

# Village may back state smoking ban

By Don Grigas  
Staff writer

At the Feb. 16 Woodridge Village Board meeting, trustees were expected to pass a resolution supporting a bill under review in the Illinois House of Representatives that would ban smoking in all public places throughout the state.

The bill — HB 4338 — would amend the Illinois Clean Indoor Act and ban smoking in all public places including bars, taverns and bowling alleys.

"I anticipate the resolution will be formally approved unanimously," Mayor William Murphy said in a Feb. 15 telephone interview.

"Our policy position in the past, I believe, was that we understood the impact and danger of secondhand smoke, but we did not want to act independently and put our local restaurant businesses at a disadvantage if the measure did not receive regional or statewide support," Murphy said.

"If the state enacts a smoking ban for public places — and this bill appears to reflect our own board's opinion — then it would create a level playing field for all, and we would support it," Murphy said.

Trustee Robert Brandt, who supported enacting a local smoking ban regardless of regional and state efforts, pushed to place the resolution on the agenda for the Feb. 16 meeting.

"(Drafting and placing the resolution on the agenda) was the result of my Jan. 25 suggestion to support HB 4338," Brandt said.

Even if the bill fails — it still must be approved by

both the House and Senate, and the governor would have to sign the bill into law — Brandt said he will "move forward with a smoking ban for Woodridge, and work with our neighboring communities to have them enact smoking bans as well."

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**William Murphy**  
Mayor of Woodridge

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See **SMOKING**, Page 9

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## SMOKING

Continued from Page 1

"I believe the bill will pass," Brandt said.

Last year the board discussed the possibility of enacting an ordinance in Woodridge to ban smoking, but a majority of trustees favored waiting for the state or county to take the lead.

A survey of businesses conducted by the Woodridge Area Chamber of Commerce resulted in some restaurant owners expressing concerns that a village-wide ban could result in loss of business to other neighboring towns like Bolingbrook, Naperville and Downers Grove.

Business owners said they would

go along with a smoking ban as long as it was region- or statewide.

"A statewide ban would provide a level economic playing field for all Illinois communities because smoking customers could no longer take their business to a restaurant or bar in a neighboring town that allowed smoking," Brandt said.

In the past Brandt has urged passage of a local ban, stating that "public health must take priority over private profit or tax revenue."

According to provisions in the proposed bill restaurants, bars and taverns could establish a separate smoking area on premises for two years, at which time they would be required to ban smoking completely.

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