

On Thu, Aug 30, 2018, 2:52 PM Brad Martin <bmartin@plfr.org> wrote:

Good Afternoon, et al.,

I must first apologize for the length of this email, and any perceived delays on my response to the grass/fire hazard issue on the closed 9 golf course. I would like everyone to be explicitly clear that regardless of any perceptions, insinuations or other beliefs that this issue is not critically important to myself, or the incredible staff (administration, Fire Commissioners or firefighters) of your Port Ludlow Fire District. I want to assure you that we are absolutely committed to the safety and protection of each and every person in our fantastic community.

I have gone through the emails I have received or been sent in an attempt to encompass as many stakeholders into this email as I can. Unfortunately, I am sure there are some I have missed or am not aware of that have a vested, or general, interest in this issue. Please forward this to anyone you may think would want to be included.

Over the recent weeks, there has been a very active discussion regarding the vegetation on the closed 9 course at various levels; email groups, social groups and within the PLVC committee structure. Unfortunately, with so many people involved, it is pretty much impossible to coordinate a well-represented meeting to address the fire danger concerns. It is important to ensure the input is based on facts, research, expertise and an interactive conversation to address the particulars and details of the issue. As we know, email is a great way to get information out, but unfortunately it is one dimensional and is open to interpretation, personal bias, distraction/deflection/rhetoric and amending of addressee's. I realize there is a lot of passion and emotion invested in this issue and I do not want to minimize anyone's position on the subject. However, I also understand that there will be some that do not agree with my findings, which is absolutely fine. The beauty of our country is the freedom of opinion and free speech.

On Tuesday August 28th, I visited the entire closed 9 Golf Course with Chief Brian Tracer and Chief Don Svetich. For those that are not aware of the names, I am your local Fire Chief (Port Ludlow Fire) who has a vast experience in the fire service for over 30 years (Including an extensive background with California Wildfires). Chief Tracer is the appointed Jefferson County Fire Marshal, through the Jefferson County Department of Community Development. Chief Svetich has an exceptional background in Wildland Firefighting, here on the Olympic Peninsula and Nationally, and is the Jefferson County Fire Chief's expert in Wildland Firefighting. I give you this VERY brief overview, as I want to assure you that I solicited reputable fire service perspectives for my response. I have taken into consideration numerous sources of information to include, but not limited to: emails, mailings sent to my office (with pictures), input from the aforementioned Chief Officers, in field observations and examinations of the course, the safety and protection of our community, accessibility to the area for fire service apparatus, fire history in the area, fuel models, topography, and a number of other considerations, some of which depend on a deeper understanding of fire dynamics that are not readily explained in an email.

Before we toured the golf course, I only informed the other Chiefs that there is concern from some of the community members regarding the fire danger and PLA's plan to allow the natural landscape to retake the golf course. During the infield inspection, we got out periodically and walked the area, checking the fuels, soil, weather, etc. When we completed the tour, there was consensus that the 8 foot mow strip PLA is doing, in conjunction with the 6 foot cart path (totaling an average of 12-14 feet) is an acceptable barrier to the conditions we observed. This took into account the higher fuel moistures in the timber line and the green belt the homeowners have between their homes and the course. One may argue that the mowing hasn't been completed in a while and needs to be re-done. However, it is obvious that it was not mowed long ago, and it does not take long for the grass to grow back. However, with the weather as it is, I would not recommend any mowing under current conditions.

I've attached Mrs. Oemichen's email below, as she points out some very valid points. We, the community, have a responsibility to do our part in preventing fires. I definitely want to point out that the homeowners are doing a fantastic part by maintaining the greenbelts on their properties. Our community enjoys the beauty of our location. It is in what the fire service considers a "Wildland Urban Interface (WUI)," which means we live in a rural, forested terrain that abuts to our properties and the fire hazard will always be a risk. Mrs. Oemichen's email lists some great resources for research and awareness (again, my reason for attaching her email). As Edgewood is a Fire Wise community, there is much we can do individually to reduce the risk, but the risk will never be alleviated in our community.

I appreciate those that have provided input and guidance. As stated earlier, I'm keenly aware of the level of passion, emotion and vested interest in this issue. I know some will appreciate my response and some will oppose it. Just understand that my response is based on the risk assessment, period. I am and always have been a very open and transparent Fire Chief, with a high level of ethics, values and professionalism.

Brad Martin - MS, EFO, EMT-P

Fire Chief

Port Ludlow Fire & Rescue

7650 Oak Bay Road

Port Ludlow, WA 98365

(360) 437-2236 Bus.

(360) 774-6311 Cell

(866) 367-2291 Confidential fax