

Hello again! This is Derek Firenze with your local news and commentary for Thursday, October 12, 2023 on KPTZ 91.9 FM in Port Townsend, Washington.

Last night, the Port Townsend Creative District held their first of two Community Convenings at the Cotton Building in downtown Port Townsend with the second scheduled for tonight at the Fort Worden Commons. The goals of the convening included providing a brief update on the Creative District's activities and planning, gathering public ideas for potential priorities, and offering a networking opportunity for creatives and the community.

City Councilmember and Creative District Subcommittee member Owen Rowe opened Wednesday evening noting that the goal of the creative district is to connect audiences with artists to support a year-round creative economy.

Rowe then introduced two firms the Creative District had hired. First was Harmonic Northwest, a company based in Port Townsend, who was brought on for their website development expertise. They've worked together to design and implement an online artist registry where people can register themselves as a local artist as well as explore a list of all the other artists working within and around Port Townsend. The registry can be found at <https://ptcreativedistrict.org/> or by scanning the QR codes on the infamous art markers the Creative District placed around Port Townsend.

Next, Rowe introduced who was behind the convening. [Owen Rowe speaking: "The other major project we're working on is what brings us here tonight. We're working with AdvisArts Consulting based in Port Townsend and Seattle. They advance informed, imaginative, and purposeful action in the cultural sector. Claudia Bach and Catherine Nueva España are helping to develop the Creative District's Arts and Culture Plan ... And this plan which we're going to be completing this year will provide a blueprint for the Creative District's efforts for the next three to five years. So that's what we're focusing on tonight."]

The bulk of the event was spent in breakout groups to discuss a series of questions around how the Creative District could strengthen connections between artists and the community. When the groups reported back on their findings some of the major themes included lowering barriers to entry for artists, and connecting artists with resources.

Tonight's event at the Fort Worden Commons will be a repeat of this exercise and will take place from 4 to 6pm.

The City of Port Townsend is warning of a new scam going around. Several Port Townsend residents have received fraudulent phone calls from someone claiming to be a member of the Port Townsend Police Department. The caller then claims that the resident missed a jury summons and requests payment from them. The city wants you to know that the Port Townsend Police Department will never call you requesting money. Do not give out your personal information or pay them in any way.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has a message for lawn owners: leave the leaves. According to Fish & Wildlife, leaf litter is a great source of nutrients for insects including earthworms, snails, and millipedes. These insects consume the decomposing leaves and they in turn become a buffet for an array of bird species. In

addition, several species of butterflies and moths lay their eggs among leaf litter, establishing the next generation of pollinators needed for plant reproduction. And larger animals such as snakes, salamanders, turtles, and toads take cover beneath leaves, ducking away from predators and foraging for their next meal.

Bagging leaves for the landfill, however, can have unintended consequences. Not only are homeowners potentially disrupting and displacing important native species but they are throwing away perfectly good, natural, mulch. A light coverage of leaves on your lawn is not going to harm your grass; in fact decomposing leaves contribute nutrients that soil needs to produce a vibrant green lawn in the spring. If you have a thicker coverage of leaves, or if you just can't stand the sight, there are also more wildlife-friendly options to tidy up the portions of your lawn that are on display.

Leaves can be gathered and even composted for a nutrient rich, natural, garden mulch. Use a rake to gather leaves together, as a rake will be much less harmful to the wildlife living within the leaves than large machinery like a leaf blower. Leaf coverage on garden beds can be surprisingly thick as long as you don't cover more delicate plants. If you have many larger leaves, you can crumble or mulch them for easier decomposition.

Instead of stuffing leaves into harmful plastic bags, push the leaves into small piles on the outskirts of your property, away from roadways, walkways, and storm drains. The colorful mounds not only look festive but will create a habitat where wildlife can flourish without ruining your landscape aesthetic.

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