

This is KPTZ 91.9 FM in Port Townsend, Washington. I'm Ann Katzenbach with local news and commentary for today, August 19, 2022.

Last evening's "under the tent" community discussion with the Intergovernmental Collaborative Group (ICG) which includes elected officials from the City of Port Townsend, Jefferson County, the Port, and the county PUD was well attended. The agenda called for participants to brainstorm all issues of how the lack of housing affects us, and what to do about it. The ICG works with the non-profit Housing Solutions Network who planned the meeting.

As an introduction, every official pointed out that hiring is curtailed and the economy suffers because there is no place to live if you hope to come here for a job. The other major issue is homelessness. The sewer system in Port Hadlock that is key to building new low-income housing, was cited several times as a model of what can be done through collaboration and determination. "We need to do more and right now" was the message of the meeting, but there are hurdles mainly because federal, state, and local policies are not always aligned. Commissioner Kate Dean said that moving forward was "like threading a needle." She also pointed out that there is a precarious balance between the rural appeal of Jefferson County and curtailing current restrictions to facilitate housing. The next meeting under the tent is on September 15 will focus on septic problems and solutions. If you have concerns or ideas, you should attend and there is lots of information at <https://housingsolutionsnetwork.org/>.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has been criticized for its leadership during the COVID-19 crisis. On Wednesday, according to the New York Times, Doctor Rochelle Wolensky, the CDC's director, said the agency must focus more on public health needs. It should respond faster to emergencies and provide information that ordinary people and state and local health organizations can understand and put to use. She plans a major overhaul of the CDC.

I lived in Massachusetts during the first two years of COVID and can confirm that information from a well-intentioned governor who relied on the CDC was garbled and insufficient. It was messy and many people died unnecessarily. Moving back to Port Townsend I was relieved to live in a community where people were informed, careful and kept up to date with clear and helpful COVID information. Knowing now, what most of us suspected, that the CDC failed in many ways, it is even more impressive that our local health authorities kept most of us safe and well informed. Thanks to them for being smart and steady.

And keep in mind: the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) is warning that we should be cautious about a one-time negative result on a home COVID test. If you think you might be infected, you should take more than one test if it turns up negative. Take a second 24-48 hours later. False negatives are rather common for a number of reasons, but false positives are very rare. If you do test positive, please stay home and isolate.

Patanque – or boules – is a sport that originated in France and has spread through various routes to Port Townsend. At the World Games in Alabama last June, Rebekah Howe of the Port Townsend Patanque Club won a silver medal in precision shooting of a Patanque ball, a medal that has never been won by an American or a woman.

Tomorrow, the Uptown Street Fair takes place. There will be music, arts, and crafts, food, beer, a parade, and you can dance.

Also on Saturday, the annual All-County Picnic takes place at H.J. Carroll Park from 11am to 4pm. Find out about the many ways the county prepares for disaster and emergency.

Beginning the night of Monday, August 22, through the night of Friday, August 26, maintenance crews will repair sections of US 101 from mileposts 247 to 274. Crews will work on small sections of the road each night from 6pm to 4:30am beginning in Port Angeles near Morse Creek moving east to Pierce Road near Gardiner.

And that's it for today's news. 91.9 FM brings you local news at noon and five pm, Monday through Friday and at noon on Friday and Saturday. I'm Ann Katzenbach. Have a great weekend.