

This is KPTZ 91.9 FM in Port Townsend, Washington. I'm Lily Haight with local news for February 17, 2021.

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The COVID-19 case count in Jefferson County increased to 328 yesterday, with two new cases reported over the holiday weekend. There are currently 8 active cases in isolation. For the most up to date numbers, visit the public health website (<https://jeffersoncountypublichealth.org/1466/Case-Information>) or the Jefferson County Facebook page.

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The Port Townsend City Council is facing increasing calls to pass a resolution decriminalizing entheogens, which are natural psychedelic substances, such as magic mushrooms. At a business meeting yesterday, the council received eight public comments calling for a resolution to be added to the council's agenda in the coming weeks. Some comments criticized the fact that the resolution has not yet been added to the agenda, despite council members bringing the topic up last month at the city's ad hoc committee meeting on law enforcement and public safety.

Council member Ariel Speser championed the effort to pass a resolution decriminalizing entheogens, bringing it up several times as the council was drafting recommendations for changes to law enforcement policies. Finally, the council decided the resolution would be best as an agenda item for a regular business meeting. But so far, it has not been added to the agenda, obviously causing frustration for advocates of the decriminalize movement.

Kris Heyting, a member of the Port Townsend Psychedelic Society asked that the city not push aside the local decriminalization movement because it's a statewide issue. Five other cities have shown that local decriminalization is achievable through a resolution or policy directive, said Heyting. Comments from supporters of decriminalizing entheogens advocate for their use to help people with mental health issues and substance abuse issues. They can also be used for spiritual practices. Currently, these substances are a Schedule 1 substance under the Controlled Substances Act, which means that possession of magic mushrooms is a felony. But advocates and researchers say that entheogens are not addictive, and they can help people with addiction issues.

Council members responded to comments by requesting that the resolution be brought before them earlier than planned – according to city staff, it was set to appear on the agenda sometime in April. For more information on the movement to decriminalize entheogens, head to [kptz.org](https://kptz.org) and check out the January 23rd Compass (<https://kptz.org/2021/01/23/compass-for-1-23-21/>), in which host Steve Evans talks with the leader of the local movement, Erin Reading.

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The city council unanimously passed the final recommendations of the law enforcement and public safety committee at their meeting last night. Among the recommendations is the task of creating a public safety citizens advisory board to work with the new police chief on reviewing and implementing the local recommendations and action items from President Obama's Task Force on 21st Century Policing and ensuring our police policy manual changes are consistent with the values of Port Townsend.

The board will also work on researching creative solutions for law enforcement, including diversion programs, and should reach out to neighboring jurisdictions to ensure consistency in law enforcement policy and procedures across jurisdictional lines. The commendations also included tasks for the city council, including working with legislative partners to advocate for a national and state-wide system of police accountability so

that officers who violate policy or are subject to discipline in one jurisdiction are not able to conceal their bad actions and obtain law enforcement employment in another jurisdiction.

The city council will also be working on expanding their Navigator and Community Safety Officer programs in the coming years. While discussing the final recommendations, mayor Michelle Sandoval brought up her concerns about the number of police officers from around the country who were found to be part of the insurrection at the capitol on January 6. To address this, the city council created a second motion in addition to the task force's final recommendations that asks the city manager and new police chief to work with city employee unions and create a policy for all city employees that condemns white supremacy and white nationalism and bans city employees from membership in white supremacist and white nationalist organizations. To view all of the city's recommendations for law enforcement, head to the city website and click on the agenda for the February 16 meeting (<https://cityofpt.us/citycouncil/page/agendasminutesvideos>).

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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.