PRIDE Project Coalition, a community-based coalition of SAFE Board of Directors and staff, City of Glen Cove officials, school district representation, the Glen Cove Police Department, local not-for-profits, clergy, the business district and community volunteers.

The planning commission is expected to amend Sec. 280-2 of the Glen Cove City Code of Ordinances making hookah lounges a prohibited use in all zoning districts throughout the city.

Last summer, Councilman Tony Gallo, SAFE Coalition's co-chair and former Councilman Tony Jimenez, SAFE Coalition's Community Committee Chair, reached out to the board of directors of SAFE Inc. and Carol Meschkow, Nassau Coordinator for the Tobacco Action Coalition of Long Island for technical support and data to assist the city in an effort to ban establishments of this nature. The mission of SAFE, and its coalition is to eliminate alcohol and

substance abuse in the City of Glen Cove.

SAFE has been working with the Tobacco Action Coalition on a statewide initiative "We've Seen Enough" campaign to combat youth cigarette and tobacco product use by teaching high school students about the power of cigarette and tobacco marketing in local stores and in advertising in general. The coalition's School Committee, chaired by Denise Kiernan, director of athletics and physical education, works with student groups, SALT and teens and teachers to facilitate the campaign throughout the schools.

"Protecting our youth from becoming the next generation of smokers is an important challenge, and I am so grateful for the partnership with SAFE's PRIDE Project Coalition in this effort to reduce our youth's exposure to tobacco marketing, especially with the emergence of e-cigarettes and the proliferation of the glitzy advertising associated with the product," said Meschkow.

"This May, the fruits of this collaboration's efforts saw the city's amendments to the code to raise the purchase age of e-cigarettes to 19 and to prohibit tobacco marketing 1,000 feet from schools, and youth facilities. The collective voices of the community were heard, validating the students' advocacy by the

mayor and city council's outstanding swift legislative action," continued Meschkow.

In a recent survey of college aged students, 37 percent of those polled responded that they thought that hookahs were not as dangerous as cigarette smoking. The World Health Organization (WHO) said that contrary to popular belief, the smoke that emerges from a water pipe contains numerous toxins known to cause lung cancer, heart disease and other diseases.

SAFE, Inc and its coalition is committed to reducing youths' exposure to addictive substances and will continue to work with Carol Meschkow on changing the social norms associated with the acceptance of its use, particularly after working with the city on tobacco signage to ban smoking from the city's recreational venues. It is this collaboration's hope to see e-cigarettes included in this outdoor initiative.

For further information on any SAFE, Inc. PRIDE Project Coalition and their initiatives contact Coalition Coordinator Aimee Abraham at 516-676-2008. SAFE Inc. is a not-for-profit tax-exempt substance abuse education and prevention agency located in Glen Cove. Visit www.safeglen Cove.org and www.facebook.com/GlenCovePrideCoalition.