

Public Comments for June 23, 2021 Port Commission Meeting

From: Eric Taylor <spamcan57@gmail.com>

Sent: Tuesday, June 22, 2021 10:57 AM

To: Eron Berg <Eron@portofpt.com>; Pam Petranek <Pam@portofpt.com>; Bill Putney <bill@portofpt.com>; Pete Hanke <phanke@portofpt.com>; Gary Lanthrum <glanthrum@gmail.com>; Ptam <ptam@olyphen.com>

Subject: proposed homeless encampment

Hi Eron Berg & Port Commissioners:

I understand that the County has requested that the Port consider allowing them to relocate the homeless camp currently located at the county fairgrounds to some port property adjacent to the airport. I think this is a poor idea.

As a pilot based at JClA, I am concerned about the possibility of safety issues with camp residents & hang-abouts wandering onto the airport grounds, including on the runway & taxiways. As an airport leaseholder & hangar owner, I am also concerned that the airport, especially "those rich guy's hangars full of expensive stuff", might be an awfully attractive target for those same residents & hang-abouts to vandalize or burglarize.

I think there are a lot of other viable locations available, preferably on the county's own property, for such a homeless camp-- perhaps adjacent to the county shop in Hadlock would be a good spot, being located near the County Sheriff's station makes that an especially attractive choice. IMHO it would be better to site this "temporary homeless camp" closer into or right in town. Locating it out in the county makes it too easy for the powers that be to let it turn into a permanent fixture-- "out of sight, out of mind".

The County Administrator's letter references two different parcels, the southernmost one is apparently accessible via Four Corners Road as opposed to SR 20. If this homeless camp must be located near the airport, I would think this one parcel would be the better choice-- IMHO the further away from the airport, the better.

In any event, considering that this issue has been sprung on us the day before the Port meeting at which it will be discussed, I would ask that the Port Commission hold off on making any sort of response to the county re allowing this homeless camp until the airport community has had a reasonable amount of time to weigh in.

Thank you,

Eric Taylor
172 Wycoff Road
Port Townsend, WA 98368
360-643-0588
spamcan57@gmail.com

cc: Gary Lanthrum, Port Townsend Aero Museum

From: David Dean <ddean449@gmail.com>

Sent: Tuesday, June 22, 2021 10:32:56 PM

To: Eron Berg <Eron@portofpt.com>; Bill Putney <bill@portofpt.com>; Pam Petranek <Pam@portofpt.com>; Pete Hanke <phanke@portofpt.com>

Subject: Relocation of the Homeless Camp to the Airport

I believe that relocation of the homeless camp to the airport would be a mistake. I'm surprised that the county even has the resources to support a homeless camp. If we look at the experience of larger cities we see that it is a continuing source of many issues and financial drain, that only worsens over time. That said, moving the homeless camp out of Port Townsend also makes life more difficult for those in that situation. The relocation to the airport would make it more difficult to get services and assistance needed by those in a homeless condition. If you don't have transportation the distance from the airport to these facilities can be a real obstacle. The Shell station at Four Corners only has a limited number of job opportunities, so seeking employment becomes more difficult. We could also expect that an airport security issue may develop that will be a concern of the airport users, and come to the attention of the FAA. This is an FAA that is concerned that hangars are used correctly on an airport that they've invested considerably in, what would they say about a homeless camp moving in. Finally I live close to this airport. There are coyotes, the occasional cougar and bears, and many other varmints and bugs that will be attracted to a homeless camp that will make things more miserable than they need to be. I realise that locating a homeless camp will meet with opposition to any place chosen, but the airport location is a really bad solution.

From: Steven Lewis <lewisstevea@gmail.com>

Sent: Wednesday, June 23, 2021 8:00 AM

To: PPT Info <info@portofpt.com>

Subject: Port Liability and Public Safety of Homeless Camp

Airport is not fenced and there is no way to separate proposed homeless (dogs, kids and adults) from runway. Port Authority would be liable for any resulting loss of life, injury and property damage. The airport is used day and night. Any disruption to landing aircraft is likely to be a major disaster.

Port Authority needs to be proactive in limiting its liability.

From: scott erickson <tailspintommys@gmail.com>

Sent: Wednesday, June 23, 2021 1:59 PM

To: PPT Info <info@portofpt.com>

Subject: Port meeting about homeless camp at airport

Once again, we have been given to short of a notice to plan for this meeting. Please extend the time for comments and participation on the subject of a homeless camp near your international airport.

Scott Erickson
300 Airport Rd
Port Townsend, WA 98368
360-912-7005 cell

From: Scott Wexman <scowex@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, June 23, 2021 9:16 AM
To: PPT Info <info@portofpt.com>
Subject: Comment on agenda item for 6/23/2021 meeting @ 4:30 [Homeless Encampment]

Regarding moving the homeless encampment near the Jefferson County International Airport:

I am against it for the following reasons -

1. Potential for runway incursions
2. Non-authorized encampments developing in the area
3. Potential mischief for tie down aircraft or other facilities and personal property.

While I realize that 'homeless' is a catchall phrase, and include people down on their luck or displaced, there is also a large contingent of mentally unstable individuals that have no business being near a vulnerable facility. Unfortunately, because our airport is not fenced, we do not have a way of excluding those individuals from the airport property.

Thank you,

Scott Wexman

-----Original Message-----

From: ptam@olyphen.com <ptam@olyphen.com>
Sent: Wednesday, June 23, 2021 11:31 AM
To: Eron Berg <Eron@portofpt.com>; Pam Petranek <Pam@portofpt.com>; Pete Hanke <phanke@portofpt.com>; Bill Putney <bill@portofpt.com>; Gary Lanthrum <glanthrum@gmail.com>
Subject: Jefferson County Airport Homeless Encampment

To Whom It May Concern,

As the director of the Port Townsend Aero Museum I would like to go on record with my concerns over Jefferson County creating a homeless encampment on the Port property directly to the south of the Jefferson County International Airport.

First off, I would like to acknowledge the growing homeless population in our cities and counties across this country is a very real issue, one that affects each of us. I have read that as many as 40 to 60 percent of the people living in homeless shelters suffer from one form or another of mental illness. Drug abuse and the companion crimes accompanying it, have also been found to be a problem for those individuals, families, business, living and operating outside of these homeless camps. For many of the people who find themselves living in a homeless encampment they probably need much more than a place to sleep. They may need help from a mental health professional, or a medical doctor, in order for them to begin the process of becoming a productive part of the society in which they exist. Until then, these same people need a place to live. That being said, the place chosen for them needs to be one that will have a minimum impact on the individuals and business located outside the boundaries of the camp.

Because the Jefferson County International Airport is an unsecured airport I feel the placement of the proposed homeless encampment south of the west end of the runway is not a good location for the following reasons:

- 1) The Port Townsend Aero Museum located on the Jefferson County International Airport is a Federally recognized 501(c)3 non-profit with a youth education program. Our young volunteers range in age from thirteen to eighteen years of age. These same young volunteers often work unaccompanied and access our large museum hangar located at the west end of the airport property, just across the runway end from the proposed homeless encampment. Senate Bill 5882, Sec 3 Chapter 36.70, and Sec 4 Chapter 36.70A prohibit a County from placing a homeless encampment within 1,000 feet of a school or early learning facility. Although our museum hangar is slightly over 1,000 feet from the proposed camp, the airport property on which our education program operates is not. For this reason I feel a more suitable location should be found for this homeless camp.
- 2) Since the Jefferson County International Airport is not secured by fences or gates, it could become a prime location for theft of personal property. Aircraft and aircraft storage hangars are not very secure, and as such they would become a target for criminals looking to support a drug habit while living at the neighboring encampment.
- 3) The Port recently provided free high speed internet access for airport patrons. This same high speed internet will now induce people living at the homeless camp to come onto airport property to access the internet. This becomes a real safety issue when these people who are not familiar with the dangers of airport operations and moving aircraft are now walking up the taxiway towards their new internet hotspot.
- 4) Finally, I have read the Washington State RCW code requirements for a zoning variation to be granted that would allow a homeless encampment to be built on county property. The list of requirements and rules for any new camp to be created is long, with most them requiring active management to insure that these rules and regulations are being met and enforced daily. As a matter of public record a comprehensive management plan by the managing agency, be it County or Port, needs to be in place that spells out in detail how each line item of the RCW requirements is not only going to be met, but be enforced in the event of a violation. I do not think permission for this proposed airport property homeless encampment, or any for that matter, should be allowed until this comprehensive management plan has been reviewed by all those who would be impacted by the encampment and is part of the public record.

Michael Payne
Director
Port Townsend Aero Museum

From: gary.l@ramtasc.com <gary.l@ramtasc.com>
Sent: Wednesday, June 23, 2021 12:46 PM
To: PPT Info <info@portofpt.com>
Cc: mmccauley@co.jefferson.wa.us; 'Eric Taylor' <spamcan57@gmail.com>; 'Scott Wexman' <scowex@gmail.com>
Subject: Agenda item on homeless shelter on Port Property

Port of Port Townsend and Interim County Administrator McCauley:

These comments are in regard to the request for the Port of Port Townsend to consider hosting a homeless encampment on Assessor tax parcels 001332017 and 001332013. These parcels are on Port property, adjacent to the Jefferson County International Airport (JCIA). As president of the Jefferson County Pilots Association, I am responding on behalf of the aviation community that base aircraft and/or fly out of JCIA. The pilot community is deeply concerned and opposed to these parcels being considered for the following reasons.

- JCIA is one of the few county airports within the Federal Aviation Administration's National Plan of Integrated Airport Systems (NPIAS) network that does not have a perimeter security fence. Almost all airports receiving FAA funding are surrounded by an 8' tall perimeter fence that keeps animals and intruders off of airport property. Despite assurances that the homeless encampment would have a 6' perimeter fence, the residents of the encampment and their pets would come and go as they please. With the airport adjacent to the encampment, the probability of them wandering onto airport property and impacting flight operations is a huge concern. Since most of the homeless do not have their own transportation, the cleared airport property would seem to offer the easiest and most pleasant access to Hwy 19 (Rhody Drive) walking from the encampment area. Absent a perimeter fence to protect airport operations, housing homeless people adjacent to an operating airport is a big enough concern (particularly for night flight operations) that tax parcels 001332017 and 001332013 should not be considered viable for homeless residences. A quick look at other NPIAS airports in the region will show that JCIA is unique in not having a perimeter security fence. The Port of Port Angeles' airport is fenced, the Port of Bremerton's airport has a security fence, the city of Arlington's airport is fenced, the Port of Friday Harbor's airport property is fenced, The Port of Anacortes airport is fenced, and the Port of Skagit County's airport is fenced. If a homeless encampment is to be seriously considered for tax parcels 001332017 and 001332013, an 8' tall security perimeter fence for the Jefferson County International Airport should be a qualifying prerequisite.
- There are a variety of challenges that homeless individuals face. Unfortunately, mental instability and addiction to illegal drugs are common issues in any encampment of homeless individuals. The impairment caused by either mental illness or drugs adds to the risk of locating such an encampment adjacent to an active airport without any protective perimeter fence around the airport property.
- For the portion of the homeless population addicted to illegal drugs, theft of personal property is one way they fund their acquisition of drugs. Aircraft are built much lighter than cars and as such are much easier to break into. The navigation and communications equipment in aircraft is incredibly expensive and would become a target for theft. This challenge is exacerbated by the lack of a perimeter security fence around airport property and the number of aircraft that are just parked on the ramp, and not secured in hangars. All transient aircraft stay on the ramp and a number of aircraft based at JCIA park on the ramp. Lack of security fencing around airport property adds to the risk of theft from this population if they were to live adjacent to airport property.
- A number of homeless individuals have companion pets, and that helps many of them cope. Those pets represent another significant operational risk to aircraft when living adjacent to an airport that does not have a perimeter security fence. Aircraft have very limited options for avoiding animal incursions onto the runway on either short final approach to landing, or on their takeoff roll. Numerous aircraft are

destroyed each year due to encounters with animals on the runway. Moving additional animals to an encampment adjacent to an operating airport that does not have a perimeter fence irresponsibly increases that risk.

- There are no sanitary facilities at either of the tax parcels referenced in the proposal letter from the County to the Port. The Jefferson County Fairgrounds actually has bathroom and shower facilities, making that property seem better suited to hosting an encampment of any kind.

Speaking from a purely personal perspective, I have had worrisome encounters with homeless people in Jefferson county multiple times. Four criminals broke into our home in Port Hadlock and stole a number of marketable items to fund their drug habits. Although all four individuals were caught, only two of them served prison time. The other two went through drug court to avoid incarceration. One of those individuals (Victoria Brown) was found dead at the homeless encampment at Jefferson County Fairgrounds in December of 2020. The suspected cause of death was a drug overdose. She is my personal example of the theft threat a portion of the homeless population pose to the aircraft parked on the ramp since the JClA does not have a perimeter security fence. In addition, my wife and I often walked our dog at the old horse race track at the Jefferson County Fairgrounds. Another homeless individual there (Peter) suffers from mental illness and has apparently stopped taking his medication after being released from Western State Hospital. His delusions have led to verbal abuse that is bad enough that we stopped walking our dog at the fairgrounds. His precarious mental condition makes housing him adjacent to an operating airport a very bad idea.

I understand that some accommodation is needed for the homeless, but choosing property adjacent to an operating airport that does not have a perimeter security fence would be a very poor decision and could lead to complicated liability issues for both the Port and the County if an incident with operating aircraft were to occur. If either of the tax parcels adjacent to the airport continue to be considered for a homeless encampment, erecting a perimeter security fence around the airport should be a prerequisite to any encampment operations.



Gary Lanthrum, President
Jefferson County Pilots Assn
glanthrum@gmail.com
(703) 629-3134

----- Forwarded Message -----

From: Barbara Morey <bemorey@yahoo.com>

To: Pam@portofporttownsend.com <pam@portofporttownsend.com>

Sent: Wednesday, June 23, 2021, 4:08:09 PM PDT

Subject: Public Comment: Developing land for a temporary homeless encampment

I am speaking as a Housing Advocate who has been actively engaged with the homeless campers at the Jefferson County Fairgrounds campground, a county owned but privately managed campground, where they have been legally residing as individuals under protection of the eviction moratorium since July 1, 2020.

The County Commissioners have offered the Fairgrounds Board \$10,000/month to allow the campers to remain at the campground for the next 3 months because there is NO other appropriate, and perhaps legal, place for them to be sent at this time. The campers I have talked to strongly urge the fairgrounds board to accept this offer.

As a housing advocate, I encourage the Port, the City, NW Justice and the community agencies to use these 3 months to hold a truly open and productive conversation to decide how to most effectively and humanely support those most impacted by the current housing crisis. Let's discuss the alternatives. I believe the Joint City/County Affordable Housing and Homelessness Task Force would provide a good forum for such a discussion. The facilitator for the task force is Liz Coker, shelter4jc@outlook.com.

Many of the campers at the fairgrounds and housing advocates suggest that rather than trying to rapidly develop another suitable temporary location at the Port, or in the County, in the next few months and at great cost, that the County be encouraged to renegotiate and modify the contract with the private fairgrounds management board to sublet the established county owned/privately managed campground, not the entire fairgrounds, to Bayside Housing so that Bayside could organize a supported, self-governing transitional encampment onsite until May 1, 2022.

Specifically, the campers and advocates suggest that the funds from the emergency housing for the homeless that would have been spent developing a new temporary site on the Port property or any other location in the county or city be allocated to pay the Fairgrounds Board for subletting the campground --which already has water, electricity, bathrooms with showers, and garbage services in an established and permitted site--to a non-profit agency for use as a supported, self-governing transitional encampment as well as to complete capital improvements of the bathrooms, waterlines and grounds *instead of creating a new temporary site from scratch.*

The current campers are grateful to the Fairgrounds board, the social service agencies, and the community for the emergency housing that they have had over the past full year at the fairgrounds campground, even though it has been in tents, and cars and old RV's. This pandemic has been a challenge for our whole community, including the campers and their neighbors. The campers are one of the most visible populations as we all have struggled to get through this crisis, so much of the discussion has centered on them and their situation. They don't want to scatter to the woods and parks and streets, but most of them do not support the idea of creating a "temporary emergency shelter" for them out in the county or at the Port for a variety of reasons.

Remember, when the moratorium ends, this population of unhoused people may suddenly increase dramatically. How will we respond?

It takes the whole village,
Barbara Morey, Housing Advocate
Port Townsend
206 326-9022

From: Glen Simecek <glenswork2003@yahoo.com>
Sent: Wednesday, June 23, 2021 3:41 PM
To: PPT Info <info@portofpt.com>
Subject: 6/23/21 Port Meeting Comments

Port Commission Members, thank you for the opportunity to comment on the proposed, temporary homeless housing location adjacent to the Jefferson County Airport. For the record, my name is Glen Simecek, I am a homeowner in Jefferson County and own a hangar on the airfield where I keep our family's small plane.

I was disappointed to hear of the proposal to establish a temporary homeless camp adjacent to the Jefferson County Airport as it seems to prioritize haste rather than addressing the needs of the homeless. As someone who has witnessed the devastating impact that homelessness has had on Seattle and surrounding areas, I feel that this proposed site is a poor choice to serve these individuals.

My business is based in downtown Seattle where I have worked for 25 years and have experienced daily encounters with homeless individuals. This interaction along with discussions with social workers, members of the faith community and law enforcement have informed my impression that the homeless populations challenges are many and varied; mental illness is not uncommon and often compounded with substance abuse issues, past physical or psychological abuse and trauma. In many cases, significant social services are necessary to serve these individuals including health care and sanitary and bathing facilities. This location appears to offer little or no access to these services; instead, it appears to frustrate these efforts by being remote with few facilities.

The location while near transit, is noisy and offers little in the way of other conveniences. The parcels are surrounded by an airfield, a highway, a transit facility, and wetlands. The airport has no physical barriers and is not actively patrolled by law enforcement and could prove a tempting target for individuals seeking additional privacy or prohibited from staying at the homeless encampment. In many cases, the aircraft inside the hangars are delicate and inadvertent damage could be unseen until it results in an accident. Additionally, the hangars are often unheated and lack fire suppression systems.

The challenges of homelessness are complex and multifaceted, and I appreciate the county's desire to address these issues. Unfortunately, I do not believe the county, the community or the homeless population would be well served by this location.

Glen D. Simecek

From: aleawaters@olypen.com <aleawaters@olypen.com>
Sent: Wednesday, June 23, 2021 4:40 PM
To: Pam Petranek <Pam@portoft.com>
Subject: ALERT! STOP HOMELESS EVICTION AT FAIRGROUNDS!

Dear Friends and Neighbors,

If you can be at the 4H building at JC Fairgrounds tomorrow (Thursday) at noon, for a meeting that will decide if 40 homeless people and families will be evicted from their tents next week, you may be able to help halt the eviction. On June 30th, the federal eviction moratorium ends.

Last Monday, June 21, our county commissioners agreed to offer Jefferson County Fairgrounds Board -- a private contractor managing the fairgrounds -- \$30,000 to delay eviction for three months while permanent housing and sites are being developed for the homeless population. The fairgrounds makes \$10,000 per month for the campground when fully occupied.

Tomorrow JCFB will decide whether or not to accept the county's offer. Unfortunately, they have made it clear on numerous prior occasions that they want the fairgrounds as a "family" campground -- for all families except homeless families, that is.

Citizen advocacy groups for the homeless believe that only lots of public pressure -- on the Fairgrounds Board and on our County Commissioners who have the power to enforce the offer, will secure three more months of home security for these 40 unfortunate people.

Please email County Commissioners and come to the meeting at the fairgrounds tomorrow at noon to speak up for compassion for the disenfranchised. We ARE all in this together.

Alea Waters and Lang Russel