

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

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At their Monday meeting this week, the Port Townsend City Council voted to pause the proposed parking pilot program for downtown; changed the rules regarding how the city proceeds with ethics complaints against staff, council members, and advisory board members; and approved additional money for repaving Tyler Street.

The decision to pause the parking pilot plan was not initially on the agenda but was proposed by Mayor Faber during his presiding officer's report. The motion was approved unanimously, and according to the Port Townsend *Leader* the council did not set a date for the proposal to return for consideration, but city staff were directed to gather more data to support alternative plans.

With regard to the ethics policy: Because the Rev. Crystal Cox filed new filings alleging ethics breaches against city council members Amy Howard and Libby Wennstrom and Public Records Officer Haylie Truesdal after learning the council planned to rewrite its ethics complaint policy, Howard and Wennstrom joined City Manager Mauro and Mayor Faber in recusing themselves from the discussion around the ethics policy. The new code approved at Monday's meeting requires the following:

- All complaints must be filed with the city clerk, who will determine the completeness of the complaint and will have the authority to reject complaints deemed incomplete.
- For complaints relating to city employees, officials, and members of advisory boards, the supervisor or appropriate individual deemed by the city manager will investigate the complaint and report back to the city manager. The city manager determines if the complaint should or should not move forward to the hearing examiner.
- Complaints against the city manager or council members will be automatically assigned to the hearing examiner.
- Complaints may only be filed by current employees and business owners within city limits, current or former residents, or anyone who has done business with the city. The prior policy let anyone file a complaint.
- No person may knowingly file a false complaint, or a false report of violation.

Now that the council has approved the additional \$178,000 needed to meet the lowest bid for the paving of Tyler Street from Lawrence to Jefferson, the project is scheduled to start soon: Northern Asphalt, the apparent low-bidder, and their sub-consultant Sound Concrete have told Public Works Director Steve King they have an opening in their schedule and hope to complete the project in 30 to 40 days.

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The City Parks Department will be closing the public parking lot today and tomorrow to accommodate the installation of the Skate Park lights. This closure will include the street parking along Monroe Street in front of the park, but the area for the bus stop will not be closed off.

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Main Street's Executive Director Mari Mullen has announced she will be stepping down in May. Mullen, whose background is in public relations, advertising, and public programming for museums, joined the organization in 1998 after serving as the marketing manager at Centrum.

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For those of you concerned about wildfires, the state Department of Natural Resources has announced it will be fully ready this year to combat wildfires across the 2.4 million forested acres it manages despite an executive order by President Trump freezing approximately \$90 million in federal fire-fighting funds. Regardless of federal funding, prior commitments from the state legislature will ensure that the DNR is “fully ready to tackle wildfires this year, thanks to the passage of HB1168, a state bill signed into law in July of 2021 that designates \$125 million every two years to be spent on Washington’s long-term forest health and reducing wildfire risks.

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And finally, the late Jimi Hendrix has been posthumously awarded the Medal of Merit for his outstanding service to Washington and his national and international recognition. According to a press release from Washington Secretary of State Steve Hobbs, the Seattle-born Hendrix is universally hailed as the greatest electric guitarist in the history of rock music and one of the most influential musicians of the 20th century, something that is no surprise to KPTZ listeners.

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