

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

The COVID-19 case count in Jefferson County remains at 331, with one new case reported so far this week. There are currently 3 active cases in isolation. The COVID-19 case rate in Jefferson County from February 7 to February 20 is 28.21 per 100,000. This is a decrease from the previous two-week case rate, which was 68.97 per 100,000 from January 31 to February 13. For the most up to date numbers, visit the public health website (<https://jeffersoncountypublichealth.org/1466/Case-Information>), or the Jefferson County Facebook page.

With a \$25,000 award from the Lodging Tax Advisory Committee, the city public works department is planning the creation of the Adams Street plaza – a small waterfront gathering place in between the Adams Street Park and the Port Townsend Vineyard's wine plaza on Water Street. The space is currently a former parking area with a few picnic tables placed there as part of the city's Open Streets program which began last summer. With the small grant from LTAC, the public works department and PT Main Street plans to add some wooden benches and cement planters to dress up the space. They also plan to level out the gravel, where it currently pools and creates mud puddles in the rain.

The idea, according to Simon Little who owns StudioSTL, a local design and building company and is helping with the creation of the Adams Street plaza, is to replicate the energy of Tyler Street Plaza, which was formerly a parking lot before the city paved the plaza and added tables and chairs. Now the Tyler Street plaza is a gathering place for eating and meeting outdoors, something that is necessary during the pandemic. The funding is just enough to spruce up the space, he said, while allowing for the option of improving it or altering it in the future. The plans are currently being reviewed by the city's transportation committee.

Port Townsend activists are planning a memorial for Christian Hall, a 19-year-old Chinese-American man who was shot and killed by Pennsylvania police in December. This Saturday at noon, people will gather to place objects, art and candles in memory of Hall at the Tyler Street plaza, by Better Living Through Coffee. Hall was shot and killed by Pennsylvania State Police. At the time of his shooting, he was experiencing a mental health crisis when officers were called to deescalate the situation. Police justified the killing by saying that Hall was wielding a handgun when they arrived at the scene. But video footage showed Hall with his hands in the air when he was shot. Hall was the adopted child of two parents, Fe and Gareth Hall. His family hired civil rights attorneys Devon Jacob and Ben Crump, who represented the families of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor and Ahmaud Arbery.

His attorneys have started a petition, which can be found on their website (<https://act.bencrump.com/a/christian-hall>), demanding that the Pennsylvania Attorney General open an investigation into Hall's death. Port Townsend activists put out the call this week for people to show up on Saturday with signs and posters memorializing Hall and protesting police brutality, writing in a text thread that "It didn't all end just because we have a new president."

Those who live near Fort Worden may have heard a suspiciously loud "boom" this past Sunday, after a bomb squad was called to the beach near the Port Townsend Marine Science Center to detonate a marine flare that was found on the beach. Betsy Carlson, who works at the Marine Science Center, discovered the marine flare

next to their building, likely dropped off by someone who had found it on the beach while cleaning up. Seeing that the metal cylinder had the words “Do not handle” and “Call police” written on the side, she called the police and state parks who contacted the bomb squad. According to Carlson, the marine flares are designed to ignite in salt water and burn for 20 minutes. This one, however, had washed up on the beach with the detonator still in place. The bomb squad, she said, dug a hole in the sand and ran a line of C4 to the marine flare, detonating it in an explosion that could be heard in the nearby neighborhood. Carlson wrote that she was glad no one had gotten hurt, and that the event was a good reminder to be careful when picking up marine debris.

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. I’m Lily Haight. Thanks for listening.