

This is KPTZ 91.9 FM in Port Townsend, Washington. I'm Lily Haight with local news for July 28, 2021.

Jefferson County Public Health reported 10 new COVID-19 cases on Monday and 4 new cases yesterday, for a total of 14 new cases so far this week. Our total case count from the beginning of the pandemic now sits at 497. There are 23 cases in active isolation and 29 test results pending. With the uptick in cases and the global spread of the Delta variant, the county's public health officer Dr. Allison Berry is encouraging people to go back to wearing face masks inside in public spaces, even if they are vaccinated. For a short time, masks were no longer required in county offices for those who were vaccinated, but the county commissioners will be meeting virtually today at 1pm to discuss and take possible action on their masking policy in the courthouse and other county offices.

City staff held a town hall meeting on Monday evening at the Cotton Building to gather feedback on a proposal to levy \$600,000 in property taxes to use for parks, trails and streets improvement. The funding for seven small public space improvement projects will come from the city's banked capacity as a result of the annexation of the city fire services. In 2019, voters in Port Townsend decided to annex City fire services into the East Jefferson Fire District. Before, the city paid for EJFR fire services with money from the general levy. Now, property owners in the city have an additional fire levy to pay for fire service. The change freed up capacity for the city to levy up to \$900,000 in additional property taxes – referred to as the city's "banked capacity" – for specific purposes including street capital projects, park projects, or contributions to the city's affordable housing trust fund. Per an agreement made at the time of the annexation vote, the city can only use a certain amount of the banked capacity per year for the first four years. Last year, the city could have levied \$300,000 but chose not to. This year, the city council can approve to levy up to \$605,000.

City manager John Mauro is proposing that the city levy this banked capacity in order to improve city parks, trails, and do some street restoration. His proposal would be to use about \$67,000 for a restoration of Pacific Avenue; \$21,000 to pave the Spruce Street trail and make it ADA accessible; \$60,000 to improve the sidewalk ramps in uptown Port Townsend for accessibility; \$227,000 to extend the sidewalk on 9th Street; \$100,000 to restore the Chetzemoka Park shelter; \$30,000 to add a swing set to Bishop Park; and \$61,000 add new signs, maps and kiosks to city parks and trails. Before the city council decides whether or not to approve this proposal, a public hearing will be held at the city council meeting on August 9 at 6:30pm. Like all city meetings happening in the age of COVID-19, this one will be virtual, so if you plan to submit public comment on the proposal, email it to publiccomment@cityofpt.us at least five hours before the meeting begins. Or attend the meeting virtually and press the "raise your hand" button when the time comes for public comment.

But beyond the public hearing coming up on August 9, there are other ways to give your input on the proposal. The city is also planning to have an information booth at the Port Townsend Farmers Market on Saturday, and city residents can also give their opinions in an online survey that is available on the city's website (<https://cityofpt.us/engagept/page/banked-capacity>) and Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/CityofPT>).

There's more to check out than just books and movies at the Port Townsend Public Library. With a grant awarded from the Jefferson Community Foundation's Spark Joy program, the library has purchased two high-quality telescope kits that are available for check out at the library. Those with a library card can check them out, along with a guide on how to host neighborhood stargazing parties. This comes as the city public works

team begins to initiate their “Dark Sky” program – which will be altering the city’s street lighting to make the night skies more visible.

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.