

This is KPTZ 91.9 FM in Port Townsend, Washington. I'm Lily Haight with local news for August 19, 2020.

\*\*\*

Last week the city council asked for more public input and this week they got it. A host of golf course supporters submitted public comments to be read aloud at the city's virtual council meeting on August 17, condemning the council's decision not to extend the current vendor's lease on the Port Townsend Golf Course.

Some of the commenters claimed the city intended to "shut down the golf course," but city manager John Mauro clarified that this wasn't accurate.

Currently, Gabriel Tonan Golf Shops has leased the golf course property since 2013. That lease is set to expire at the end of the year. This week, the city put out a request for proposals for continued golf course management and operations. Gabriel Tonan Golf Shops is eligible to submit a new proposal, should the company wish to continue operating the golf course. All proposals are due by September 30 and the city council will discuss these proposals at a meeting in October.

However, the city council is also entertaining new ideas from the public about how to use the golf course. This is in part because the course needs about \$1 million in improvements, according to a 2018 study completed by the National Golf Foundation.

At previous meetings, city council members have discussed altering the golf course and using part of the property for park space that is open to everyone. They've also discussed the need for more housing in Port Townsend and ways the golf course property could be utilised for that purpose. No official decisions have been made.

To learn more, or to give your own opinion, Mauro suggested members of the public visit the new "Engage PT" website (<https://cityofpt.us/engagept>) to fill out the survey.

\*\*\*

In other city news, the city council is debating a new ordinance that would create a transparent and consistent process for adding public street art to our city. The discussion was sparked after the city council approved a temporary "Black Lives Matter" mural to be painted on Water Street as part of the "Juneteenth" celebration.

The new ordinance would give the city manager the power to approve or deny public art projects such as street painting, intersection murals and crosswalk painting. The city manager would do so in consultation with the arts commission. Language in the ordinance puts some restrictions on public street art if it depicts violent images, sexually graphic images, nudity, religious symbols, hate messages, support for or opposition to a candidate, or inappropriate imagery to maintain on public property.

According to arts commission chair Nhatt Nichols, the idea of allowing more murals and street art is exciting, especially considering the historic murals that already adorn the sides of some of downtown's brick buildings.

But Nichols said the decision requires input from a lot of different city departments, including the Historic Preservation Committee, the Department of Public Works, the city manager and the arts commission, which can help fund public art projects.

Nichols said it is vital the city has an open process for approving or denying public art projects like this. This was evidenced by the fact that more than 20 members of the public submitted comments asking the city to install a “Blue Lives Matter” mural in support of law enforcement.

“Blue Lives Matter” is a pro-police countermovement to the Black Lives Matter movement; however, its origins are not comparable because the “Blue Lives” of law enforcement officers represent a choice of profession rather than a fact of birth.

Mayor Michelle Sandoval clarified that the council would only be discussing the creation of a process for public street art, not any actual proposals. “To all the people who took the time and effort to comment regarding the BLM mural, that was not part of the discussion this evening,” she said. “This was simply about having a process in place for any type of public art mural.”

The city council will vote to approve the ordinance at a future meeting, and several council members requested the arts commission play a role in the creation of the new process.

\*\*\*

And that’s it for today’s local news. KPTZ 91.9 FM brings you local news at noon Monday through Saturday and at 5pm Monday through Thursday. You can contact us through [news@kptz.org](mailto:news@kptz.org). I’m Lily Haight. Thanks for listening.