

This is KPTZ 91.9 FM in Port Townsend. I'm Jim Burke, with your local news and commentary for Tuesday, December 19, 2023.

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From the *PT Leader*: Habitat for Humanity of East Jefferson County addressed the community on December 12 about its Mason Street affordable housing project in Port Hadlock, at a public meeting that took place at the Jefferson County Public Library. During the December 12 public meeting, Habitat announced its selection of two firms for project management and architectural design, to help lead the design and planning efforts for a “permanently affordable” mixed single and multi-family community in Port Hadlock-Irondale.

According to Habitat officials, Schemata Workshop, a Seattle-based architectural firm, is slated to lead the design and planning of the community, while Cap Ex of Baltimore, Maryland develops the financial and supporting work, with both firms working at the close direction of Habitat to help develop “an implementable and financially feasible” master plan for the Mason Street neighborhood. East Jefferson Habitat Executive Director Jamie Maciejewski cited the partnerships her group is continuing to develop with local businesses and other organizations, with Cap Ex and Schemata playing “key roles” in helping to deliver local affordable housing.

Habitat purchased a 17.12-acre parcel in Port Hadlock-Irondale in 2022 by working with donors and the Jefferson Community Foundation and will lead the development of the project’s master plan over the next year. Cap Ex Project Lead Tim Pula expressed enthusiasm for collaborating with Habitat and the community to help create a “sustainable, ecologically responsible” neighborhood, thereby hopefully addressing the county’s significant need for affordable housing. The 17-acre community is intended to include 140-170 homes, which should be affordable to a wide range of families and individuals who live and work in Jefferson County, to the point that the Request for Proposal for professional services, to support the creation of the master plan, stated that the project would yield “a lasting means of providing dignified housing.”

East Jefferson Habitat Construction Director Bob Collins said the selection process was “fair but rigorous,” seeking not only experience, but also “an informed and shared commitment to the Habitat for Humanity vision of creating community.” The selection of Cap Ex and Schemata marked the project’s official launch over the summer, while the development of the master plan in the coming months is intended to be significantly influenced by a proactive schedule of community outreach, including public meetings on December 12 and January 18.

East Jefferson Habitat’s next public meeting is on January 18 at 5pm at the Jefferson County Library to solicit the community’s input on conceptual alternatives for the housing project. Schemata architect Grace Kim noted her firm’s experience with “translating community vision into implementable plans, by including ‘authentic community engagement’ and finding ‘stakeholder alignment’ to respond to the needs of the community.” Habitat anticipates the Mason Street master plan to be completed by next summer, with the attendant permits, streets and utilities expected to roll out between late 2025 to early 2026, which should coincide with the availability of the new Port Hadlock sewer.

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KPTZ News received a newsletter from Finnriver Farm and Cidery. In it, co-founder Crystie Kisler said this: “The earth spins into Winter Solstice on Thursday, December 21 – the shortest day of the year and a significant marker of seasonal shifting on the farm. There is a definite texture to winter on the farm. Outside – mud, mist, wet shoes, the smell of sodden ground and long-ripened apples, and that sense of predictable surprise at 4pm when the sun drops below the ridge and you think, ‘Dang, it’s over already?’ Inside – the aroma of mulled

cider, the chatter of hospitable conversation, the rhythm of holiday soul radio, green boughs draping, and the twinkle lights! A friend of mine once taught me a song, standing under a cedar tree on Solstice night as our kids bounded through the dark woods:

Be still and know that day and night  
Be still and know that dark and light  
Are one Holy Circle

So, here at the Solstice at Finnriver, at the seasonal fulcrum of day and night, I am trying to honor the holy circle as I experience it. To keep my heart open to witness, grieve, wonder and learn, and my arms ready to reach. Wishing you all well as can be, praying for peace, working for Love all around, Crystie, Finnriver co-founder.”

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KPTZ 91.9 FM brings you local news Monday through Friday at noon and 5pm and at noon on Saturday. You can contact us at [news@kptz.org](mailto:news@kptz.org). This is Jim Burke. Thanks for listening.