

This is KPTZ 91.9 FM in Port Townsend, Washington. I'm Lily Haight with local news for March 30, 2022.

Jefferson County Public Health reported 8 new cases of COVID-19 yesterday. This brings our total case count, since the beginning of the pandemic, up to 3,184. There are currently 36 active cases in isolation and one Jefferson County resident is hospitalized. The two-week case rate for Jefferson County has gone back up above the 100 per 100,000 point, and is at 142 per 100,000 as of yesterday. For the most up to date case information, visit the Jefferson County Public Health website (<https://www.jeffersoncountypublichealth.org/1466/Case-Information>), or the Jefferson County Government Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/jeffcowagov/>).

Uptown residents woke up on Monday morning to find that two of the creative district's way markers – the white, wooden sculptures that mark the boundary of the district – were artistically enhanced (or, some might say, vandalized). The sculpture by the Port Townsend Library and the one across the street from Aldrich's were both drizzled with red and yellow paint, and a tear-stained face was pasted to the sculptures along with the words "In this town, art is dead" and "not local art." This sparked conversation in the community about these sculptures, which were controversial since the moment they went up last summer. The sculptures were created by artist Jonah Trople out of reclaimed fir. Trople has written on his Instagram account that he believes creating these sculptures "cemented his role on this earth as Artist-as-Shaman." When the sculptures first went up they stirred some conversation, partly because Trople was paid \$28,000 for the job, and also because Trople's simplistic style of wood carving left many wondering why the city had put up what looked to some like a bunch of blank, white sign posts around town. Now, some vigilante artist is making a commentary on the creative district's choices. The statement printed on the side of the two sculptures "not local art" might be a comment on the fact that Trople recently moved to Hawaii. Previously, he split his time between Port Townsend and Hawaii, although according to a profile on him in the *Peninsula Daily News*, he is from Sedro-Woolley.

But whoever was behind painting the sculptures by the library and Aldrich's has also sparked a conversation about who public art is for – and why Port Townsend doesn't have a space for anonymous street artists to make their mark because of the city's historic preservation rules. Street art and street murals all have to be approved by the city and any graffiti is quickly painted over by the police department. In the comment section of a post on Facebook about the vigilante art, several people commented that they believed the sculptures were intended to be interactive. Piper Corbett, who is the owner of Propolis Brewing, noted that there is little room for creative street art in Port Townsend, and even painted signage on a business' walls like hers has to be approved for the city. "The art projects that have been approved in this town have for the most part been decided in small groups behind closed doors," she wrote.

While most city business is actually conducted in meetings that are open to the public, it's true that most residents don't have the time or know-how to attend city meetings. However, if you do have the time, and you want to have a say in the future of Port Townsend's public art, you can apply to sit on the board of the Arts Commission (<https://cityofpt.us/bc/page/arts-commission-0>), which has two vacant positions right now and meets on the first Wednesday of each month at 3pm. And if you have an opinion about finding a way to incorporate street art and graffiti onto the streets of Port Townsend, you can seek out the current members of the Historic Preservation Committee (<https://cityofpt.us/bc/page/historic-preservation-committee-0>), which meets on the first Tuesday of every month at 3pm.

The county's on-and-off-again search for a new county administrator is now off once again, as commissioners decided to stop spending their time looking for some new blood to bring to the job, and instead decided to offer interim county administrator Mark McCauley the job. While searching through candidates for the county administrator position, commissioner Greg Brotherton said he found that all the attributes they were searching for in an administrator were already present in McCauley. When he asked McCauley if he'd be interested in the job, he said yes. McCauley joined the county as director of the central services department in 2017. Previously he worked for Clark County for 16 years, in the finances department. And before that, he served in the United States Army for 20 years. McCauley had been planning on retiring from his position as central services director, but agreed to a minimum of two years in his new role as county administrator.

And that's it for today's local news. KPTZ 91.9 FM brings you local news at noon and 5pm Monday through Thursday and at noon on Friday and Saturday. You can contact us through news@kptz.org. I'm Lily Haight. Thanks for listening.