

This is Casey Dolan with your local news for Wednesday, July 6, 2022 on KPTZ 91.9 FM in Port Townsend, Washington.

Yesterday, the Jefferson County commissioners decided to schedule a public hearing on the creation of another no-shoot area in addition to the existing ones in the County at Kala Point, Port Ludlow, Ocean Grove and Cape George. A petition circulated among the residents of the Greater Jolie Way and Silver Berry Place area, east of Hastings Avenue and north of Cape George Road in Precinct 1201. 31 of the 41 households petitioned were in favor of the ban. According to the petition, “There have been multiple unsafe shooting situations that threatened us, our animals, and our properties. Despite past efforts to stop this, the threats continue and have recently increased to the point where we need to act before a serious accident happens.” Several incidents were cited in the petition, including target shooting along a property line and random shooting at all hours, including that of semi-automatic firearms. There was concern mentioned for outsiders who use the local hiking trails.

Philip C. Hunsucker, the Chief Civil Deputy Prosecuting Attorney for Jefferson County, explained the requirements necessary to establish a no-shooting zone. The Commissioners heard public comment on the issue, including that from a former veteran and war journalist with PTSD, all of whom advocated for the no-shoot area. They decided to schedule a public hearing based on the existing boundaries as determined by the petition itself.

One public speaker, Tom Thiersch, suggested expanding the boundaries to include land on the other side of Hastings Avenue, but the Commissioners rejected the inclusion of Thiersch’s suggested expansion for a no-shoot area, partly based on the requirement of tribal approval. According to Commissioner Heidi Eisenhour, tribes had expressed concern over a possible incursion into traditional hunting grounds.

Petitioners said they “are not anti-gun. Many of us own guns and some of us are ex-military with a clear understanding of gun safety. Many of us have lived in this neighborhood or in rural areas of the county for many years and are aware of the expectations of a rural lifestyle.” No hearing date has yet been set.

The East Jefferson Fire Rescue and Port Ludlow Fire and Rescue are proposing a merger to become one department. Voters who live within the jurisdiction of the two districts shall decide. Fire commissioners with both departments have officially agreed to develop a plan that may lead to a merger of the two departments. But this will hinge on a ballot measure that would be presented to voters who live within the boundaries of the districts. Earlier this month, during subsequent meetings of the board of fire commissioners for both departments, fire commissioners agreed to full integration of the two departments. East Jefferson Fire Chief Bret Black said an outline for the work ahead was being created. The intention behind the merger is to provide services more efficiently and with greater resources. After the merger plan is fully devised, the merger would not go on the ballot until a resolution calling for the election is passed by both fire district boards. Voters in both districts would then need to pass the proposal.

A portion of the Chimacum Creek Tidelands in Irondale Beach Park has been closed by the State Department of Health to recreational uses, including shellfish harvesting and swimming, because of a high level of E. coli bacteria discovered in the creek. Michael Dawson, water quality manager for Jefferson County, said last Friday that the “average bacteria counts were greater than 900 units per 100 milliliters, nine times greater than the state water quality standard,” for E. coli. E. coli bacteria is due to fecal contamination from warm-blooded animals,

including people. Warning signs are posted at the beach, the stream and the parking lot. Investigation of potential sources of the bacteria is underway, although failing septic systems could be the source according to health officials. For more information about septic monitoring, see www.jeffersoncountypublichealth.org/659/Operation-Monitoring-OM or call 360-385-9444.

John Nowak has been elected unanimously by the Post Townsend School District's board of directors as its newest board member. Nowak was the director of Care Transformation with Jefferson Healthcare for 45 years before his recent retirement. He will take over the Director District 1 position, which was previously held by Connie Welch until she announced her decision to step down from the position in May. Nowak will continue through Welch's term, which is set to end in November 2025.

KPTZ 91.9 FM broadcasts your local news Monday through Thursday at noon and 5pm and at noon on Saturday. You can contact us at news@kptz.org. I'm Casey Dolan and I thank you for listening.