

Hello again. This is Derek Firenze with your local news and commentary for Thursday, December 28, 2023 on KPTZ 91.9 FM in Port Townsend, Washington.

Our top story today is one that brings me a great deal of sadness. Kate Dean has pulled out from the race for Congress. It cannot be said that the beloved County Commissioner did not try, but money, and quite possibly the moneyed interests attached to so much of it, got in the way. Dean said in a post to social media that she learned just how much big money is required to be taken seriously as a candidate, and that she didn't feel good about spending the whole year extracting it from the community. According to *The Leader*, Dean raised about \$30,000 dollars against an expectation of 100 to 200 thousand. The money she raised will be used to defray campaign expenses, with the remainder returned to donors.

The news broke on Friday just days after another big move by Hilary Franz who is expected by many to win the seat U.S. Representative Derek Kilmer is stepping down from. Much like the greenwashing of Biden to help oust Bernie, Franz, acting in her role as Commissioner of Public Lands for the Washington State Department of Natural Resources, finally caved to environmentalists on the Power Plant timber sale. It is one of the only legacy forests in her tenure to be spared the ax, and was part of a larger piece of preservation previously reported on by KPTZ. The DNR has been sued many times under Franz's leadership after continually failing to meet the standards set by the Policy for Sustainable Forests, a legally binding document adopted by the Board of Natural Resources in 2006 that dictates old growth forests must be increased by 10-15% by allowing fully functioning forests to mature. Franz has plenty of corporate interests on her side to help with funding, including the logging industry, but she lacks much of the goodwill an honest candidate like Kate Dean brings in spades. None of the candidates have any reports filed with the Federal Elections Commission yet, but according to the *Peninsula Daily News*, Franz's campaign announced that it had raised more than \$100,000 in the first week.

Dean graciously closed out her announcement to step down by saying that she appreciates the support and enthusiasm that many in the community offered her during her run, and that she was sorry she couldn't fulfill the vision of having "one of us," a regular person, in the US Capitol.

Another attempt by the local government met its end this week with demolition and removal of the Cherry Street Building which began on Tuesday. After the failed attempts to sell off the structure, the only way it seems possible to get rid of this mistake is to remove any trace of its existence other than the \$834,000 in municipal bonds used to purchase it from Canada.

The demolition work on the infamous 3-story stucco building had to be quickly stopped as soon as it began for lack of dust control. City staff heard community heard what they called concern over asbestos abatement. During previous surveys of the building, asbestos had been seen, though the city claims it was all removed after a previous survey completed in 2017. Work began again on Wednesday with dust control in place, and the project is expected to take approximately two weeks to complete. The city also noted that the contractor plans on recycling structural material and concrete. For safety, the city asks to please avoid the area and help inform kids to stay away as heavy equipment is onsite.

Finally, some good news. the Center for Whale Research announced the birth of a new orca calf to the beleaguered South Resident Orcas. The research nonprofit received reports and photos from Puget Sound killer whale researchers Maya and Mark Sears of a new calf with J pod on Tuesday. The calf was not with the pod in

other recent encounters, or when Mark and Maya saw the whales on Saturday, making this calf just a few days old. Perhaps a Christmas miracle? The calf was primarily observed near adult female J40, who has not yet had a calf, as well as other J pod females. J40 seems to be the most likely mother, but they have yet to confirm. The calf's sex is also unknown. May we get another miracle to rebirth the strength of our salmon runs to feed this hungry new neighbor.

KPTZ 91.9 FM brings you local news at noon and 5pm Monday through Friday and at noon on Saturdays. You can contact us through news@kptz.org. This is Derek Firenze, taking a moment to pause and thank you all for a lovely 2023, my first year at KPTZ. Being of service to this community through local news is a blessing to do. Thanks for listening.