

This is KPTZ 91.9 FM in Port Townsend. I'm Jim Burke, with local news and commentary for Tuesday, May 14, 2024.

This first story is from the *Washington State Standard*, yesterday: Only one Democrat named Bob Ferguson, the Attorney General, is running to be Washington's next governor after two others with the same name withdrew Monday. The other Bob Fergusons – one from Yakima and the other from Graham – exited before a 5pm deadline amid threat of potential prosecution for intentionally trying to confuse and mislead voters with their candidacies.

Robert Benjamin Ferguson of Graham, a U.S. Army veteran, issued a statement citing harassment and potential legal action: "If I did not withdraw from the race, I was publicly labeled a 'threat to democracy' by another candidate and his supporters."

Robert Arthur Ferguson of Yakima dropped out minutes before the deadline. He could not be immediately reached for comment.

Both had been recruited into the race by conservative Republican activist Glen Morgan, who raised the money to pay their filing fees. Morgan said, "The attorney general should be ashamed of himself. He threatens the little people as always to promote himself." Morgan made clear he sought out more Bob Fergusons to file.

Monday's departures ended weirdness in the contest for governor centered for months on four candidates – Democrats Ferguson and Mark Mullet and Republicans Semi Bird and Dave Reichert. Focus shifted in the past three days to three Bob Fergusons. The drama began Friday afternoon. Bob Watson Ferguson of Seattle, the state's attorney general who has raised nearly \$7 million in a months-long campaign, fumed, calling it a scheme to trick voters, and to dilute his vote and prevent him from advancing past the primary. He and his campaign lawyers responded by delivering cease-and-desist letters to the homes of the other Bob Fergusons on Saturday, letting them know their actions could land them in jail.

Ferguson turned it up a notch at a press conference early Monday, vowing to see them prosecuted for violating an 81-year-old state law that makes it a felony to challenge someone with the same name "and whose political reputation is widely known, with intent to confuse and mislead the electors." As AG Ferguson said, "In the final hours of filing week, anti-democracy Republicans orchestrated a cynical, deceptive attack on election integrity. To be clear: I do not want these two individuals to be prosecuted so long as they do what is right and withdraw by today's 5pm deadline," he said yesterday.

Ferguson's attorney on Monday sent Secretary of State Hobbs a letter requesting use of the full first name and middle name or initial for the other Fergusons and the occupations for all three. He also wanted the three names to appear consecutively on the ballot. State election officials set the ballot order Friday with numbers drawn randomly. Bob Arthur Ferguson of Yakima landed second and Bob Benjamin Ferguson of Graham third with Bob Ferguson of Seattle in the 13th spot. In all, 30 candidates filed, but now, there are 28 candidates and the only Bob Ferguson in the race will be the 11th name on the ballot.

This reporter attended an event last Thursday evening, and this story includes a report from *Peninsula Daily News*: More than 100 people turned out for the first public meeting of Port Townsend's comprehensive plan update, a process that will take more than a year to complete. The state Growth Management Act requires cities of a certain size to update their comprehensive plans every eight to 10 years and future legislative actions by the

city council are meant to comply with that plan. City officials said Thursday they wanted community members to share their vision for what the city will look like in 2045, and any thoughts they had on how to achieve those goals. Several stations covering various aspects of the planning process –including transportation, economic development, and housing – and were set up around the meeting hall at American Legion Post 26, so community members could give notes and feedback about each topic.

Mayor David Faber said the comprehensive plan update is one of the most important things a city can do. Faber said, “The comprehensive plan effectively defines what our built environment can be. The infrastructure and the built environment is probably the biggest thing the city does, and this defines what that’s going to look like for the next 20 years.” Comprehensive plans can go largely unused, but city officials have said they hope this update will be referenced by future city governments. More information on the update can be found at the city’s project website, <https://www.pt2045planning.org/>.

KPTZ 91.9 FM brings you local news Monday through Friday at noon and 5pm and at noon on Saturday. You can reach out to us at news@kptz.org. This is Jim Burke. Thanks for listening.