

This is KPTZ 91.9 FM in Port Townsend, Washington. I'm Diane Walker with your local news and commentary for Thursday, February 20, 2025.

Jefferson Land Trust has begun investigating the possibility of converting a retired golf course on Marrowstone Island into a conservation burial ground. According to Erik Kingfisher, director of the Land Trust's stewardship and resilience, a conservation or green burial is a biodegradable burial, done in a place that is protected by a local conservation organization. Such burials can actually improve the value and condition of a property. Plots are expected to sell for \$4,000, with a portion of sales going into an endowment, Kingfisher said. He added that the Land Trust speculates that 8 to 10 acres of the property in question could be used, with each plot taking up about 30 by 30 feet. The trust is in the process of having both above ground and underground surveys done to gain a clear picture of how much of the property can be used for burial purposes, he said, adding that the Land Trust has set up a subsidiary, Olympic Wildland Burial Grounds, to own and manage the property. For more information about conservation burial, visit <https://saveland.org/conservation-burial-program>.

In a letter posted to the Port Townsend Community Facebook page this week, Port Townsend Mayor David Faber addressed local concerns about the proposed paid parking program for downtown. He began with a discussion of the nature of the problem, noting that folks agree there's too little parking available, but disagree about who is – or should be – taking up the spaces. Apparently, employees and residents complain about tourists, but business owners and shoppers complain about employees and residents.

Faber's letter then addresses the variety of solutions that have been proposed. For some, building a parking garage would be a great solution, but Faber points out both financial and environmental drawbacks to that plan. For others, who would like to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, the solution is to disincentivize the use of personal automobiles, or even to pedestrianize downtown. But pedestrianizing is a massive change and would depend on a lot of buy-in from the community that Faber believes does not exist. In addition, he claims pedestrianizing might make access more challenging for disabled, elderly, and families.

Other folks have suggested more enforcement of the two-hour parking limits, but Faber claims the city lacks the resources to hire sufficient staff to monitor that. Putting all of these complaints and ideas in a blender, says Faber, produced the idea of a paid parking pilot study, the purpose of which is to both encourage parking turnover and to encourage people to consider alternative methods of transportation.

Whether or not the City actually adopts a paid parking program, adds Faber, is ultimately dependent upon community buy-in. But he concludes by stating categorically that the city is not capable of building a parking garage, pedestrianizing downtown, or enforcing current parking rules unless those rules come with a way to generate revenue. In short, he concludes, paid parking appears to him to be the only viable solution to our current parking problem, and he asks the community to evaluate: is the downtown parking problem serious enough to warrant implementing paid parking? It's okay to say "no", he adds, "and if that's the general community sentiment, I would rather council and staff not spend any more effort trying to solve a problem for which no reasonable solution is sufficiently popular to enact."

According to the Port Townsend *Leader*, the JUMP! Playground in HJ Carroll Park will be closed through early March for renovations. Improvements will include a new toddler play area, a bilingual communications board,

repainting the climbing orcas, and a new chain-link art gate by local artist Gunter Reimnitz. The playground will re-open Mid-March, and a grand re-opening gala is planned for May 3.

And finally, those of us who have bird feeders are being advised by the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife to clean them regularly, due to the rise of salmonellosis and avian flu. Conjunctivitis, E. coli, and other viruses and/or bacteria can also be transmitted from bird to bird via contamination of a feeder by an infected bird.

KPTZ 91.9 FM broadcasts your local news Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday at noon and 5pm. You can contact us at news@kptz.org. I'm Diane Walker. Thank you for listening.