



St. Paul bans candy in form of tobacco

Teens led the way to write an ordinance prohibiting the sale of the imitation tobacco items and toy-like lighters. It takes effect in about a month.

By **CHRIS HAVENS**, Star Tribune

Last update: April 9, 2009 - 12:06 AM

Candy smokes and cartoon character lighters will no longer be allowed to be sold in St. Paul.

The City Council voted unanimously Wednesday to approve an ordinance that bans the sale of "imitation tobacco products" and "novelty lighters." The ordinance will take effect in about a month.

St. Paul might be the only U.S. city to ban both the fake tobacco products and lighters.

Several countries prohibit the sale of candy cigarettes, including Australia, Canada and Thailand. In the United States, some national retailers, such as CVS and Wal-Mart, have agreed not to sell them. Maine and Tennessee and several local

jurisdictions in other states have banned the sale of novelty lighters.

The ordinance was championed by a group of St. Paul teenagers working with the Association for Nonsmokers-Minnesota, which educates youth groups and individuals who want to lobby for anti-tobacco policies.

The teens expressed concern that candy cigarettes and toy-like lighters would glamorize tobacco use and lead children to smoke later in life. Some studies have confirmed their concerns.

Nobody spoke in opposition to the ordinance during a public hearing last week.

Council Member Melvin Carter III sponsored the ordinance but made the teenagers do all the research and sell it to his colleagues on the council.

"This happened as a result of the work of these young people," he said.

Shanicee Dillon, a junior at Johnson High School, was part of a core group involved in the drafting of the ordinance.

"It's nice to know you can have an impact

Advertisement

the news you want delivered right to your inbox →

SIGN UP NOW AT startribune.com/newsletters

Print Powered By FormatDynamics™



on a community," she said.

licenses.

Dillon added that it might be time to try to push similar ordinances in other cities.

Chris Havens • 612-673-4148

Jeremiah Carter, a Central High School sophomore was upbeat about the outcome.

"I couldn't stop thinking, 'Yes, we did it.'" Carter is not related to the council member who shares his last name.

Mayor Chris Coleman said he will sign the ordinance.

Also Wednesday, the council approved a budget amendment for the Department of Safety and Inspections that calls for laying off seven employees and reducing the hours worked by 36 trades inspectors from 40 to 32 per week.

The trades union members came up with the reduction in hours as a way to save another seven jobs.

The measures are part of a restructuring plan to cut costs in the department as the city tries to deal with an estimated \$13.4 million budget gap this year. Safety and Inspections has seen dramatic decreases in revenue from building permits and business

Advertisement

Reminder: Send Flowers
 Secretary's Day - April 22
 Mother's Day - May 10

**Save 15%
 Enter FD09**

800.216.6539
www.Boesen.com

Print Powered By FormatDynamics™