

Bringing the Community Together

KENSINGTON OUTLOOK

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FEBRUARY 2021

PUBLICATION OF THE KENSINGTON COMMUNITY COUNCIL

VOLUME 79 NUMBER 1

KCC Hopes to Stage 2021 Summer Camp



Campers celebrate out on the lawn at Kensington Park in 2016. Photo by Marty Westby.

By Linnea Due

Jenny Parks, Kensington Community Council's recreation director, started her job last year on March 9, a week before the opening of the spring session of KCC's after-school enrichment program. Managing that upcoming session and planning for 2020's summer camp were Parks' top priorities. Then came the shutdown. Schools closed Friday, March 13, and Sunday the 15th was the last day libraries, restaurants, and businesses were open.

"KASEP's winter session ended that Friday," Parks said. "We postponed the spring session, hoping we could go back to it in a few weeks. Finally we cancelled it. But we still held out hope that we would be able to start summer camp."

Registration for the popular camp had already begun in February. KCC's summer camp is open to children entering grades 1-6, with a camp director, counselors, and specialty teachers offering cooking, gymnastics, sports,

and much more. Around fifty children attend each weekly offering—each week is capped at sixty campers. Parents can sign their kids up for just a week or the entire summer on a week-by-week basis. "Shelter in place was supposed to end June 4," Parks remembered. "We thought then we'd give it a few more weeks to make sure it was safe, so we cancelled the first three weeks of camp. Then as we got closer to the first week of July, when we were supposed to start, it became very uncertain where things were going."

Issues with bathroom cleaning, how many children could form a pod, the unavailability of the Community Center, and more played a role in the difficult decision by KCC's board to cancel last summer's entire camp. Parks had already discovered that it took as much time to undo plans as it did to make them. "In my first weeks on the job, I started refunding money to parents from the cancelled spring KASEP session," she explained. "And then we began refunding



money for summer camp registrations. Plus we had to apply for refunds ourselves." The summer camp includes a weekly field trip—and KCC had paid for field trip venues. "Because of COVID, those venues were sympathetic to our need to cancel," Parks said.

This fall, KASEP is mostly restricted to virtual offerings with the exception of

See Summer Camp, page 11

Measure Twice, Cut Once:

Here Are the Correct Numbers for Cell Phone Users

By Janice Kosel, director, KFPD
All 911 calls from Kensington landlines are routed through the Albany Police Department. However, 911 calls from a cell phone in Kensington are handled in an entirely different manner. Many are routed through the California Highway Patrol in Vallejo, which may cause undue delay.

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State of the Market

Real Estate is business as usual in an unusual market. Properties are selling in days, with multiple offers and very favorable terms for the seller. All while keeping buyers, sellers, and the community safe. The market is very strong in Kensington and the surrounding area. Inventory is limited and there are many qualified buyers.

2020 to January 8, 2021

Listings		Pending Sales	
Number of listings	4	Number of Pending Sales	2
Avg. List Price	\$1,604,000	Avg. List Price	\$887,000
Avg. Square footage	2,632	Avg. Square footage	1,172
Avg. List Price Cost Per Sq. Ft.	\$641.10	Avg. List Price Cost Per Sq. Ft.	\$763.81
Avg. Days on the market	16	Avg. Days on the Market	24

Sales January 2020 to present

Number of Solds	69 (Per MLS)	Avg. Square footage	1,839
Avg. List Price	\$887,000	Avg. Sales Price Cost Per Sq. Ft.	\$750.90
Avg. List Price Cost Per Sq. Ft.	\$661.69	Avg. Days on the market	17
Avg. Sales Price	\$1,332,054		

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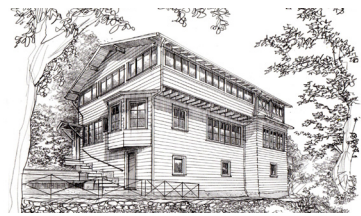
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Kensington Update

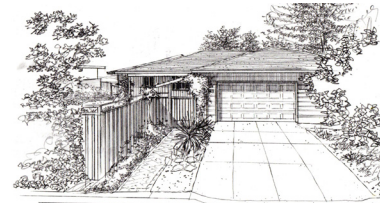
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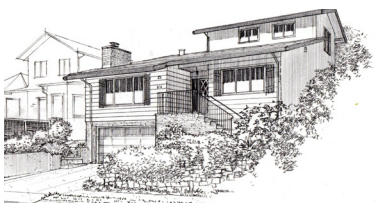
42 Somerset Place, Berkeley
Remarkable property surrounded by John Hinkle Park. Once a grand summer house transformed into a beautiful residence. Truly a unique treasure. Five bedrooms and two and one-half baths.
Offered: \$1,695,000; Sold for \$1,800,000



415 Berkeley Park Boulevard, Kensington
Classic Spanish-style, this home is the definition of a fixer-upper. Two bedrooms and one bath with loads of potential. Located one block from Colusa Circle.
Offered at: \$699,000; Sold for \$900,000



84 Kensington Road, Kensington
Single-level Rancher with a spectacular view of San Francisco and the Bay. Three bedrooms and two baths.
Offered at \$1,198,000; Sold for \$1,500,000



852 Gelston Place, El Cerrito Hills
Mid-Century, four bedrooms and two baths. State-of-the-art 1960's Brady Bunch appeal in the Kensington School zone.
Offered at \$998,000; Sold for \$1,300,000

If you are considering selling or simply wish to know the value of your home in today's market, call me. The conversation is confidential and complementary.



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MARCH 2021
DEADLINES:
Advertising Deadline ❖ February 8
Editorial Deadline ❖ February 10

The Kensington Community Council is dedicated to the improvement, development, and education of the community, and to the promotion of social welfare in Kensington. It enriches the community by providing educational and recreational programs for all ages and by publishing the Outlook, a monthly newsletter that covers local events and issues.

KCC also provides a forum for all Kensington community groups to meet and coordinate their respective efforts toward the common good of the community.

Opinions expressed in Letters to the Editor are those of the writers and do not reflect the opinion of the Outlook, its editor, or the Kensington Community Council. Letters must be signed and include the resident's phone number and address (which will not be printed). Letters 350 words or under will appear in the print edition (space permitting). Any letter over 350 words will be printed in the online edition only. Publication of letters and articles is subject to space and the editor's discretion. Obituaries of Kensington residents are printed without charge. All material must be received by the 10th of the month preceding issue date; submit by email to editor@kensingtonoutlook.com. No press releases or PDFs; Word documents or text in the body of an email are acceptable. Use one space, not two, after all periods.

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O U T L O O K

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59 Arlington Ave.
Kensington, CA 94707-1307

Published ten times a year by the nonprofit Kensington Community Council. (Monthly, except for the combined July/August and December/January issues.) Available online at www.KensingtonOutlook.com, courtesy of AboutKensington.com.

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Advertising.....510-508-3241
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Letters to the Editor

Not a Tug of War

Dear Editor:

Recently the Kensington Property Owners Association (KPOA) sent a letter to Kensington’s fire board (KFPD), with copies to the Kensington police board (KPPCSD) and its own members. I have been a member of both KPOA and KFPD boards, though I do not speak for either. I write personally to address statements in the KPOA letter.

Although the letter says that both boards should be working together on decisions about the Public Safety Building (PSB), KPOA blames the KFPD for the disunity. This is unfair. Last year, at the KPOA’s urging, the KFPD agreed to try to form a 2x2 committee with the KPPCSD to discuss the PSB renovations in public. Ultimately the KPPCSD complied, but at the sole joint meeting that was held, the KPPCSD would only introduce themselves. They would not discuss issues. This after years of resisting KFPD’s attempts to work together, costing taxpayers an estimated million dollars in inflated construction costs.

KPOA says that the KFPD has “aspirations for expanded fire department space.” Not so. Renovation of the PSB is bound by changing laws, codes, and regulations (ADA, Title IX, etc.), including a new elevator. Some recently developed drawings (which are not at all set in stone) have the fire department lose one of its three engine bays and access to the (traditionally) shared conference room. (Firefighters cannot confer in the Community Center because they need to be close to their engines.) There is no hope of making an Emergency Operations Center in a shared PSB, so Kensington will not have one in case of disaster.

A solution depends on fire and police chiefs continuing to work on constraints with the architects, as they have been doing for months. Firefighters have to live in the PSB with their engines and equipment; they cannot patrol as the police can. Many compromises have been made. But this is not a territorial tug-o-war. Let’s assume good will, and the experts will report to the boards when they’re ready. There is still a lot to be worked out.

Kevin Padian

View Ordinance Needs Bite

Dear Editor:

I always say I moved to Kensington for the view and for the biscuits at Inn Kensington. Fifteen years later, we’re still enjoying delicious biscuits, but we’ve also learned that the real reason for being here is the neighbors. We love our little community and feel very lucky to call Kensington home—surrounded by good company and those breathtaking views.

Because views are why we pay premium prices for our homes, CC County put together a document to define how views in Kensington are to be maintained. Basically, the 1984 ordinance states that a homeowner is entitled to keep the view they had when they purchased their home. Neighbors are expected to allow maintenance of their trees to a height that ensures their neighbors keep their views. Unfortunately, the ordinance is less of an enforceable legal document and more of a suggestion. While it seems perfectly reasonable to expect that a neighbor would adhere to such a request, this isn’t always the case.

We’re fortunate to have a view of three bridges, but because of a neighbor’s lack of neighborliness and seven tall trees (many of which were planted after we moved in), our view of the Richmond Bridge is quickly disappearing. We’ve had many discussions with them about keeping their trees trimmed (with our paying the expense!), and yet, as they still refuse to mediate, we now find ourselves having to hire an attorney to enforce that the terms of the ordinance be followed. Considering a lawsuit with a neighbor is not the reason we moved to Kensington!

We believe if the Kensington View Ordinance had some teeth and was able to be enforced without having to go to court, unfortunate situations like this wouldn’t continue to occur. Judging from the number of times this pops up on NextDoor, it’s clearly time to revamp the ordinance. We urge the KPOA, Supervisor John Gioia, and the Kensington community to partner and change this outdated document so we can avoid lawsuits and enjoy the view. If you agree or have input, contact me at KeepKensington-View@gmail.com.

Michael Rossi

City on a Hill

Dear Kensington Residents,

I am forever grateful to have been able to stand and work so close to history and hold a deep sense of gratitude and respect for the exposure the district has allowed me to experience.

I am proud to say I have been blessed to be a public servant in the district for 23 years. But just as the sun rises on an angelic morning, dances across the sky only to set marking the end of a beautiful day, is an apt description of my experience with this “City upon a Hill.”

I am grateful to have encountered and come to know some of the most brilliant people the world over in one small community. I want to thank the district for the privilege to serve your law enforcement needs and the opportunities it has afforded me and my family. I am also thankful for the friendships I have established with Kensington residents.

I hope the district can maintain a police department worthy and reflective of its residents.

Captain Rickey Lee Hull
(see story on Hull’s retirement celebration on page 7)



The Long Road Towards Renovating the PSB

By Linnea Due

The road to renovating the Public Safety Building seems to stretch into infinity. At the fire board meeting January 13, new fire district general manager Bill Hansell delivered a joint status report (prepared with KPPCSD interim GM Bill Lindsay) to fire board directors. The report began with a summary of the high points since 2016, after a structural engineering firm determined that unless the building was seismically strengthened, “loss of life [may occur] during a seismic event.”

Five years later, despite plans that would correct the seismic issue and strengthen the building to a rigorous essential services standard, the road takes another turn—hopefully to an identifiable horizon. To very briefly recap: In September 2019, architectural firm RossDrulisCusenbery (RDC) recommended a plan that did not include the police department. Objections to that strategy produced new plans that relegated the police to the first floor only. Option D included an elevator and a wheelchair lift on the second floor, both said to be mandated by the county, thus cutting space from both agencies. (County staff is either cagey or wants real plans, not conceptual drawings, to consider, as the elevator has not been required in writing.) At the November 2020 board meeting, fire directors decided to pay out RDC and look at the project afresh.

This December, Hansell, Lindsay, fire chief Michael Pigoni, and interim police chief Walt Schuld met several times to discuss whether Option D could work. Hansell, who is also an architect, tried to respond to criticisms of D by drawing up a new proposal, called “G.” (Perhaps E and F ended up in the trash.) In this version, the police have approximately 370 square feet of space upstairs, divided into three work stations and a computer room.

As Hansell and Lindsay write in their report, “Both Chief Pigoni and Chief Schuld have prepared written comments reflecting the difficulties in developing a conceptual design that meets the facilities requirements of both departments.” Those comments can be viewed in the January board packet of each district.

Pigoni made 12 comments, with his preference not to lose the third apparatus bay the most startling. For months, the third bay has been slated as a turnout room, a workshop, and a decontamination space for firefighters. Those spaces were deemed essential. In their place, Pigoni suggested a decontamination and/or equipment cache trailer. He also noted that the bedrooms sometimes must house two firefighters, that the gym area is too small, and that the police have no bathroom upstairs.

Schuld’s comments were shorter but no less critical: that the three work stations must serve nine officers, there are no dedicated stations for the police services assistant, detective, traffic officer, no room to grow reserves or volunteers. There is no sink, refrigerator, or cupboards. Officers must leave food in their lockers or eat out. There is no evidence storage, and as noted in Pigoni’s comments, just a single restroom on the ground floor, for the public and officers.

In the new version, the police have approximately 370 square feet of space upstairs.

At the fire board meeting, Hansell relayed two suggestions: since both departments need temporary housing during the renovation, the temporary housing for the police could become permanent. Colusa Circle was mentioned; the fire department must be at the center of Kensington for response time, but police on patrol are less constrained by location. Hansell pitched this as a good use of funds: spend 5.8 million (including temporary housing during the build) and end with a building that, as Hansell put it “gives you no more program” or spend 7 or 8 million that would include a dedicated space for the police. “Both departments might find a better fit,” he said.

Fire board director Don Dommer mentioned that the work the interim police chiefs did to attract officers created a challenge: “They’ve been down police for years, and now we have a full complement”—thus need for more space. None of the plans include housing for either district’s general manager or staff.

Hansell’s other suggestion was that the district could submit plans solely for the outer shell of the building—the seismic renovations and necessary upgrades—while ignoring non-weight-bearing inner walls that define rooms and hallways. This would move the project through permitting and construction start. Hansell estimated that the board could gain six months before deciding whether fire only or police and fire would occupy the finished building.

Rob Firmin from the Kensington Property Owners Association spoke in favor of the resolution on the table: that a public meeting be held with both boards to discuss the options. Kevin Padian argued that the meeting should include all members of both boards, not a two-by-two as had been proposed. “What matters,” said Firmin, “is that you meet and meet as soon as possible.” The motion passed unanimously.

The following evening, the police board met to discuss the joint status report. The motion to hold a public meeting also passed unanimously, but the focus was on the necessity to house the police in the PSB. Said director Rachelle Sherris-Watt, “While both boards meeting is a bit unwieldy, I think we can do it and hammer out a solution to get both departments into that building.”

Board president Sylvia Hacaj said, “It’s crucial that we do our best to stay [in the PSB]. We have improved the functioning of the police department immensely. A change in the status of our housing would upend the advances we’ve made.”

See PSB, page 12



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NOVEMBER POLICE LOG

1 SUSPICIOUS CIRCUMSTANCE, Berkeley Park Blvd. Male wearing jeans and blue sweatshirt w/crow bar trying open the AT&T box on the EBMUD property.

2 CITIZEN ASSIST, Purdue Ave. \$90,000 in funds removed from Citibank acct and sent to Thailand, bank has been advised and wants RP to make a report.

5 GRAND THEFT, Westminster Ave. Catalytic converter taken from RP's veh sometime yesterday morning. Neighbor may have camera.

6 SUSPICIOUS CIRCUMSTANCE, Oberlin/Stanford aves. Two subjects sitting behind a vehicle RP concerned due to catalytic converter thefts. Report unfounded.

GRAND THEFT, Ocean View Ave. Was trying to rent Spruce St., Berkeley via an add on Craigslist, RP was scammed out of \$1,000.

7 SUSPICIOUS CIRCUMSTANCE, Yale Ave. Alarm notification went off of a window being opened, also error for the laundry room downstairs...Earlier her dogs were barking, RP did hear car doors opening/closing and people talking outside. Requesting area check and interior check of the lower part of her residence.

DISTURBANCE OF PEACE, Lennox/Beverly. Loud engine for the last ten minutes.

Petty Theft, Arlington Ave. Catalytic converter theft.

9 PETTY THEFT, Willamette Av. Auto. Take bag w/ belongings. Door left unlocked.

Community Oriented Policing, Coventry Rd. Helped resident take groceries into home.

13 ANIMAL CALL, Edgcroft Rd. Dark grey pit bull has a collar on, dog nonaggressive, transferred to CCC Animal Control.

14 REGISTRATION OF ARSON OFFENDER, Grizzly Peak Blvd.

15 WELFARE CHECK, Kensington Hilltop Elementary School. RP saw 2 small children on the hiking trail behind school. 1 boy- age 4, 1 girl age 8. The children were coming down the trail and asked the RP if she saw their mom.

16 SUSPICIOUS PERSON/S, Cambridge Ave. Female caller stated she saw a male on foot w/ shotgun then disconnected. Unable to Locate Source of Complaint.

DISTURBANCE OF PEACE, Lawson Rd. Multiple subj came onto property w/ no masks and used bathroom. WMA 50s gray blnd, shorts, no shoes w/AFA 50s. Became upset and aggressive when asked to wear a mask and not to come onto property. Subjects have since departed.

DISTURBANCE OF PEACE, Franciscan Way. Neighbor dispute. RP reporting his neighbor just drove past him recklessly. High rate of speed, swerving, and yelling at RP. Ongoing issue of harassment. No injuries.

911 CALL, Colusa Ave. Ex-husband w/drug history had argument w/ex gf whose family members texted RP threatening to bomb her residence and his residence text says bomb is set to go off at 5 mins before 12am, RP is leaving to parents house in El Sobrante, initial 911 call was from male subj who disconnected without giving any information.

18 DISTURBANCE OF PEACE, Yale Ave. Guy banging on the door yelling profanity. No further descript.

19 911 CALL, Highland Blvd. Leg super swollen, possible blot clot ruptured, he is standing in a puddle of blood. Officer arrived and had to give lifesaving aid prior to fire's arrival. 06:53

ANIMAL CALL, Coventry Rd. Deer stuck in RP's metal gate and in distress no obvious injuries. . Officer was able to free animal.

20 CORONER'S CASE, Lexington Rd. RP sees resident inside the home unresponsive laying face down. Officers had to force entry. Coroner's case.

ASSISTANCE TO AN OUTSIDE AGENCY, Albany Bowl. 50-60 juveniles walking s/b setting off fireworks. Albany only has one unit available. Requested at least one unit for traffic control and to make sure no one is hit. Three KPD officers responded to give assistance.

25 NATURAL DEATH, Oak View Ave. 93 yr old female.

December Police Log

2 DISTURBANCE OF PEACE, Dewey Rd. Neighbor dispute, honking at and almost hitting wife w/her car. Per RP he was informed by K73 to give him a call this morning to look at video footage.

3 GRAND THEFT, Kenilworth Dr. Catalytic converter taken from veh.

5 PETTY THEFT, Los Altos Dr. Possible unlocked vehicle rummaged through, clothing taken value \$50.

6 ASSISTANCE TO AN OUTSIDE AGENCY, Arlington Ave. Saw someone steal vehicle 1300 block of Arlington heading n/b.

8 PETTY THEFT, Coventry Rd. 2 packages (approx value of \$400.00) taken from porch.

12 DISTURBANCE OF PEACE, Rugby Ave. Domestic. RP is victim. Resp is father-in-law. Resp brandished stick at her and hit her car w/it. No injuries.

14 BURGLARY, Arlmont Dr. Entry was made from front door. RP has not been through the house yet, is standing by outside the res.

REQUEST FOR EXTRA PATROL, Sunset Ct. Residential break-in attempt at 82-yro mother-in-law's residence. Talking heard outside after midnight, 3 weeks ago double door to left of atrium/pool leading to woodworking room and door at rear of house near retaining wall leading to pool tampered with pry marks seen by brother-in-law, no car in driveway, female lives alone and is on hospice, RP is retired BPD sgt, will be contacting an alarm company tomorrow.

17 IDENTITY THEFT, Trinity Ave. RP was notified that persons have been calling his elderly aunt asking for money. Victim has written out a check for \$350. Subjects are from out of the country, nephew stopped payment on that check. Victim rec'd additional scam calls claiming to be from the IRS informing the victim that she had would be receiving monies but would need to pay taxes on the funds. Victim gave her DOB, location of birth, parents' name, and that she had an account at Mechanics Bank.

19 THEFT, Anson Way. RP found his unoccupied vehicle w/engine running and his vehicle was rummaged through and \$500 gift cards taken and air pod pros taken. Veh possibly left unlocked.

22 THEFT, Kenyon Ave. Theft from trunk overnight.

25 GRAND THEFT, Highland Blvd.

26 VEHICLE TAMPERING, Kenilworth Dr. Catalytic converter. Occ last night.

Petty Theft, Kenyon Ave. From auto. Vehicle registration & insurance card taken.

28 SUSPICIOUS PERSON/S, Kensington Park. Unknown race male navy hoodie, gray sweats, sunglasses, mask. Male has been walking around park. RP thinks he could poss be a drug dealer. RP is by basketball courts, but the male subj is walking all around the park.

29 PETTY THEFT, Arlington Ave. Plant stolen, no witnesses, unknown value.

30 IDENTITY THEFT, Windsor Ave. Unk person opened an Ebay account under RP's name and has accumulated fees from the company.

SUSPICIOUS CIRCUMSTANCE, Wildcat Canyon/Grizzly Peak. RP is delivering to the address. Per RP there has been someone stalking her for 2 years. He is now in the area in a white Buick, his girlfriend is in a green Prius there is also a WMA in a grey Toyota pickup truck. Per RP she was shot at by the subjects 3 days ago. RP disconnected call. .

31 GRAND THEFT, Arlington Ave. Catalytic converter theft.

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The finish line is in sight—but the race is yet to be won. Stay vigilant, wear your mask, and keep our Kensington community safe.



Detective Amit Nath was promoted to sergeant on January 4

Police Department’s New Hires and Promotions

By Linnea Due

Interim Chief Walt Schuld has been busy finding new officers for Kensington’s ranks. As other jurisdictions struggle to attract police officers, Schuld has worked with past interim chief Steve Simpkins to paint Kensington as a place where police are valued as an integral part of the community.

New hires since Schuld came on in May are Officer Jose Fajardo (hired July 14), Officer Roy Bang (August 24), Reserve Officer Thang Ho (November 2), and Captain Mike Gancasz (January 18). Detective Amit Nath was promoted to Sergeant on January 4.



Roy Bang's wife Jennifer pins on his badge at his swearing-in ceremony



New officers Roy Bang and Jose Fajardo

Passings

Donald L. Morrison, a longtime resident of Kensington, passed away recently in Portola at the age of 93. He was born on June 1, 1927, in Omaha, NE, and grew up in Lincoln. He was the state champion miler in high school before serving his country in the US Army in WWII. He was on the track team at the University of Nebraska and earned a BS in chemical engineering. He worked for C&H Sugar Refinery in Crockett and for Shell Oil in Martinez.

He developed a keen interest in sailing at a young age and built and raced his own sailboat. The Bay Area and the Golden Gate appealed to him as a sailor. He joined the Richmond Yacht Club in 1964, before it was relocated to Brickyard Cove. He taught his daughters to sail, and raced regularly with family and friends as crew. The whole family enjoyed cruises to the Delta and picnics on Angel Island. His favorite kind of day on the bay was foggy and gray: not too wet, but just a fresh breeze and a good bit of spray!

When asked how he would like to be remembered, he answered, “I loved my family.” He was blessed to have a wonderful wife, Jackie, two daughters, seven grandchildren, and two great-grandchildren.



Eight bells will be sounded for his last watch, which ended October 16, as he entered into eternal life with his Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, whom he invited into his life just twenty days before he sailed home to heavenly shores.

David Americus Seely was born in White Hall, Illinois, in 1926, the son of Margaret and Clifford Seely. The family moved to Peoria with David and his older brother, Don. David served on an escort carrier in the South Pacific during World War II, the USS Munda. His ship was one of the first to dock in Japan. David was a proud and patriotic American all of his life.



After the war, David entered the American Institute of Technology in Chicago. After graduating, he went to San Francisco and got a job at KGO-TV, where he worked for 35 years. He served on the board of the Academy of Television Arts & Sciences, and was an honorary member of the Television Silver Circle and Broadcast Legends.

David married his longtime sweetheart, Glenna Jean Hanks, in 1951. They were married for almost 70 years. They have three children, Lisa Joy Gillooly, Brent David Americus Seely, son-in-law Josef and Cynthia Jean Seely-Eisner. His five grandchildren were a gift, and his great-grandchildren were a bonus joy.

David was a talented fine artist and a remarkable Mr. Fix-It. Outside of Kensington, where he lived for 52 years, his favorite place was the home he designed and built at Windflower Point in Lake County. Sharing it with family and friends brought him great pleasure. He enjoyed traveling, cruises, sports and music, and sitting on his deck at the lake, enjoying the beauty of God’s work. He died December 16.

Jean Kirkendall Cannon, advertising and business manager for the Kensington *Outlook* from the September 1976 issue through the July/August 1998 issue, died August 16, 2020, at the age of 84. Through her dedication, perseverance, and ability to meet endless deadlines, Jean built a strong core of advertisers for the *Outlook*. She facilitated the transition to her successor, Alma Key, who continues in the job. Jean had previously worked for Welcome Wagon.



A native of San Francisco and a longtime resident of El Cerrito, Jean served as auditor of the Kensington PTA and was a volunteer for Meals on Wheels and a Richmond soup kitchen. She also was active in the Read-Aloud Volunteer Program.

Jean was a 1958 Phi Beta Kappa graduate of UC Berkeley and a loyal fan of Cal football and the Cal band. She was an enthusiastic knitter, loved to travel, and had a great sense of humor.

Jean is survived by her husband of 61 years, Robert Cannon; son, Robert Cannon, Jr., and his wife, Melinda; and daughter, Constance Jones, her husband, Mark, and their sons Stuart and Robert.

Donations in her memory may be sent to the University of California, Berkeley; the Read-Aloud Volunteer Program (read-aloud.org/donate); or a favorite charity.

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Leigh Schneider hugs her new puppy Georgie. The icicle lights she sponsored at Arlington village brighten winter nights. Photo by Sylvia Elsbury.



Photo by Oliver Brown

Celebrating Community with Lights

By Linnea Due

Realtor and Kensington resident Leigh Schneider is a familiar face around town, walking her Bernese Mountain dogs (she and her two sons just got a puppy) on the trail and in the neighborhood. Schneider moved to Yale Avenue sixteen years ago. "I'd never heard of Kensington before looking for a home in the East Bay," she said. "But when I discovered it, I just fell in love."

A single mom with two boys, Schneider said that she "went into the field that I love, which is homes. First I went into construction as a project coordinator with a local contractor, then I studied landscape design at Merritt College." After that, she got her realtor's license.

When Schneider realized the Arlington village did not have a display of welcoming holiday lights, she set her mind to making it happen. She visited each merchant, offering to sponsor the purchase and installation of decorative lights throughout the commercial area. Without exception, Schneider was met with enthusiasm and offers to help. "Trish [McDermott] at The Arlington, Larry [Lefebvre] at Kensington Fine Foods, Bob at Young's Market, and Brian [Odell] at Ace Hardware—they were my point people on installation day," she said.

Schneider and her helpers figured out electrical connections and where to mount the cool-white icicle lights. "I couldn't have done it without their support," she said. "We came together as a little village to make this happen." Holiday light installers the Xmas Guys mounted the display.

The lights start at Ace Hardware and wrap around Sakana Sushi & Roll, then begin again at Raxakoul Coffee and Cheese, illuminating the commercial stretch of Arlington Avenue up past Arlington Wines & Spirits, Inn Kensington, Young's Market (Kensington Fine Foods is inside) and past Mechanics Bank to The Arlington, all of which are open during the pandemic.

Schneider, who works out of the Red Oak Realty office on Fairmount Avenue, is thrilled with the festive result. "I hope to sponsor the lights for many years in the future, and I just hope it makes people happy. We're so lucky Kensington has this small-town feel," she said. "It's important to celebrate Kensington by supporting our local stores, and we all could use a lift in our spirits this year! I genuinely feel lucky to live here. We have a treasure in the hills."



Ike Joh Celebrated as Colusa Market Sold

By Rodney and Sarah Paul

We want to express our deep gratitude to Ike Joh, who has owned and managed the Colusa Market for the past 28 years but has now sold it to begin a well-deserved retirement. Ike has done an excellent job meeting the needs of our community and ensuring that staples we rely on are consistently available. He has always been hard working and known for getting up early each day to ensure his store has fresh, very high-quality produce. In the early months of the pandemic, we would see him staying late into the evening to keep the store stocked.

We know a great many in our community appreciate Ike's work, and we hope many of you will join us in wishing Ike a very long and happy retirement. Both the Colusa Market and Young's Market on Arlington are businesses that make Kensington a better place, and all their workers are frontline heroes who have done a great deal to keep customers safe during the pandemic. We thank them all.

Pandemic Borrowing

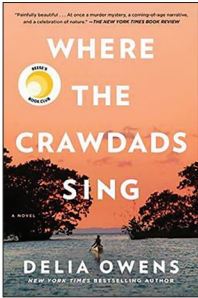
Contra Costa County Libraries Reach More than a Million Digital Checkouts in 2020

By Linnea Due

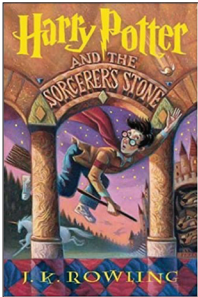
Although digital lending at libraries has increased over the past five years, 2020 marked an important milestone in the county: over a million books were checked out as either ebooks or audio books. With pandemic-closed branches and 24/7 access to digital books, it is probably no surprise that digital borrowing is popular. The county is one of only 102 public library systems worldwide that surpassed a million checkouts (Contra Costa came in 55th on the list).

"We are thrilled to be celebrating this reading milestone with our patrons," said Alison McKee, interim county librarian. "We are eager to serve members of the community wherever they are, and in these unique and challenging times we're proud to be able to expand our digital collection to do just that."

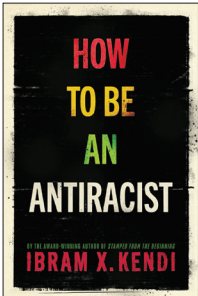
What are people reading? The highest-circulating title was *White Fragility* by Robin DiAngelo. In terms of genre, thrillers got the top spot. The catalogue of choices is vast, including biographies, romance, new fiction, and young adult and children's books among many others.



- The top five ebook titles:
1. *Where the Crawdads Sing* by Delia Owens
 2. *The Giver of Stars* by Jojo Moyes
 3. *White Fragility* by Robin DiAngelo
 4. *Little Fires Everywhere* by Celeste Ng
 5. *How to Be an Antiracist* by Ibram X. Kendi



- The top five audio book titles:
1. *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone* by J.K. Rowling
 2. *White Fragility* by Robin DiAngelo
 3. *The Subtle Art of Not Giving a F*ck* by Mark Manson
 4. *Talking to Strangers* by Malcolm Gladwell
 5. *Becoming* by Michelle Obama



- Kensington's top five contained a couple new titles. The top five digital checkouts for Kensington:
- 1 *How to be an Antiracist* by Ibram X. Kendi
 2. *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone* by J.K. Rowling
 3. *The Overstory: A Novel* by Richard Powers
 4. *White Fragility* by Robin DiAngelo
 5. *The Dutch House* by Ann Patchett

Readers in Contra Costa County only need a valid library card to access digital books from the library's OverDrive-powered digital collection. Readers can use any major device, including Apple(R), Android™, Chromebook™ and Kindle(R).

Visit <https://ccc.overdrive.com/> or download the Libby app to get started. Then you can borrow ebooks and audiobooks anytime, anywhere.

Popular Police Mainstay Rickey Hull Retires

By Linnea Due

The last day of the year marked the end of Rickey Hull’s 23-year career with Kensington’s police department. During that time, Hull served as an officer, a sergeant, master sergeant, captain, interim police chief, and interim district general manager. During a private Zoom celebration of his retirement January 3, residents and colleagues with long memories talked about who Hull was—and wasn’t. Said one person, “This is what I never heard Rickey say: that he was too busy. That it was someone else’s job. That his shift was over.”

Person after person—there were about fifty to sixty on the call—described Hull as a man of great character, a voracious reader of politics and history, a good fisherman, and a devoted son. Listening from the Zoom window that he shared with his mother, Hull took these accolades in stride, much as he greeted criticism in the past. Long-retired chief Barry Garfield gave Hull his best wishes, and a story about two cities’ forces arriving to assist with what turned out to be a family of raccoons gained a lot of laughter. Hull’s brother Charles also spoke.

The prevailing sentiment was admiration for a rare individual who never let his work down but also never allowed his job to interfere with his ability to be compassionate and caring. He took policing very seriously, community health even more so, and caring for individuals as the highest calling of all. He will be missed.



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K E N S I N G T O N

Community Education

KASEP

Kensington Afterschool Enrichment Program

Our Winter KASEP Classes are underway and kids are enjoying some virtual Spanish and Coding classes as well as getting outdoors and safely participating in Tennis, Judo and other fitness classes .
You can register for an upcoming session now online at KensingtonCommunity-Council.org/Kasep

KASEP Winter/Spring 2021
Each block is 6 weeks of class
Block A-Starts January 11th - February 26th
Block B-Starts March 1st - April 16th
Block C-Starts April 19th - May 28th

Virtual Classes
COOKING - FAMILY MEALS - Available Block B - Grades 2-6
COOKING - ALL ABOUT TACOS -Available Block C - Grades 2-6
CODING - Available Blocks A, B & C - Grades K-6
MATH CLUB - Available Blocks A, B & C - Grades 3-6
ORIGAMI - Available Blocks A, B & C - Grades K-6
SPANISH - Available Blocks A, B & C - Grades K-6
FUN ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCE - Available Blocks A, B & C - Grades 1-5

In Person Classes
DANCE FITNESS - Available Blocks A, B & C -Grades K-6
HANABI JUDO - Available Blocks A, B & C - Grades K-6
SKYHAWK SPORTS CAMP - Available Blocks A, B & C - Grades 2-6
TENNIS CAMP - Available Blocks A, B & C - Grades 3-6

We will introduce more in-person classes as we can do so safely.



KCC Summer Camp

Camp Returns in 2021!
We are busy planning for a fun and safe KCC Summer camp for children entering first grade in the FALL 2021 up through 6th grade.
There will be 10 weeks of camp beginning Monday, June 7th running through Friday, August 13th. You may enroll by the week for one week or all 10 weeks. KCC camp offers tennis lessons, daily arts and crafts, with an afternoon sports and games, along with a themed activity such as Carpentry, Legos, Cooking and Trail Excursions; a different activity is planned for each week of camp. Online enrollment starts February 23rd at 7pm and is on-going. Visit the KCC website at KensingtonCommunityCouncil.org for complete list of weekly activities.

Calling all Counselors!
KCC Summer Camp will be accepting applications for Summer Camp Counselors beginning March 1st. Applicants must be high school seniors or college students and older. Applications can be downloaded from the website: KensingtonCommunityCouncil.org

KCC

Thank You!!

KCC Fund Drive Donors 2020

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Adult Classes

Zumba in the Park
Saturdays 9:00-10:00 a.m.
Community Center Lawn
* If there is rain the class will be cancelled and not relocated inside *
Register at KensingtonCommunityCouncil.Org/adult-classes

Tennis Court Reservations: For weekends and holidays only,
KCC/KASEP Office: 59 Arlington Ave., Bldg. E (Across the grassy field above the tennis courts in Kensington Park),
Kensington CA 94707. E-mail: kccrec@yahoo.com, or call 525-0292.

Our website is: www.kensingtoncommunitycouncil.org.

CITIZEN
FORUM

A Case for Public Ownership of Kensington Paths

By Lisa Caronna, Kensington Pathkeepers

There are many reasons why the original planners of the subdivisions that make up Kensington created a network of public access paths. These paths allow people to walk directly up and down the hills versus the circuitous route of the hillside roads. Just like the streets, they were designed for the benefit of the entire community. That’s why they were drawn as part of the street right-of-way (not separate parcels).

Over time, the county accepted responsibility for the streets, but they did not assume ownership of the paths. As a result, over many decades there have been cyclical efforts to establish local public ownership. Public ownership is important to ensure that the paths are public forever, that potential evacuation routes are protected, that grant funding can be sourced, that maintenance and improvements can be implemented, and that liability can be managed.

The Pathkeepers have been encouraged that the Kensington Police and Protection Community Services District (KPPCSD) is now examining public ownership through two board meetings, research by an ad hoc committee composed of directors Chris Deppe and Rachelle Sherris-Watt, and communication between the district and Contra Costa County board supervisor John Gioia.



Even turkeys enjoy the paths.

Public forever: The most important reason for the paths to be under public ownership is for their clear protection as public access routes in perpetuity. These public paths have been in a state of ownership limbo for over a hundred years. During that time the public has lost a great deal. Most critical are paths that have been blocked off by adjacent owners so that they no longer connect to streets as was originally intended. There are currently two paths in Kensington where this has occurred, and for the safety of our community and the public good we should work with the adjacent neighbors to rectify this problem. In other cases, without clarity of ownership over all these years, fence lines and plantings have narrowed the original ten-foot-wide lanes, and there may be opportunities to make adjustments, over time, for improved access. Without public ownership, the paths will continue to be blocked off and eroded until this precious resource disappears.

Potential evacuation routes: Paths may be one of the fastest ways to exit the hills by foot during a wind-driven wildfire from the east. While the paths may not be an option for everyone due to the steep terrain, they could be a lifesaver. The “Kensington Evacuation Research Project” conducted through the Kensington Fire Protection District, concluded that given the limitations of the road network to handle a sudden influx of vehicle traffic, evacuation on foot may be necessary, and the pathway network may be one of the best options. They also recommended that the paths need better signage and vegetation management. Other communities including Berkeley and Mill Valley have extensive pathway systems identified in their evacuation plans as a resource and “an option” for those able to navigate them.

Grant funding: Without land ownership, applying for grants to improve the paths is impossible, and Kensington is missing out on funding opportunities. Other communities have tapped grant resources for special projects and improvements to paths including El Cerrito, Mill Valley, Oakland, and Berkeley. There are numerous opportunities to explore that fall into the broad categories of parks, safe pedestrian routes, recreational trails, and fire prevention programs. A requirement of many, if not all, of these grant opportunities is that the applicant be a public agency.

Maintenance and improvement: Once the paths are under one agency, a plan for their maintenance and improvement can be developed. Priorities can be established to implement improvements based on criteria that benefit the entire community. In many cases, volunteers can be coordinated to help build and maintain the path as is done in our neighboring communities of Berkeley, El Cerrito, and Mill Valley. With public ownership, the paths will be positioned to meet as many codes and standards as possible given the hilly terrain. Funding will be needed, especially for repairs to concrete steps, including installation of handrails. A careful study of costs and funding mechanisms must be developed based on standards desired by the community for improvements that can be accomplished over time.

Liability: As a public asset, no one individual, property owner, or volunteer group should be responsible for liability of the public paths. The paths are used by the entire community. Public health and welfare are at the core of why public agencies are formed and what they strive to achieve. Liability is a major concern for any public agency. There are no guarantees that a case will not be filed. However, based on research with adjacent cities of El Cerrito and Berkeley, these suits either haven’t occurred or are very rare. In addition, public agencies have certain State liability immunities where trails and paths

provide access to recreational or scenic areas. Government Code 830 through 831.9 does provide some litigation protection and immunities from prosecution under certain criteria and conditions for public ownership of recreational trails. This immunity may also apply to the paths in Kensington and should be explored further. The good news is that the insurance provider for the KPPCSD reported no increase in premiums to acquire the paths. Nonetheless, the district will need to work with its insurance experts to best determine any steps needed to reduce potential risk.

What’s the alternative? Should we continue to let the paths deteriorate and be blocked off? Should we expect volunteers and adjacent property owners to take on the liability of making improvements that may be haphazard and not meet local codes? Should we ignore or eliminate this evacuation option?

My opinion is that without tackling the public ownership issue now, lives may be lost in an emergency, and this problem may lie dormant for another ten years. What we do know is that it won’t disappear, and the next generation will be left to solve the issue of public path ownership.



KIC clean-up with champion leader Gretchen Gillfillan.

Recent Developments at the KPPCSD January 12 Meeting: Board directors agreed to meet with county officials to share information, flesh out the issues, and develop a report for the full board that will help guide decision-making on public path acquisition. These meetings could begin in late February once the new district General Manager is on board later this month. While no specific dates have been set, we see this as a positive step forward.

Supervisor John Gioia has offered around \$100,000 in county funds for the path acquisition process. At the meeting, Gioia stated that the money comes from one-time fees collected on newly constructed homes in Kensington and is intended for capital improvement projects that benefit the community, not for maintenance. Supervisor Gioia clarified that his priority recommendation for use of those funds is to advance a solution for the paths in whatever way is most useful.

The meeting included a report by the path ad hoc committee directors, Chris Deppe and Rachelle Sherris-Watt, on the status of relevant research including historical data and survey costs. Much is still to be learned, but these are major steps forward in gaining public ownership.

Community members are ready to work with our local agencies on the gritty details of what it takes to acquire the paths and what it will cost to repair and maintain them. Let’s make a pledge to get this done!



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Summer Camp
...from page 1

a dance fitness class. In the past, some classes have filled the moment KASEP’s online registration opens—for example, two coding classes, one for K-4, the other 5-6, have always been popular and still are in their virtual versions. The outdoor classes are working well, which gives Parks optimism that this summer’s camp can also go off without a hitch, though some things will look differently than in the past.

“The only thing we know we’re cutting out are the field trips,” Parks said. “That could change if at the end of July things are back open. We’ll probably do some local hikes just to get them in a different place. And we’ll keep them doing their crafts and games and hopefully some cooking.”

Cooking depends upon the Community Center opening up. The kitchen was specifically designed for children’s classes, with lower counters and easily accessible bottom cabinets. “We have themed weeks,” Parks explained. “There’s a week of cooking, a week of sports, we have Olympics week, and more. They’re highlighted on the registration. But even if someone isn’t interested in the theme, there are always other activities.”

Parks hopes that the Community Center will be open. “But if not, we’ll be OK without it,” she said. “With our usually dry summers we’ll be OK with the outside space.”

Part of the factoring last year was how to manage pods of 12 children each. Each pod of campers would have needed its own bathroom and was not supposed to mix with other pods, meaning if there were sixty kids, five pods would be moving about without interaction.

But even harder were the restrictions on teachers. Said Parks, “Last summer was difficult because they put in a stipulation. A teacher could only teach one pod of kids. Bindy [Baker], our gymnastics teacher, normally teaches 180 kids a week at several sites and now could only teach 12. A lot of our teachers make a living by doing multiple classes. So it impacted their income as well as our ability to get teachers.”

Some teachers also had medical issues. “Hiring the counselors would not be an issue, but specialty teachers are hard,” Parks said. “It’d be nice if we didn’t have to do the pods, but we can do it if we have to.”

This year KCC and Parks are determined to try to make it work. “Now, for the tennis



camp and the other two camps, kids are wearing masks, distancing, and bathrooms are getting cleaned daily,” Parks said. “We’re doing temperature checks, and we ask questions daily about how kids feel. If we have to do that for fifty or sixty kids every day, it’s a logistical issue, but again, we can do it.”

Working parents may welcome the opportunity for their kids to have fun in a camp setting. “I think parents would be really excited,” Parks said. “When they see there is an

option for a nine-to-five summer camp, I think parents will jump at it. Summer camp is affordable and in a group setting.” She noted that kindergartners entering first grade are eligible. “It would be great for them because they haven’t been able to attend classes in person at all yet.”

It also could be good for those who left elementary school years ago. “We’re accepting applications for camp director and counselors starting March 1,” Parks said. “Both my kids were counselors, and they loved it. They got to know the kids around the community. It’s especially nice for older kids that went to Hilltop.”

She said that she’s moving forward planning—and hoping that camp can start June 7. “We want it to be a safe, fun camp. We have to see how things are in a few months. I am very hopeful right now.”

Registration for the weekly sessions begins on February 23. Once a total of sixty kids is reached for each week, that week closes to new registrants. If there is room, registration remains open. “Some weeks fill up fast,” Parks cautioned. “The first week and the last week of camp usually fill quickly.”

Register your child at www.Kensington-CommunityCouncil.org.



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Photographers throughout Kensington and El Cerrito have been posting beautiful sunset and sunrise photos these past weeks. Photo by Ford Whitefield-Brewer.

Not a Surprise

According to WalletHub, which ranks states and cities by various topics, California comes second only to Hawaii as the worst state to drive in. WalletHub used 31 indicators to identify driving experiences, from congestion to safety to accidents. Here are some: we rank the worst in congestion, 45th in car thefts, 49th in gas prices, and 48th in road quality. —Linnea Due

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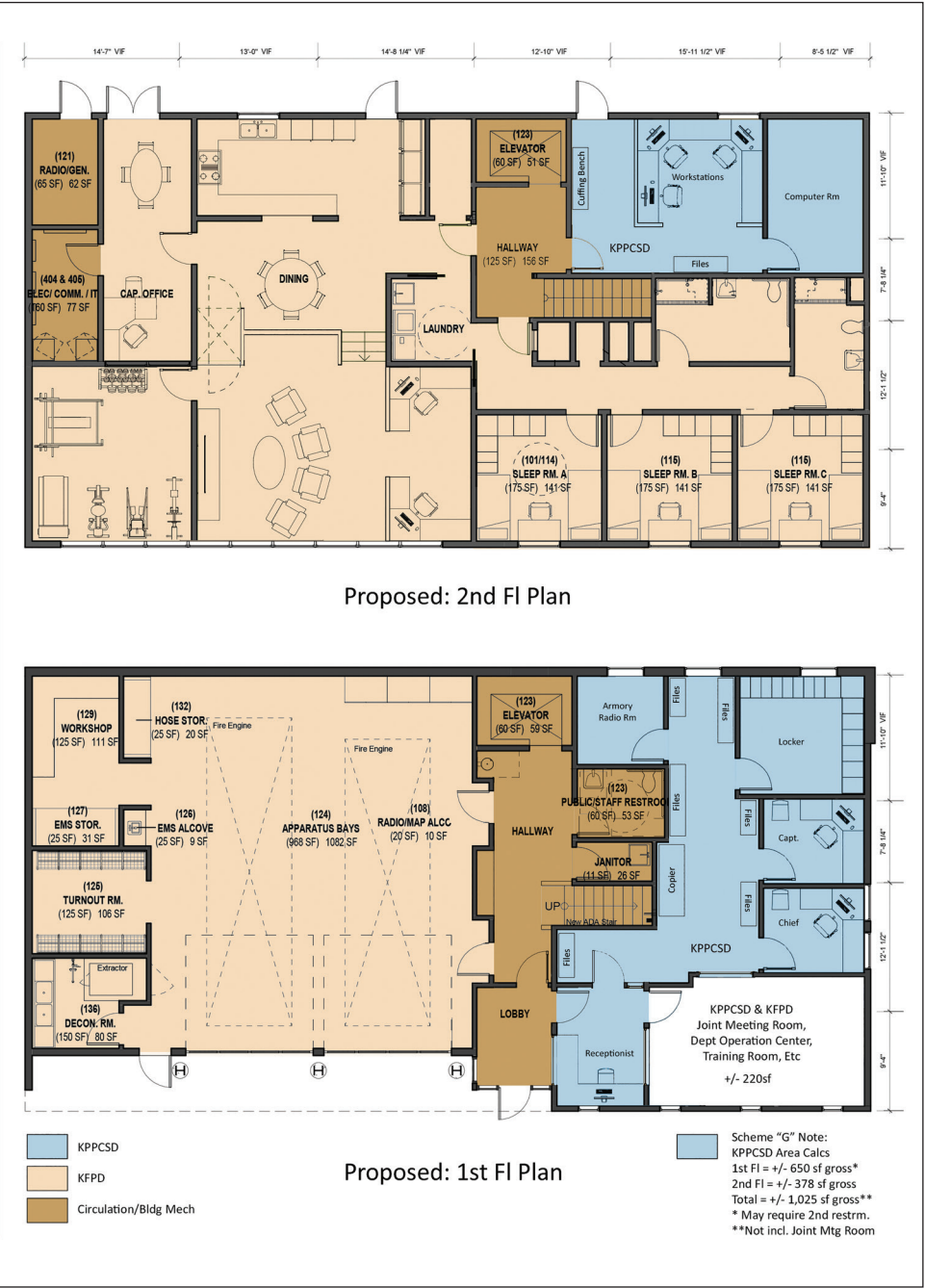


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PSB
From page 3



A new year brings a new option. Above are the two proposed floor plans for Option G, the most recent draft for the Public Safety Building renovation. Unlike the plans before it, this drawing, dated January 8, has space for the police on the second floor, though that space is smaller than the police have now. The fire district's new GM, Bill Hansell, suggested completing the seismic upgrades on the shell of the building before hammering out how interior spaces would be divided. As with earlier proposals, Option G is only conceptual, a way to think about how the building could house both agencies.

During public comment, Linda Lipscomb pointed out that Kensington residents pay for the building. “It’s the people’s house,” she said. “We’re paying for it, and we want our police in there.”

The public meeting will take place in February after the regular board meetings of each district. Interim GM Lindsay and Hansell will set a date and read in the police district’s new GM, Marti Brown (an interview with Brown will appear in the March *Outlook*). Check district websites for date and Zoom link.