

San Juan council supports ban on smoking in outdoor dining areas

April 18, 2019



San Juan Bautista council members this week unanimously approved the first reading of an ordinance that will make the city the first jurisdiction in the county with a ban against smoking in outdoor dining areas.

Council members approved the introduction of an ordinance, as proposed by San Benito County Public Health Services. The item will come back for a second reading next month as required with an ordinance revision. It will be enforceable 30 days later.

There were some questions on details before the approval, such as whether vaping would be included in the ban. The city attorney told council members it includes any lighted or combustible tobacco product and interpreted that to mean vaping would be prohibited in outdoor dining areas as well.

Public Health Officer Gail Newel in March made the case for such a ban in San Juan against smoking in outdoor dining areas. She mentioned how 151 jurisdictions throughout California have a similar outdoor smoke-free dining policy, including the city and county of Santa Cruz, Capitola, and Monterey. Newel also noted how second-hand smoke causes lung cancer and heart disease and has led to the death of 2.5 million Americans since the mid-1950s.

State Law does not prohibit smoking in outdoor areas of restaurants but cities are free to adopt stricter regulations.