

This is KPTZ 91.9 FM in Port Townsend. I'm Jim Burke, with your local news and commentary for Friday, September 22, 2023.

The last daylight hours of Summer are today. Vernal equinox is tonight and the first full day of Fall is tomorrow, September 23, but that is astronomical autumn. Meteorological summer includes June, July, and August. Meteorological autumn includes September, October, November.

You might think that recent rain means we can burn again? Not yet For most of this summer, the level of the fire danger in Jefferson County has been ORANGE/VERY HIGH. The danger has recently lowered to YELLOW/HIGH. This means that only one thing has been allowed again, and that is wood or solid-fueled cooking fires – enclosed flame only (pellet-fed, charcoal barbecues, and smokers). Gas and propane appliances are still allowed. The list of things that are still not allowed are:

- Land clearing and yard debris fires
- Recreational wood fires
- Wood or charcoal cooking fires that are open
- Tiki torches
- Liquid fuel candles or lanterns
- Gas or propane weed torches or burners
- Discharge of fireworks of any type
- Discharge of firearms on open lands

More information is at <https://www.ejfr.org/>.

As reported in the *PT Leader*: Port Townsend City Council met Monday evening one final time to workshop possibilities for the golf course before their final decision, slated for September 25. Chris Jones of Groundswell presented two revised plans based on the outcome of the July 17 meeting, when a decision could not be made whether to maintain the golf course, build a central park instead, or create a hybrid of the two. Jones said, “We were tasked to develop one concept. We developed two: Concept A and Concept B.” Jones went on to explain that Concept B was only created because certain elements of Concept A did not go over well when presented to the stakeholders. This was due to concerns about location and density of proposed housing. “Therefore, Concept B is functionally the same as Concept A; however, we have removed two developments along Blaine Street and reduced the development along San Juan Avenue,” Jones said.

Jones noted common priorities based on the 14-month-long community discussion. Among them were permanent housing, family amenities, a restaurant, walking trails and bike paths, maintained legacy of both the golf course and the natural environment, a dog park, and the creation of “third space” to celebrate community. To accommodate these priorities, both concepts contain affordable housing developments along San Juan Avenue and Blaine Street. They also include a preserved driving range, a chipping green, and a putting green. Groundswell has expanded Kah Tai prairie by 200 percent and designed a bird blind. 1.24 miles of biking trails and 2.4 miles of walking trails are in place, with the intent to connect different neighborhoods. A dog park is designated near the intersection of San Juan Avenue and Blaine Street, with separate areas for both small and large dogs. Groundswell also included plans for a mini golf program – “a potential income generator” – a playground, and a community garden to accessorize the housing.

As for the housing, Jones said, “We have the opportunity to build 64 to 145 units.” Those would likely be townhouses and/or apartment complexes. To placate concerns on overall development cost, Jones said that

Groundswell has reduced it to \$2 million. The council spent the final part of the meeting discussing these concepts. Mayor David Faber reminded those present, “We are not limited to Groundswell’s options.” And he went on to say, “We must consider the quieter voices that may have not participated, namely children,” he added, acknowledging that the golf course is a “legacy project.”

As heard on KPTZ’s *Brewocracy Now*, yesterday city manager John Mauro mentioned that there was a group of folks who are avid golfers who are attempting to form a nonprofit organization that would enter into an agreement with the city to run the golf course in the near future. This will be discussed and the City Council’s final decision on the future of the golf course will occur this Monday evening, September 25 at a special meeting at 6pm at City Hall council chambers.

KPTZ 91.9 FM brings you local news Monday through Friday at noon and 5pm and noon on Saturday. This is Jim Burke. Thanks for listening.