

This is KPTZ 91.9 FM in Port Townsend, Washington. I'm Diane Walker, with your local news and commentary for Tuesday, May 12, 2026.

Affordable Hometown Port Townsend (AHPT) has rejected the city of Port Townsend's settlement counteroffer with regard to the group's appeal to the state's Growth Management Hearings Board concerning the city's recently passed comprehensive plan. Sent Monday, AHPT's counteroffer asks the city to put a moratorium on increased density allowed in R-II zones by the comp plan, along with other requirements, stating that once permits are approved for larger structures as set out in the current comp plan, affordable housing stock will be diminished, and residents will be displaced by teardowns and rising property taxes. City staff is reviewing AHPT's response and counteroffer and will recommend an executive session with City Council on May 18 to review the response and counteroffer with Council.

In addition to the pause on development, AHPT has also requested that the city remove six specific provisions from the code adopted in December, including a request to reinstate 10-foot side yard setbacks, to reduce maximum lot coverage for multifamily units from 65% to 50%, and to establish a maximum of six units per structure. The group has also proposed that neighbors receive formal notice and an opportunity to comment on the infrastructure impacts of new five- and six-unit projects before permits are issued.

AHPT's proposal seeks to have the city use the moratorium to assess the racially disparate impacts of past and future housing policies; and would also like the moratorium to allow for an infrastructure assessment to ensure public facilities like water, sewer, and roads can support increased density without decreasing the level of service for current residents. AHPT's letter states that the organization is not against increased density so long as it meets the affordable housing targets required under the Growth Management Act and addresses impacts from density increases.

At approximately 3:34pm last Thursday, Quilcene Fire Rescue was dispatched to an embankment in the area of Linger Longer Road, where they found a 125-pound dog named Gidget and its owner needing assistance. Apparently Gidget had become stuck after chasing after a coyote and its owner had gone down the embankment to prevent the dog from falling farther. Unfortunately, due to Gidget's size, the owner was unable to get the dog back up safely. With the assistance of the Brinnon Fire Department and deputies from the Jefferson County Sheriff's Office, a litter basket, ropes, pulleys, and a winch system were assembled and safely hoisted Gidget back up the embankment. Both Gidget and her owner were uninjured.

Port Ludlow Associates are allowing a Wind Phone to be erected on their property in the copse of trees to the east of the market at the intersection of Oak Bay Road and Paradise Bay Road, and they invite people to feel free to sit down on the bench and dial a loved one.

The Wind Phone is a phone booth which contains an unconnected phone with no dial tone or actual services but instead provides a space for people to speak their grief, thoughts, and memories aloud to someone who has died.

The first Wind Phone was established by a man named Itaru Sasaki on a windy hill in Japan overlooking the Pacific Ocean after the deadly Japanese tsunami of 2011. Sasaki invited mourners to visit his phone booth to make calls to their friends and relatives lost in the great tsunami, hoping they would find a connection to their loved ones and cope with their grief. While the Wind Phone originated in Japan, Wind Phones have been

installed in various locations worldwide such as parks, libraries, and private gardens. There are over 500 in the United States alone.

A plaque placed near the Port Ludlow Wind Phone booth reads: “This phone will never ring. It’s connected by love to nowhere and everywhere. It is for those who have an empty place in their heart left by a loved one. Say hello, say goodbye. Talk of the past, the present, and the future. The wind will carry your message.” The phone will be officially dedicated on May 30 at 1pm. For more information, contact Karen Griffith at kgriffith45@gmail.com.

And finally, just a reminder: the Hood Canal Bridge will be closed from 10pm to 5am tonight, Wednesday, and Thursday, and next week’s evenings from Monday to Thursday as well.

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.