

Hello! This is Derek Firenze with your local news and commentary for Thursday, April 20, 2023 on KPTZ 91.9 FM in Port Townsend, Washington.

Perhaps the biggest news in the nation for this briefest of moment is the U.S. Supreme Court's decision on Wednesday to only temporarily extend women's access to an abortion pill for two days while justices consider whether to allow restrictions on to take effect as a legal challenge to the medication's Food and Drug Administration approval continues. As reported by the Associated Press, an order was signed by Justice Samuel Alito on Wednesday, with the court indicating it will act by Friday night at midnight.

The justices originally gave themselves Wednesday as a deadline on the fast-moving case from Texas in which abortion opponents are seeking to roll back FDA approval of mifepristone which is the most common method of abortion in the United States, making up more than half of all of the nation's abortions. The Biden administration and the maker of the drug, New York-based Danco Laboratories, want the nation's highest court to reject limits on mifepristone's use for at least as long as the legal case winds its way through the courts. Abortion opponents first filed suit in November in Amarillo, Texas and the legal challenge quickly reached the Supreme Court after a federal judge issued a ruling on April 7 that would revoke FDA approval of mifepristone. Then, less than a week later, a federal appeals court modified the ruling so that mifepristone would remain available while the case continues, but with limits such as that the drug can't be mailed or dispensed as a generic and that patients who seek it need to make three in-person visits with a doctor, among other things. That generic version makes up two-thirds of the U.S. supply, according to its manufacturer, Las Vegas-based GenBioPro Inc. The court also said the drug should only be approved through seven weeks of pregnancy for now, even though the FDA has endorsed its use through 10 weeks since 2016.

Washington's own federal judge then entered the fray, ordering the FDA to preserve access to mifepristone under the current rules in 17 Democratic-led states and the District of Columbia that filed a separate lawsuit. If the justices do not block the Texas ruling from taking effect for now, the Biden administration and Danco have a fallback argument, asking the court to take up the challenge to mifepristone, hear arguments, and decide the case by early summer. Such a step is rare before at least one appeals court has thoroughly examined the legal issues involved, and the 5th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals in New Orleans already has ordered an accelerated schedule for hearing the case, with arguments set for May 17.

Closer to home, the Olympic Housing Trust is aiming to provide a new and much-needed affordable housing option in Port Townsend. The Dundee Hill project sits upon the Dundee Hill neighborhood, near Hastings and Sheridan. The housing plan is a dynamic five-unit multifamily development comprising two, two-bedroom units and three, three-bedroom units situated beautifully adjacent to the neighborhood's community garden. A generous local donor in Port Townsend has given land where the Trust will build the new houses that will be permanently affordable to first-time home buyers in the community. The homes will be sold to income-qualified households, which in this case are those earning under 80% of the Area's Median Income (AMI), which equates to about \$55,000 a year. To qualify, people must have also lived in the area for at least one year and be able to secure a home loan.

The project was also just funded \$80,000 by the County for early construction costs. Kellen Lynch, Outreach Coordinator for the Olympic Housing Trust, noted in correspondence with KPTZ that the plan pairs the housing with the existing community garden to enhance both housing and food security. He also added that the City's recent code amendment around unit lot subdivision was necessary to make this project possible. To date, they have raised over \$316,000 and those who would like to contribute can go to <https://olympichousingtrust.org/>.

Fish tales are taking on yet another meaning as a new local group is merging fishing with film in a collaboration of filmmakers called Fishboat Media. The Port Townsend-based visual storytelling collective focuses on communicating our region's rich maritime culture and diverse heritage. Their kickoff video – and the first of a series – *Shipwright Sessions*, takes a look at an unsung but critical component of wooden boat work: caulking. They sat down to talk with Brad Seamans of the Port Townsend Shipwrights Co-Op, who recently wrapped up some of this time-honored craft on the F/V Polaris, a storied 100+ year-old halibut schooner built and maintained right here in Washington State. That video can be found on Fishboat Media's Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/fishboatmedia>).

KPTZ 91.9 FM broadcasts your local news Monday through Friday at noon and 5pm and at noon on Saturday. You can contact us at news@kptz.org. This is Derek Firenze. Thanks for listening.