

Smoke Free Playgrounds Proposed In Atchison

(KAIR)--Tobacco would get the boot in city owned playgrounds if a request made by Live Well Live Atchison at Monday's meeting of the City Commission gains traction.

Andrea Clements of Live Well Live Atchison has a goal to make all city owned parks tobacco free.

On Monday, she, with almost a dozen supporters present, took a step to try and achieve it.

Clements presented her plan to prohibit tobacco use within 200 feet of a city playground. Here's why:

"Our children have the right to swing on a swing next to a child whose parent is a smoker and not inhale the smoke of that parent," Clements said. "Everyone has the right to breathe clean air, and it is the city's obligation to protect public health, safety and welfare."

Clements said signage provided by Live Well Live Atchison—at no cost to the city—would inform park users of the rule. And she envisions the policy as self-enforced similar to no littering or leashed dog policies. She doesn't want it to incur punishments for smokers rather,

"Our request is about the city taking a stand to protect the most vulnerable citizens we have—our children," Clements said. "We're not interested in seeing a lot of tickets written. Live Well Live Atchison is trying to systematically create a healthier community for our citizens and all children. We're hoping we can get the city's partnership in this."

Now, last night's presentation merely opens the discussion for city commissioners to draw up a policy to vote on.

Commissioners did raise varying questions and potential concerns from including designating areas in the park for smokers to how prevalent the problem even is.

Commission received the request to discuss further at a later date.

Clements added that Holton, Kansas City and Lawrence have no tobacco policies in all their city parks.

Many Signals Communications