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New law would define No Parking zones at school



Yellow painted lines delineate No Parking zones at Hamburg School and orange cones help point them out, but they are not enough to enforce parking limitations. Officials worry about emergency needs.



A new plan is drawn that would clearly mark the area and the borough is set to adopt a No Parking law.

By Lauryn G. Lupino

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Hamburg —“God forbid we have a problem, there is no way an emergency vehicle could get through,” said Hamburg School Superintendent Steven Engravalle.

While attending a basketball game a few weeks ago at Hamburg Elementary School, Engravalle was talking with Jan Wright, acting captain of the Hamburg Police Department, when they realized they could be looking at a potential problem.

The school does not have clearly marked No Parking zones in front of the building. That’s why the town is working on a law that would put some teeth into enforcing a ban on parking in front of the building.

“Let’s face it,” said Engravalle, “things happen; people get hurt. It could be something like a twisted knee during a basketball

game, but if we needed to get an ambulance through we couldn't do it." Currently the school has painted the sidewalk with drop-off and pick-up signs and uses cones to block cars from parking in front of the entrance to the building. Teachers and staff keep traffic moving during the day, but find after-school pickup and evening events are too crowded, becoming difficult for them to manage.

"Unfortunately, without the ordinance," said Captain Wright, "there is no way for anyone to enforce the parking ban."

Parking at the school is a problem. The current parking lot is too small for the many events held at the school. The growth of Hamburg's population, coupled with more evening school and town events held at Hamburg Elementary, has proven this time and again. "Hamburg is a growing city and there needs to be changes that reflect that," Captain Wright said. "The school was built about 100 years ago when there was no requirement, and probably little need, for emergency vehicle lanes."

Despite the potential repercussions from the lack of emergency vehicle accessibility, Engravalle believes that it took "a pair of fresh eyes" provided by both himself and Wright, to recognize the problems the school could be facing without the ordinance in place. "Safety and security is always the top priority for us. Captain Wright and I speak daily about security issues," he said.

Hamburg's council first introduced its new parking ban at its meeting on Feb. 4. It was scheduled for a second reading and final approval on Feb. 20, after presstime. Once the ordinance is in place the municipality will be responsible for establishing fines that can be charged to anyone parked there illegally.

As for the lack of adequate parking, Engravalle says he wants "to do everything to accommodate my parents." To that end, "we have reconfigured parking recently and plan to provide more parking for parents and visitors this summer."