

Village Board sees no need for added restrictions on concealed-carry at Fredonia Government Center

The Fredonia Village Board saw no reason last week to add restrictions to the state's concealed-carry law when it comes to the Fredonia Government Center.

Trustees unanimously accepted a recommendation from the Public Safety Committee that weapons not be banned from village buildings.

The issue has become a hot topic in some communities after the state's concealed-carry law went into effect on Nov. 1.

The City of Port Washington is considering implementing a prohibition on concealed weapons in municipal buildings, following the lead of the Village of Grafton, which has already enacted such a ban.

Village of Saukville officials, however, decided not to post weapon restrictions at village buildings and Village of Belgium officials have said they do not plan to take up the issue.

"The committee didn't see the need to do anything and thought we would just sponge off what other communities have done," said Trustee Scott Ehaney, who is chairman of the committee.

Although the topic has been divisive in some municipalities, there was no interest by other trustees in considering gun restrictions in the village.

"All we need to do is say we will be following what the state law allows," said Village President Chuck Lapicola.

Trustee Mark Edbauer said village officials shouldn't tamper with the law by imagining how worst-case scenarios might play out.

"We can't disenfranchise people because of bad things some people might do. There are always going to be criminal scumbags, and some people are always going to be afraid of what those scumbags might do," Edbauer said.

Village President Chuck Lapicola said he worked for years in Michigan, which has allowed licensed residents to carry concealed weapons for decades, and never encountered problems.

"There was no increase in the breaking of the law or shootings because of concealed carry," Lapicola said.

"In fact there was a decrease in crime when the criminals knew that other people were carrying. The percentage of crimes committed by concealed-carry permit holders was the same as the

Village content with weapons law

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population in general.”

The Public Safety Committee will research what village ordinances need to be amended to comply with the new state weapons law.

Trustees did belatedly approve a map recommended by the committee designating what areas are closed to sex offenders under a village ordinance adopted last year.

The ordinance makes it illegal for people on the state’s registry of convicted sex offenders to live within 500 feet of places frequented by children, including schools, day-care centers and parks.

The registry includes individuals convicted of more than two dozen categories of “crimes against children.”

However, when the ordinance was adopted, a map was never created showing where those restricted areas are located. The map was unanimously approved by the board.

Ehaney said the committee also considered implementing a similar restriction on the walking routes often used by children, but the village marshal’s office said it would be difficult to enforce such restrictions on such a loosely defined area.

“Marshal (Mike) Davel said his officers have the authority to question suspicious people in these areas as it is,” Ehaney said.