

This is KPTZ 91.9 FM in Port Townsend. I'm Jim Burke, with local news and commentary for Tuesday, June 4, 2024.

As we said on KPTZ local news on Friday, starting tomorrow, June 5, the intersection of State Route 19 and State Route 104 will be completely closed for 21 days. WashDOT will be rerouting all Beaver Valley Road traffic to Center Road. There are temporary signals set up at the intersection of Center Valley Road and State Route 104, so taking a left to head toward the bridge will be safer. But it will add a few miles to the trip so plan ahead.

The City of Port Townsend announced their selection as the winner of the 2024 ICMA Award for Local Government Excellence in Community Sustainability for the City's Financial Sustainability Initiative. The ICMA – or the International City/County Management Association – is the world's leading association of professional city and county managers and other employees who serve local governments. This award recognizes local government programs that demonstrate innovation, excellence, and success in balancing that community's social, economic, environmental, and cultural needs.

The City of Port Townsend's Financial Sustainability Initiative was a multi-year strategic effort to map out pathways for the City to meet ongoing and evolving community needs long term. The City established a Financial Sustainability Task Force in 2022 to assist with a review of the City's current financial position and identify options for the future to recommend to City Council. A report (https://cityofpt.us/sites/default/files/fileattachments/engage_pt/page/20561/final_financial_sustainability_report_to_city_council.pdf) with recommendations to City Council for long-term financial sustainability options was presented in the summer of 2023. The Task Force recommendations focus holistically on all city services with an emphasis on strategic priorities determined through widespread community engagement and planning over a number of years, including core services, housing, streets, and parks.

Shortly after the recommendations were made in June of last year, the City Council integrated the report's findings and the thrust of the initiative into the development of their multi-year strategic work plan. As part of that, and immediately following, a Transportation Benefit District was established and a 0.3% sales tax for local transportation funding was put before the voters for consideration in the fall of 2023 and it was passed with nearly 80% of the vote. With corresponding changes to the sewer rate and newly-created utility discount program, initiatives in parks and housing, and the work building on an update to the Comprehensive Plan, the Financial Sustainability Initiative continues to be a blueprint for the communities long-term viability, sustainability, and success.

This past weekend was the SEVENTY/48, the human powered boat race with 128 teams this year, from Foss Waterway Seaport in Tacoma to the Northwest Maritime Center in Port Townsend. And the winning team is "Team Beasts From The East." The duo completed the journey in 10 hours and 42 minutes. In the Facing Backwards category was "Team Salty Beaver Rowing Club" and they finished in 14 hours and 4 minutes. The winning solo paddler in the By Yourself category was "Team Patty Party" in 14 hours and 23 minutes, and STANDING UP was "Team Sea Town Supper Club" and their time was 17 hours and 11 minutes. And the NRS Random Hero Award went to "Team we Get 'Em at Night!" (NRS, Northwest River Supply is an employee-owned business in Moscow, Idaho and a sponsor of the race.) Congratulations to all the winners, and everyone who finished the race!

Last year, the SEVENTY/48 and the R2AK (Race to Alaska) were back to back, but this year they are separated by a week, so next Sunday, June 9, the R2AK starts at the crack of dawn. The bonus this week is that there promises to be much better weather this coming weekend with sun and temps in the high 60s and low 70s.

On Saturday, Port Townsend Pride is having a celebration of LGBTQ+ people everywhere, and the fun starts at 11am and continues until 4pm. That's at Pope Marine Park downtown and on Water Street and it dovetails with THE RUCKUS at 2 pm (also in Pope Marine Park), the celebratory send-off for Race To Alaska sailors. Incidentally, the Race 2 Alaska is going to be a biennial event going forward, so the next one will be in 2026. Next year is the return of the WA360, which is a race that is round trip from Port – “a rollicking counterclockwise slide through the waterways of Washington,” according to the Race to Alaska website – that's <https://r2ak.com/>.

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.