

## Sex offender ordinances go to board

Written by Mark Jaeger  
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### Residency restrictions would be imposed within 500 feet of schools, parks frequented by children

The Fredonia Village Board will consider a pair of ordinances Thursday intended to regulate where registered sex offenders are allowed in their community.

The ordinances were introduced last month with virtually no comment. Officials said the silent treatment was intentional, choosing to give residents a chance to react before engaging in full debate.

In contrast, the issue of residency restriction for sex offenders has generated spirited debate among residents and officials during deliberations by the Public Safety Committee.

Following a template of an ordinance adopted by the Village of Grafton, the proposed restrictions would prevent a registered sex offender from living within 500 feet of a school, park, playground or daycare center.

Thirty-one categories of offenses would be included in the ordinance, including rape, sexual assault, incest and possession of child pornography.

Offenders who violate the ordinance could be fined between \$1,000 and \$2,500 for each violation.

A penalty provision is also included in the ordinance for landlords who knowingly rent properties within protected zones to known sex offenders.

The text of the proposed ordinance cites a host of legal precedents for the restrictions, including case law from five different states and the U.S. Court of Appeals.

The legal grounds for the rules are spelled out in the ordinance.

“When convicted sex offenders re-enter society, they are much more likely than any other type of offender to be re-arrested for a new rape or sexual assault. Given the high rate of recidivism for sex offenders and that reducing opportunity and temptation is important to minimizing the risk of re-offense, there is a need to protect children where they congregate or play in public places in addition to the

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protections afforded by state law near schools and daycare centers,” the residency ordinance contends.

Trustees will also consider a second ordinance which would establish “child safety zones” where registered sex offenders would be prohibited from loitering.

Those zones would include parks, playgrounds and athletic fields commonly frequented by children.

According to that ordinance, offenders would be given the chance to explain their presence in the protected zone to police prior to arrest.

The ordinance would establish a fine of up to \$1,000 for each violation.

The board meeting begins at 7 p.m.