

Smoking Ordinance May See Less Assembly Support Next Week

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Brianna Gibbs/KMXT

Next week the Kodiak Island Borough Assembly will decide if Kodiak residents should have an opportunity to vote on whether or not smoking should be banned in indoor public places.

The second hand smoke control ordinance, if passed by the assembly, will be put on the October ballot and left to the community to decide. During last week's borough assembly meeting, many assembly members expressed support for moving the ordinance forward to a public hearing, and even supported it being placed on the fall ballot. However, things took a turn during last night's assembly work session when one of those supporters changed their mind.

Assemblyman Tuck Bonney said he would no longer support advancing the ordinance to a ballot.

"I have heard from many, many people. The people that I represent don't put shoes on in the morning they put their XtraTufs on. And they smoke. The other comments that I hear is that it should be a business decision. At the plant we have a smoking room in our break room. It's a completely walled off room, away from everybody, and it's worked really well. I've received a lot of comments on this and I just at this point in time I'm not going to support it. I'm going to go ahead and say no. I thought about you know, maybe just putting it off for a while, and the more comments that I got and the more people that I talked to, especially among the fleet, and among my own crew. I've been listening to them, and I've got to listen to them because they're the people that I support. And I'm not going to support it any more. I'll be voting against it."

Assemblyman Dave Kaplan was absent during last week's meeting, but said he also wouldn't support the ordinance.

"At this time, I have a problem with this ordinance as is. I don't think it's ready yet. I don't think it's ready to go on a ballot. And I don't think it's worth at this point in this juncture that we waste staff time trying to get it on the ballot, until this is further thought. I think it's premature. It's

a big issue. Any ballot measure is a big issue because it's put to the public to vote on. At this time I will not be supporting this. No, not now."

The non smoking issue is on the agenda for next week's regular meeting. There will be a public hearing on the matter and assembly discussion. Assemblywomen Louise Stutes and Carol Austerman were absent during last night's work session, as was Assemblyman Aaron Griffin, who introduced the ordinance idea a month ago.

Also on next week's agenda is a reconsideration of a rezoning ordinance on a plot of land on Shannon Point in Womens Bay. The ordinance, which would rezone the land from business to industrial, was passed by the assembly last week. Bonney had been against the rezone, but changed his vote to the prevailing side so he could bring the item before the assembly once more. Kaplan was absent during the last vote on the ordinance.