

You're listening to KPTZ 91.9 FM in Port Townsend, Washington. This is Lily Haight with What's New in this week's Port Townsend *Leader* for June 24, 2020.

It will be another week, or more, before Jefferson County moves into Phase 3 of Gov. Jay Inslee's "Safe Start" reopening plan. At the end of a three-hour meeting on Thursday, June 18, the Board of Health voted to approve Public Health Officer Tom Locke's recommendation to move to Phase 3, but directed Public Health Director Vicki Kirkpatrick to submit the application for reopening on June 29, instead of immediately.

The board did decide to open camping in the county immediately with no restriction.

In the coming week, Locke is going to explore the options of enforcement for not wearing masks, including criminal penalties. While Locke has already issued a directive requiring people to wear masks in public places when 6 feet distancing cannot be maintained, he could make a new directive similar to the one in San Juan County that would include punitive measures. In San Juan County, violators of the masking order can receive a misdemeanor citation and be required to pay a fine.

In Jefferson County, there are now 33 confirmed cases of the coronavirus as of June 23. Clallam County has surpassed Jefferson in case numbers with 34 confirmed cases. Nationwide, there continues to be a steady increase in diagnosed cases of COVID-19, although Locke noted the death rate is decreasing. Washington has 28,870 confirmed cases of coronavirus as of June 23.

With the lease expiration on the operation of the Port Townsend golf course looming, the city must soon decide if they want to keep it a golf course or use the land for another purpose.

A unanimous vote at the Port Townsend City Council June 15 means the city will soon be seeking requests for proposals to continue operation of the city golf course as well as engage public opinion of possible other uses for the space, with a final decision to come later this year. A National Golf Foundation report commissioned in 2019 found that the course is currently operating on a shoe-string budget and may require significant capital investment and marketing to increase its revenue and break even.

Once a request for proposals is published, the city hopes to receive new proposals for operations that detail how the course could remain viable, while also beginning a public process to discuss other possible uses for the land.

A city-wide survey on the use of public spaces conducted in fall 2019 showed that roughly 75% of respondents said they never use the golf course. About 10% of respondents indicated they use the golf course on a daily, weekly or monthly basis.

The Olympic Peninsula Farmers Fund has awarded a total of \$26,650 to seven small farms in Jefferson County so they can provide locally grown produce, meat, eggs, and dairy products to food banks and local feeding programs. The fund was created as a partnership between the North Olympic Development Council, the WSU Extension Regional Small Farms Program, the North Olympic Land Trust, and the Jefferson Land Trust to provide pre-paid, long-term contracts of \$1,500 to \$5,000 to farmers this season.

Farmers will in turn provide food for food banks and local feeding programs over the next three to five years. Seven farms in Jefferson County received a contract: Red Dog, Midori, Spring Rain, Sunfield Land for Learning, Corona, and Mystery Bay farms.

While many farms have already been involved with donating food to the food banks in Jefferson County, this allows them to give credit to the food banks to buy locally grown food for the next five years.

Former Port Townsend councilman Robert Gray is pressing the city council to change the name of one of the city's streets in recognition of Black Lives Matter. Gray, a two-term councilman who didn't run for reelection in 2019, would like to see Taylor Street renamed. "We have a tremendous amount of streets named after presidents," Gray said. "A lot of them owned slaves, among other things," he said.

Starting earlier this month – after demonstrations erupted in cities across the country following the police killing of George Floyd in Minneapolis, Minnesota – Gray started asking city leaders during the public comment periods of council meetings to consider his street-renaming idea. Gray said at least five of the major streets in Port Townsend are named after ex-presidents who owned slaves. The list includes the street in front of City Hall: Madison.

Gray suggested a number of alternative names, including Harriet Tubman, Thurgood Marshall, Martin Luther King, Jesse Owens, Rosa Parks, Billie Holliday, Bob Marley, and President Barack Obama.

For these stories and more, check out this week's edition of the *Leader* on newsstands and online now. This is Leader news reporter Lily Haight, on KPTZ 91.9 FM.