

This is KPTZ FM 91.9 in Port Townsend, Washington. I'm Nhatt Nichols, bringing you the news and commentary from the Jefferson County *Beacon* for Wednesday, October 30, 2024.

The city of Port Townsend has designed a beautiful, easy-to-use new sidewalk with public safety in mind for rolling strollers, playing, hauling inventory, moving with a disability, the elderly, and the beauty of the beloved Uptown. Along with creating accessibility through smooth sidewalks, they've created bulb-outs curb extensions to the corners, narrowed the street so they make for a shorter crossing, and slowed down traffic because they narrow the street visually. The idea is to make it more inviting for non-motorized transportation and for both environmental sustainability and public health. Laura Parsons, the civil engineer on the Lawrence Street Project says, "It's healthy for everybody in the community to be moving and get out of their cars as much as possible – to be moving their bodies and thinking of air quality."

The trees that have been removed from Lawrence Street aren't going to waste. Instead, they have been given to the Port Townsend School of Woodworking to repurpose. There is a mixed response to the new back-in parking on Tyler Street, with some being excited about pedestrian safety and others concerned about their ability to safely park. Parsons feels confident in people's ability to adapt. There will also be two regular parking stalls reallocated to handicapped parking stalls.

One of the main purposes behind the upgrades is for ease of accessibility for those with movement difficulties. Michelle Sandoval was on council for 20 years and mayor for three terms, and with her husband's recent stroke, her worldview has been opened to the limitations within infrastructure for individuals with disabilities. They know where all the worst runs of sidewalk in town are, ripped up by trees and full of treachery, many of which are outside Uptown businesses. The changes to the Uptown sidewalk mean she and her husband can go to those restaurants together again and move through the space without the anxiety of navigating obstacles.

With Sandoval's political history and personal connection to disability needs, she encourages people to think deeply about why it's important that money goes to these projects. And while the Lawrence Street project is being addressed through Public Works trust fund money, Sandoval encourages people to think deeply and openly about the movement of money in the city. If you would like to give your input on city funding, the next city council meeting is on November 4 at 6 pm at City Hall.

On a beautiful historic property in Quilcene stands the nearly 100-year-old barn that may be a key to the future of music in Jefferson County. In 1935, the Iseri family, who immigrated to the US from Japan, built the barn on their land that stands solid to this day. This historical structure survived the tumultuous times of its origin, through nearly forty years of the Olympic Music Festival, into its new beginnings as a beaconing light within the native forest's present permaculture.

Enter the Quilcene Lantern in 2024 and meet the new land stewards: Laurie, Steve, Willem, and Bergen De Koch, who've been busting their humps since January to serve up Jefferson County with some twinkling limelight we all can step into. The De Koch's are continuing the work of running a family business founded upon what the Iseri family started when they purchased the land in 1913. After six months of wearing all the hats, the De Koch family has opened the Lantern's doors for live, electrified shows.

Since June, the venue has provided a safe space for nearly twenty gigs highlighting different music genres, Tarboo Fest being one of their events slated for annual continuance. Concerts in the Barn will also keep its annual gathering place at the Quilcene Lantern for the foreseeable future.

The De Koch family is forging ahead into the winter months of Quilcene's darkest days so the Lantern's illumination can shine upon local musicians' talents and their passionate drive to share their art and culture. More opening doors to opportunities, allocating artistic and spatial warmth within the community as precession wobbles the earth into its chilliest season here in the Pacific Northwest.

The Quilcene Lantern is at 7360 Center Road, Quilcene, WA. You can buy tickets and find more information at <https://www.quilcenelantern.com/>

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