

This is KPTZ 91.9 FM in Port Townsend, Washington. I'm Lily Haight with local news for July 8th, 2020.

The Port Townsend City Council voted on Monday to ban single-use plastic straws and coffee stirrers in all restaurants and cafes in Port Townsend. Last December, Port Townsend High School's Students for Sustainability presented a petition with hundreds of signatures in support of the straw ban to the city council.

Many major cities have banned plastic straws across the country. Seattle was the first major U.S. city to ban all plastic utensils, including straws from restaurants in July of 2018. In September of 2018, California Gov. Jerry Brown signed into law a bill that made California the first state to ban restaurants from serving drinks with straws, unless a customer asks for one.

An environmentalist group called the Plastic Pollution Coalition began the "The Last Plastic Straw" movement – an effort to make the plastic drinking straw a "relic of the past." According to the Coalition, Americans use more than 500 billion straws each day. Plastic straws are just one example of the single-use plastics that can't, or don't, get recycled and end up in landfills or in the natural environment. But by starting with a plastic straw ban, the coalition hopes to shift the way businesses and individuals think about the waste they create.

The Students for Sustainability visited Port Townsend businesses to gain support for the plastic straw ban and found that many already used straws made of a different material, such as compostable straws. But they also found that there needed to be an exception to the straw ban for individuals with physical limitations, who require straws. In March, the group of students presented their research and a drafted ordinance to the city council.

The ordinance approved by the city council on Monday banned plastic straws and coffee stirrers, with exceptions for people who need them. The ordinance also allows them to still be sold at grocery stores like Safeway and QFC. Individual businesses also have the opportunity to seek a variance to the ordinance from the city manager.

The ban will go into effect on January 1, 2021. Businesses who do not comply with the ordinance will face a first-time penalty of \$100.

A number of restaurants in Port Townsend are taking advantage of the city's "Open Streets" initiative. In an effort to promote social distancing, while also allowing businesses to reopen for service, the city of Port Townsend created a free permit for businesses to expand onto sidewalks and street parking areas.

The Old Whiskey Mill on Water Street was the first to take advantage of the new permit, placing outdoor tables on the parking spots outside of the restaurant.

Now the Tin Brick, Alchemy Bistro and Wine Bar, Better Living Through Coffee, Tommyknockers, and Elevated Ice Cream are serving food outside in addition to the Whiskey Mill.

The city council approved a resolution that allowed businesses to apply for temporary "Parklet Streatery" permits without paying the \$250 special permit fee at a meeting on June 1st, just as the county had moved into Phase 2 of Governor Jay Inslee's "Safe Start" reopening plan. City manager John Mauro explained the permits were not guaranteed and the city will require a review of the permit after 60 days.

According to Mauro, this will give the city a chance to re-evaluate that the “streetery” is safe and includes safe physical distancing guidelines, as well as the public use of the right-of-way, including streets, sidewalks and parking.

Adam Kelly, the man charged for the killing of local musician Jarrod Bramson, pled guilty last Thursday, July 2nd, according to the Jefferson County Prosecutor’s Office.

Kelly pled guilty to controlled substance homicide after he allegedly provided drugs to Bramson and then left him in a car in the parking lot of Jefferson Healthcare, where Bramson died of a drug overdose.

In addition to being charged with homicide, Kelly was also charged with possession of multiple controlled substances, and manufacturing of multiple controlled substances. Kelly also faces federal charges related to operating a large-scale drug lab in his home that was used to manufacture steroids for sale on the Dark Web. He pled guilty only to the homicide charges, according to a press release from the prosecutor’s office. Sentencing will take place on July 23rd.

And that’s it for today’s local news. KPTZ 91.9 FM brings you local news at noon Monday through Saturday and at five PM Monday through Thursday. You can contact us through news@kptz.org. I’m Lily Haight. Thanks for listening.