

This is KPTZ 91.9 FM on your dial in Port Townsend, Washington. I'm Charlie Bermant with news and commentary for Tuesday, June 3, 2025.

Fort Worden State Park is evolving. Months after the dissolution of the Public Development Authority and the closure of hospitality services. Peninsula College's tenure at Fort Worden State Park is coming to an end, with the announcement last week that the spring semester will be its last. The college will vacate the facility on September 1, according to a press release. The 14,000 square foot facility was renovated especially for the college in 2016. At that time the college entered into a \$1 yearly lease, with a 50 year commitment, similar to many of the Fort Worden tenants. The dissolution of the Public Development Authority invalidated those leases, with new agreements currently being negotiated between Fort Worden partners and Washington State Parks.

Peninsula College president Suzy Ames told KPTZ yesterday that the negotiation had nothing to do with the decision to move, rather it had to do with a \$2.2 million budget deficit. She said that the facility was underutilized. This was attributable to a shift toward online learning, but also due to the Fort Worden location, which is not easily accessible through public transportation.

While the college is leaving Fort Worden, it will maintain a Jefferson County presence. Peninsula College's services – including academic advising, financial aid support, and wraparound student services – will continue to be available to all students in East Jefferson County through remote and mobile formats. A physical space will eventually open in Chimacum or Port Hadlock, according to Ames.

Washington State Parks spokesman Chris Holm said that the college's announcement was not anticipated. After the college leaves the facility, Parks will assume full responsibility for maintenance and operation of the building, which its long-term use yet to be determined. Students currently enrolled or planning to attend in-person fall quarter classes in Port Townsend are encouraged to contact Anna Forrestal, Director of the Port Townsend campus at AForrestal@pencol.edu, or (360) 417-6317.

As one door closes another is kicked open. Taps at the Guardhouse Bar and Kitchen is scheduled to open this month, with an exact date depending upon the issuance of its liquor license. Taps will be operated by Heidi Haney and Brian Curry, who plan to provide a comprehensive bar program paired with a light menu featuring nostalgic comfort foods with creative, globally inspired twists. The dishes are designed for flexibility – suitable for light snacking, shared appetizers, or casual full meals. The all-ages dining area and small lounge will seat 40 guests while the seasonal fire pit enhanced patio and year-round porch will seat 60.

Haney, who for the last seven years, has been running Topsy Gypsy Mobile Bar Service, said she is excited to be a great neighborhood place while serving Fort Worden staff, visitors, and art patrons. They seek to feature as many local products as possible. Taps will be pouring PT beers, cider, and wine, and are also planning on working with local farms and bakeries. The facility has a very limited kitchen preparation area, so the menu needs to be focused on moderately priced lighter fare and casual entrees. Plans also call for an outdoor grilling station July through September offering burgers, brats, and vegetarian options.

As for the Commons, Holm said Parks is working on a couple of possibilities for opening the Commons kitchen and Reville Café. In the meantime, Parks is renting the Commons to Centrum throughout the summer, as well as a few other private rentals.

A presentation about emergency preparedness with regard to extreme heat and wildfire smoke safety takes place next week. Jefferson County Public Health specialist Lara Gaasland will discuss the importance of air quality during wildfire season and the health risks associated with extreme heat and wildfire smoke. Her presentation takes place from 4 pm to 5 pm next Thursday, June 12, in the Carnegie Reading Room at the Port Townsend Public Library.

KPTZ brings you local news Tuesday through Thursday at noon and 5pm. To contact us, write news@kptz.org. This is Charlie Bermant. I have a cold, so don't stand too close to the radio.