

Hello again and happy Juneteenth! This is Derek Firenze with your local news and commentary for Wednesday, June 26, 2024 beamed in from the *Jefferson County Beacon* for KPTZ 91.9FM in Port Townsend, Washington.

In an update to a story we reported on earlier, the Jefferson County Board of Commissioners changed course on their plan for the Jefferson County Emergency Shelter located at the American Legion Hall in downtown Port Townsend. The commissioners agreed on Monday to contract the running of the shelter to Bayside Housing and Services instead of operating it on their own. Bayside's board of directors is set to vote whether or not to accept the contract tonight.

The emergency shelter was previously run by the Olympic Community Action Program, better known as OlyCAP. OlyCAP's contract to run the shelter, however, ends this week at the end of the month. Bayside deputy director Heather Dudley-Nolette, who is also currently running for County Commissioner in District 1, told me that the organization hopes to agree on the contract quickly in order to avoid any lapse of service at the shelter. The agreement the county sent to Bayside includes funding for four full-time employees including one shelter manager and three full-time monitors. To fully staff the shelter, however, eight positions are required. Under the current plan, volunteers will need to work alongside paid staff to ensure there are at least two people monitoring the shelter at all times.

Dudley-Nolette said that Bayside has found people for the three shelter monitor positions, but was still looking for someone to fill the shelter manager position. She also mentioned that the current shelter manager, Terry Strickland, has been very helpful in the discussions so far, and though he plans to stay with OlyCAP and leave the position once Bayside takes over, he will still offer what he can to help during the transition. If you are interested in applying for this position which provides such a vital service to our community, you can reach out through the contact page at [baysidehousing.org \(https://www.baysidehousing.org/contact-us\)](https://www.baysidehousing.org/contact-us).

While we celebrated Juneteenth last week, as Coretta Scott King once said, "Struggle is a never ending process. Freedom is never really won, you earn it and win it in every generation." This week, the *Beacon* had Housing Solution Network's Network Director Liz Revord help bring to light history around housing and racism. Revord reported on a presentation she attended with Housing Resources Bainbridge Island in April on the work being done at the University of Washington on the Racial Restrictive Covenants Program of Washington State.

Historical housing policies, including restrictive covenants, have had devastating long-term consequences and impacts on marginalized communities, she wrote. These policies prevented certain populations from buying or renting homes in many communities, hindering families from establishing and creating generational wealth. These types of restrictions come in a multitude of forms, and many of these document types are still commonplace today, although racial restrictions only became illegal in 1968.

Since 1917, real estate professionals through the American Board of Realtors have heavily promoted and led the use of covenants, offering such covenants as a way to "protect" property, property rights, and, of course, property value. By the mid-1930s, redlining became a secondary practice, giving banks and mortgage lenders a visual of "safe" and "unsafe" areas for investments, where a red line determined "hazardous" communities. Although in 1948 those covenants were ruled to violate the equal protection clause of the 14th Amendment, it wasn't until Congress passed the Fair Housing Act in 1968 that racial covenants became illegal. However, this did not prevent scare tactics and other forms of harassment, or worse, from happening in communities across the nation.

Port Townsend's own Mayor David Faber joined this conversation in the comments section adding that after the Fair Housing Act, communities turned to exclusionary, single-family zoning as the legal way to exclude people of color from communities. According to the Washington State Department of Commerce, Jefferson County has seen an increase in cost-burdened BIPOC households between 2014 and 2019, while there has been a decrease in cost-burdened white households during that same time frame. However, when it comes to homeowner numbers, Jefferson County appears to be on a better track. Commerce states that BIPOC homeowner rates increased between 2015 to 2021 from 51% to 67%, but compared to white households at 76% and 80% respectively, Revord points out we still have much to do.

KPTZ 91.9 FM brings you local news at noon and 5 Monday through Friday and at noon on Saturday, partnering on Wednesday to bring you stories from jeffcobeacon.com. You can submit ideas to the Beacon through info@jeffcobeacon.com. This is Derek Firenze. Thanks for listening.