

Good afternoon, thanks for tuning in to 91.9 KPTZ FM. I'm Simon Jaynes in Port Townsend Washington bringing you the local news for Friday, October 14, 2022.

On Monday this week at Salish Coast Elementary, there was an incident on the playground that triggered many layers of response from the school district staff and parent community. During fourth grade lunch, a physical altercation took place between two students, and in the course of investigating the incident, it was learned that one of the students involved said that he would shoot another student.

When such a statement is made, schools must take the threat seriously and the response process begins immediately. Families in the district received a series of emails from the principal, and it was the primary topic of Wednesday's PTA meeting where many parents expressed their concerns and desire for more information. Here is what Principal Lisa Condran had to say on Tuesday: "When a threat is made, we follow an assessment protocol that includes interviews with witnesses, family members, teachers, and staff. We notify any targets of the threat and determine the student's access to weapons. The student who allegedly made the threat is excluded from school while the level of threat is determined."

There was no need for a school closure as no immediate danger was identified. In a follow-up statement yesterday, Principal Condran said, "Together we are supporting our students in feeling safe in our schools. We take threats seriously and there are specific protocols for dealing with gun-related threats in particular....Threats are often related to a student not feeling a sense of belonging. Both nationally and locally we are seeing our young people struggle. Our counselors and other mental health providers prepare students to talk about what happened and heal. We know this can be hard when fear still exists, but the safest approach is to wrap around the students, so they feel a sense of connection." Today, October 14, schools within the district are closed for a planned teacher preparation day.

The County Assessor's Office has completed inspections and market analysis for 2022 and is in the process of mailing out change-of-value notices for the majority of properties in Jefferson County. These values will be used for calculating 2023 taxes. According to Jefferson County Assessor Jeff Chapman, "Property owners in Jefferson County are about to receive change-of-value notices with substantial increases." He went on to mention that they do "expect most composite levy rates to drop significantly, meaning that the actual 2023 tax increases will be substantially less than the value increase." Statewide, the Office of Financial Management put the median home value increase at 23.9% in 2021.

Wildfire smoke is sticking around several parts of Washington and forecasts show smoke will likely get worse before it gets better, lingering in western Washington through the weekend. Days of consistent smoke exposure can take a toll on your health, especially those with health concerns that make them vulnerable, so it is important to be aware of conditions. Yesterday, the Port Townsend Air Quality Index (AQI) was at 145, putting it at an Orange Alert, which means Unhealthy for Sensitive Groups. As of 10:00 this morning the AQI was around 101, which is just above the moderate range but still quite noticeable for many; and it may climb higher today. Tomorrow, AQI levels are predicted to be back below 50 on the Olympic Peninsula which is an acceptable level for most people.

Another public invitation has been made for residents to participate in the process which will reshape the City Golf Course. The City of Port Townsend is hosting a meet and greet for the community to initiate the Concept Planning Effort on Tuesday, October 25 from 2 to 4pm. City staff and the design team will have information booths set up at the Golf Course and Mountain View Commons to meet the community and answer questions about the upcoming planning effort. They will also have comment cards and listen to ideas. This event will take place after the second Stakeholders meeting which is happening this coming Tuesday, October 18 at 3:30pm. The purpose of the meet and greet appears to be that of giving the public an opportunity to interact with proposed design and use ideas before any final decisions have been made. You can find information on how to participate in the stakeholder process for this project at the city of Port Townsend webpage under the “engage PT” Banner (<https://cityofpt.us/engagept/page/envision-port-townsend-golf-course-and-mountain-view-commons>).

Gov. Jay Inslee has directed that all the names of Washington State Ferries be temporarily changed to honor the Seattle Mariners. All 21 vessels in the fleet were renamed, starting Thursday, October 13, after team players and personnel. The names will remain in place as long as the Mariners remain in the 2022 Postseason. The Mariners unfortunately took a second consecutive loss in their 5-game series with the Houston Astros yesterday, putting them in a must-win situation as they return to their home field for game 3 tomorrow. The M/V Salish, which serves the Port Townsend Coupeville Route is currently sailing under the name Andres Munoz – one of the Mariners top relief pitchers who saw action in yesterday’s game.

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 Friday. You can contact us at news@kptz.org. I’m Simon Jaynes, thanks for listening and have a great day.