

This is KPTZ 91.9 FM in Port Townsend, Washington. I'm Diane Walker with your local news and commentary for Thursday, April 10, 2025.

\*\*\*

Listeners who have heard the rumors about the impending demise of Quimper Mercantile and the other businesses occupying that strip mall down by the ferry dock may apparently rest easy for now. Although the Hall Equities Group, new owners of the strip mall, have not been allowing the resident stores to renew their leases, there are still five years to go before those leases expire. The long-term future of the property is under consideration by its owners, but any change is years down the road and Brandon Farrell, chief operating officer of the group, has informed the Port Townsend *Leader* that it is more likely that the mall will eventually be replaced with new construction designed to enhance the surrounding area. It is likely that the news of the non-renewable leases got confused with the recently approved hotel project slated for the property across the street from the mall. The Mercantile, a community-owned corporation, has several years in which to determine how to proceed, but has announced its intent to continue operation well past the five year mark. "Quimper Mercantile is here to stay," according to Peter Quinn, board president and principal of the Mercantile.

\*\*\*

Following a year-long moratorium on short-term rentals (STRs) due to concerns about affordable housing, Jefferson County Commissioners passed updated regulations this week. According to the *Peninsula Daily News*, the Commissioners have set a maximum cap on the number of short-term rentals permitted in the county. Only up to 4% of all permanent dwelling units will be allowed to be permitted as STRs in each county Zip code. An STR is defined as a primary dwelling unit which is not a hotel, motel or bed and breakfast and which is rented for fewer than 30 consecutive days. If the cap is reached, applicants will be placed on a waitlist. As permits become available, the county's Department of Community Development would issue them to the earliest applicants, according to the new code.

\*\*\*

In a report to Jefferson County commissioners this week, Public Health Officer Dr. Allison Berry noted that while infectious disease numbers continue to be low in the county, measles cases in Texas are increasing and federal funding cuts are affecting Jefferson County programs. While no cases of measles have been reported in Clallam or Jefferson counties, Berry notified the board of a third measles case in Washington state, in Snohomish County, according to the *Peninsula Daily News*. The case is an infant who traveled by air, she said, adding that Jefferson County has the lowest measles vaccination rate among children in Washington state counties. "If measles does come to Jefferson County, it can become a very big issue very quickly," she said. The measles, mumps, and rubella vaccine is safe, it's incredibly effective, and it gives you lifelong immunity against measles, as well as mumps and rubella."

And while Berry has seen a rise in the number of recent vaccinations, she points out that federal funding cuts – which have resulted in measles clinic shutdowns in Texas – have also affected the Division of Global Migration, which tracks air travel for infectious diseases and sends messages to the individuals exposed on a flight. "That's not happening now," said Berry. "Normally, we get that list within two to three days, then we can contact everyone who was exposed so they don't expose others." In the case of the Snohomish child, the list still hasn't been received. The likelihood that there are other people in Washington state who were on that plane who don't know they were exposed is high, Berry said, adding that she recommends that people stay up to date on vaccinations, stay home when sick, and reach out to a health provider when concerned about strange rashes.

\*\*\*

And finally, Washington Senator Maria Cantwell has issued a statement applauding President Trump's decision yesterday to issue a 90-day pause on some of his proposed tariffs. Cantwell's bipartisan bill, which she introduced last Thursday to reaffirm Congress' key role in setting and approving trade policy, has since been joined by 12 additional bipartisan co-sponsors and has been endorsed by multiple major US Business organizations. In addition, a bipartisan group has introduced a companion version of Senator Cantwell's legislation in the House of Representatives, also cosponsored by equal numbers of Republicans and Democrats.

\*\*\*

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.