

Press Release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Safe Coalition Community Committee Advocates for a Safer Glen Cove for Our Children and Quality of Life for Its Residents

A Public Hearing took place at City Hall on July 25th to discuss Local Law 04-2023, amending Chapter 280, "Zoning", Section 280-6, Section 280-45.3, entitled, "Prohibition applicable to all districts", Section 280-66(F), entitled, "Special uses permitted at the discretion of the Planning Board", and Section 280-74, entitled, "Penalties for offenses", of the Code of the City of Glen Cove. This was the second Public Hearing.

It is against the law in New York not only to possess or sell illegal drugs, but to possess drug paraphernalia for the purpose of manufacturing, selling or packaging drugs. Under New York Penal Code § 220.50 to be convicted of criminally using drug paraphernalia in the second degree the prosecutor must show that you knowingly possess or sell: (1) Diluents or adulterants; (2) Gelatine capsules, glassine envelopes, vials, capsules or any other material that can be used to package narcotics; (3) Scales and balances used or designed for the purpose of weighing or measuring controlled substances. As many of these items have other, innocuous uses, to be convicted of this crime the prosecutor must show that you possessed or sold these products under circumstances that indicate that you knew that the products were to be used to manufacture, package or sell drugs.

The City of Glen Cove has seen an increase in retail shops that have ostensibly opened as a tobacco shop and slowly started to begin to introduce drug paraphernalia and sell illegal synthetic drugs. In June 2022, the Glen Cove Police Department Crime Prevention Unit (CPU), began investigating sales of synthetic Tetrahydrocannabinol (THC) from local Smoke Shops located within the city. The investigation was initiated after the department received complaints that youths were purchasing various synthetic THC products from local smoke shops in the area.

During last year's investigation, 8 people associated with 4 smoke shops in Glen Cove were arrested and charged with drug offenses. THC is the main psychoactive compound in marijuana and it's what gives users the 'high.' Synthetic THC is man-made in labs and is the main ingredient in products called Delta- 8 that is currently illegal under New York State law, as well as edible gummies and candies. Many of these candies have very similar candy wrappings as popular candies such as Razzles, Skittles and life savers. The arrests took place at the end of June and the first week of July.

Over the course of the last year, SAFE, the GCPD and Mayor's office received community complaints from residents and surrounding communities that these stores were selling THC/flavored nicotine vapes to minors. Cumulatively, 10 people have been arrested for illegal sales of THC products. Arrests from 5 stores were made which included the owners as well as employees.

Last year, the Coalition's Community Committee embarked on an effort to draft and propose a new law restricting incoming stores to B2 District areas as strong and effective laws and regulations were needed to protect youth from deadly addiction by reducing access to tobacco, vaping products and other drug paraphernalia. With the assistance of the City Attorney, Tip Henderson, that effort came to successful fruition on July 25, 2023 at the City Council meeting whereby the proposed law was passed unanimously.

Members of the Community Committee are Georgie Connett, SAFE Board Chair, Community Committee Chair/Strategic Planner, Deputy Chief Ortiz, Detective Glennon, Bruce Kennedy, Tony Jiminez, SAFE Board Member, Deputy Mayor Donna McNaughton, Jill Nossa, Downtown BID and Sharon Harris, SAFE Executive Director/Coalition Co-Chair.

Georgie Connett addressed the Council, thanking them for their time and support in this serious matter and recognized Tip Henderson for his legal guidance in amending this Law. "The Mayor and City Council unanimously recognized the serious consequences of young people having access to harmful substances and that keeping them safe and promoting quality of life for all residents is a priority" stated Georgie Connett.

The Coalition has always advocated for the health and wellness of the Glen Cove community and has worked hand in hand with the Mayor and City Council to implement sustainable environmental strategies that supports and maintains a healthy environment for residents. Its mission is to eliminate alcohol and substance use in Glen Cove. In 2006, the Coalition initiated the City of Glen Cove's first Social Host Law which makes it a violation for adults to permit alcohol use in their homes by persons under the age of 21. In 2007, the law was adopted county-wide. and in 2011 No Smoking signage was prohibited at all Parks and Beaches and was modified to include vaping in 2018. In 2014, Hooka Lounges were banned. In 2022, the Coalition was successful in the support of the Opt-out of Marijuana Dispensaries. These environmental strategies were a result of a long standing collaboration with Carol Meschkow, Manager-Tobacco Action Coalition of Long Island.

The goals and objectives of the SAFE Glen Cove Coalition draw on a community-wide approach to change community norms, values, and policies about alcohol and substance abuse that foster consistent standards for behavior and the need for prevention. The Coalition was formed in 2003 and is composed of the following: youth, parents, business, media, school, youth-serving organizations, law enforcement, religious or fraternal organizations, civic or volunteer groups, healthcare professionals, state or local agencies, and other local organizations.

The Coalition will continue to provide alcohol and drug prevention, intervention and education to prevent and reduce youth use and will continue to inform the community about retail store activity as needed. To learn more about the SAFE Glen Cove Coalition please follow us on www.facebook.com/safeglencovecoalition or visit SAFE's website to learn more about the dangers of alcohol, tobacco/vaping and other drugs at www.safeglencove.org.