KENSINGTON OUTLOOK 59 ARLINGTON AVE KENSINGTON, CA 94707-1037





Bottom Row, left to right: Lilliana Porter, Berkeley High School (BHS), U of Vermont; Ella Monteleone, El Cerrito High School (ECHS), UC Berkeley; Indy Quartel, ECHS, Undecided; Natalia Brunetti, ECHS, Stevens Institute of Technology; Lauren Okimoto, ECHS, Northeastern University; Ashley Ngan, ECHS, UC San Diego; Emi Akiyama Tahara, St. Mary's College High School (SMCHS), School of Art Institute of Chicago; Miranda Wong, ECHS, Undecided; Kiara Fillingim, ECHS, CSU Long Beach; Malorie Dowling, ECHS, Falmouth University, UK; Melayne Chiang, ECHS, Berkeley Community College; (Photo bomb dog Makko). Middle Row: Ian Tamagno, SMCHS, St. Mary's College; August Jones, SMCHS, University of Colorado, Boulder; Binta Maina, ECHS, Macalester College; Kaden Tindol, ECHS, Undecided; Charlotte Connelly, BHS, Undecided; Kaleb Paige, ECHS, CSU Chico; Ayaz Earley, ECHS, Lawrence University; Kamren Poe, ECHS, Manhattan College; Kazu Akiyama Tahara, SMCHS, U of Oregon. Top Row: Chris Kiess, ECHS, UC Santa Cruz; Miles Freightman, ECHS, U of Oregon; Finn Hartigan O'Connor, Head-Royce, Wesleyan University; Michael Krijanovski, Bentley HS, University of Utah; Bockarie Maina, ECHS, Macalester College; Bennett Yarnell, ECHS, UC San Diego; Eamonn O'Leary, ECHS, Chico State; Ondieki Maina, ECHS, Macalester College; Milan Willet, ECHS, UC Berkeley; Ryan Thompson, ECHS, Cal Poly SLO; Will Flowers, ECHS, University of Chicago. Photo by Jenny Parks



Tristan Schonfeldt-Aultman, ECHS, Champlain College; Will Diego, ECHS, UC San Diego; Cate Flowers, ECHS, UC Berkeley; Finn Kaste, ECHS, Northern Arizona University

ECHS,

Not Pictured : Sophia Bartley, BHS, Barnard College, Irena Connelly, Oakland School of the Arts (OSA), Undecided; Cole Wayne, ECHS, University of Colorado, Boulder; Ava Robertson, ECHS, Undecided; Abigail Kaneko, BHS, UC Davis; Charlize Pope, ECHS, Lewis & Clark College; Oliver Brown, ECHS, New York University



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Bentley, Occidental College



Oliver van Linder, Bentley, University of Colorado, Boulder.



Anna-Nibha von Rospatt, St. Colum ba's College HS, Dublin, Gap Year

JUNE 2022

What's the Rush? Dear Editor: Vida Dorroh

Dear Editor, **Chris Sorensen Pay Attention**

Dear Editor:



	2	8	18
Detached Single Family	New Listings	Pending Sales	Closed Sales
	Average List Price \$1,396,500	Median List Price \$1,233,500	Median List Price \$1,372,500
	Median Sq. Ft. 1,820	Median Sq. Ft. 1,613	Median Sq. Ft. 1,954
		Median DOM 9	Median Sales Price \$1,701,500
If you're considering selling you're probably thinking about what you'll need to do to get your house ready			Median DOM 13

Kensington | Market Update

to appeal to the most buyers. It's crucial to speak with a trusted real estate professional who knows your local market before you start making upgrades.

March 2022 to present | Q2

Here are three things to keep top of mind as you're making your list of projects to tackle this year. How can I help?

1. The Number of Homes for Sale Is Very Low Housing inventory sits far below what is normally considered a balanced market. This means major remodeling and upgrades may not be needed. Of course, certain repairs may be important or even necessary. The best way to determine where to spend a good chance you've already made your money - I work closely with you to confirm which improvements will give you the greatest return on your investment.

2. Buyers May Be Willing To Take on Projects When They Purchase Your House Today, many buyers are more willing to take on home improvement projects themselves to get the house they wish to buy. Your efforts may be better spent working on thoughtful cosmetic updates. Instead of over-investing in upgrades, the buyer may change anyway. I help you determine key projects that will give you best results and return on money spent

3. As Your Agent I Will Help You Spotlight the Upgrades You've Made Over the past year, many homeowner have made a significant number of updates to their homes. The most recent State of Home Spending report finds: "Home improvement spending rose 25% year-over-year to \$10,341. Homeowners who invested in home improvement did an average of 3.7 projects, up from 2.7 in 2020" ... There's updates to your home that could appeal to buyers. If that's the case, I will find ways to highlight those upgrades in your listing. The same is true for any projects you are consider ing moving forward. No matter what, before you renovate, you may want to meet and discuss what work needs to be done and how to make it as appealing as possible to future buyers. Every home is different, so a conversation with me could be beneficial to make sure you make the best decisions when selling.

Ruth Frassetto, CRS | 510.697.8606 | ruth.frassetto@compass.com | DRE 00779030 Over 20+ years of experience. Consider me your Real Estate Resource.

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Kensington and Beyond Update June 2022

SOLD | 479 Vassar Ave.

Berkeley | 3 BR | 2 BA

View home! All level living with

LP: \$1,198,000 | SP: \$2,000,000

SOLD | 7110 View Ave.

El Cerrito Hills | 5 BR | 3 BA

Campbell and Wong designed c. 1959

Mid-Century Masterpiece. Stunning views

LP: \$2,788,000 | SP: \$3,300,000

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thoughtful updates



NEW LISTING | 55 Arlington Ct. Kensington | 4+ BR | 3 BA Paul Hammarberg design, classic East Coast feel. Gorgeous grounds.



SOLD | 9 Avon Road Kensington | 3+ BR | 2.5 BA A Kensington treasure sited on a level view parcel. Designed and built by E.V. Aiken c. 1953.

LP: \$2.688.000 | SP: \$3.150.000

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▲ SAFETY SCENARIO ▲

What If You're Out of Town?

About 115 vehicles participated in the April 9 evacuation drill. Many residents were out of town that weekend and could not participate. What would you do during an actual evacuation if you're away from home? Is your house hardened and do you have your neighbor's contact information so you can check on your home or pet? If you are not home during an evacuation order, you likely cannot get back to your house. Start hardening your home, protecting your vital documents, and planning with neighbors to look after each other, especially the most vulnerable. Residents are hosting block parties to prepare together. To plan your block party, visit kensingtonfire.org/prepare. -Johnny Valenzuela



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.

Letters to the Editor

As a Kensington voter who has attended/watched virtually every Kensington Fire Protection District board meeting for many years, I am appalled at the current board majority's abdication of responsibility through wholesale delegation of authority to General Manager Bill Hansell, who is unelected and neither lives nor works in Kensington. During the April 28 special board meeting, Hansell presented two open agenda action items, both of which were unnecessary and premature, in an apparent strategy to keep up an artificially speedy tempo in the Public Safety Building project.

First, he wanted the board to authorize its financial consultant to "go to market" to seek bids for a \$3.5 million loan. But when guizzed by Director Julie Stein (the only director who had clearly done homework on these motions) on the amount of the loan, the contract for such services and the related fees, Hansell said, in essence, you can leave all that to me. So the board gave Hansell and his consultant a blank check, and did not seem even inquisitive about the terms of the contract

Second, Hansell wanted authorization to spend \$4,700 as a "down payment" for a temporary steel building to house the fire engines, again to supposedly "lock in" favorable pricing. But when quizzed (again, by the estimable Director Stein) about how long the price "lock-in" would last, and where the fire engines would be located, he admitted that the price lock is of limited duration, and the location had not yet been secured by contract. Once again, the board majority voted 3-1 to give Hansell what he wanted-Director Stein voting no.

I didn't vote for Bill Hansell to run our Fire Protection District board, but that seems to be what's happening. Based on the letter from Hansell to the KPPCSD staff that the Outlook's investigative reporter uncovered, it looks like Hansell might be angling to run the police district, too. Does Kensington want a Hansell Conservatorship of our governing boards' directors? What's the rush? Oh, there's an election in November, so let's get everything "locked in" before the voters have their say.

Hiding Behind the COVID Curtain

I am appalled by the recent decisions of the majority of the Kensington Fire District board members to ignore the Kensington voters and residents who continue to ask that the KFD board pause their planning processes and address the concerns about the retrofit of Kensington's Public Safety Building (PSB) and the potential plan to house our police department in Kensington Park.

Following the decisions of the KFD board at its April meeting, I and several Kensington residents created a petition requesting community engagement to: Rethink options to house the Kensington police and fire departments in a retrofitted and renovated PSB; To protect Kensington Park for recreational use; and to communicate the total costs before KFD triggers far-reaching ramifications by committing our tax dollars.

A week later over 230 Kensington residents and park users signed the petition addressed to the KFD and KPPCSD boards and more sign every day. Please visit

savekensingtonsfuture.info for more information and to sign the petition. The fire board's position that the police must permanently move out of the PSB has

created a ripple effect that threatens the community's use and enjoyment of Kensington Park for recreation, Kensington After School Enrichment Program (KASEP) classes, the Kensington Community Council (KCC) Summer Camp, and many other uses of our park. Neither board has said what the total cost will be for the building retrofit, temporary housing, and a permanent home for the police-or how it will be paid. It appears that the KFD general manager, a public servant, hid behind the COVID curtain to negotiate contracts with financing consultants before securing and publicizing the estimated cost of the PSB renovation. Although one board member requested these estimates at the meeting, the majority of board members approved his recommendations after limited deliberations.

Why? Because many of the things we value are threatened by the two districts responsible for the safety of our town. The fire district plans to tear down the Public Safety Building and replace it with a \$13.5 structure that will serve only firefighters—thus becoming the sought-after third fire station for El Cerrito (paid for by Kensington taxpayers). The project is being rushed through despite significant public opposition to the cost and to their decision to evict the police department. While no one contests the need to make the PSB seismically safe and updated for efficiency, there is concern that the current plan is far more extensive than necessary to serve the needs of Kensington's fire department. Are duplicate administrative and meeting rooms necessary if it means evicting the police?

Meanwhile, the KPPCSD threatens to take over Building E or the Annex—in the middle of our park that we fought so hard for-to house the ousted police. Imagine police cars competing for space with the after-school programs; driving down Windsor

> responding to calls; sirens going off in our tranquil park while kids walk to school. If the police must be relocated, why not consider the church parking lot on the Arlington? But the KPPCSD board refuses to answer questions, ignoring outrage over its plans, scheduling "special" meetings when parents aren't available, ignoring letters and public comments condemning its actions.

> The point is this: If you care about our community; if you care about our public safety services; if you care about having publicly elected officials be responsive to the community they serve, then let directors on both boards know.

Sign the petitions being circulated to pause the building of the massive new fire station. Contact board members to let them know they cannot continue to behave like

autocrats. Vote in the November election against those incumbents on the two boards who have put our public safety at risk. And follow the movement to consolidate these two districts into one so that we no longer have two boards working against each other at the expense of Kensington taxpayers. Pat Gillette

Plastic Bag Recycling

Dear Editor:

Now that we are composting, along with recycling, our trash volume has reduced dramatically. But what about clean plastic bags (and clean plastic film)? Last year we were allowed to put them in our recycle bin, but this year they are strictly prohibited. So in the trash they go?

No! Large supermarkets (Safeway on Shattuck Avenue in North Berkeley, Lucky in El Cerrito Plaza) have bins inside their front doors specifically for plastic bags; bring them there. Happy composting and recycling. Now back to letters about the police/fire departments. **Casey and Emily Bowden**

The Importance of Sharing

Dear Editor:

As a kid I also have a personal opinion about the move of the police station into the Kensington Park. I don't think kids would like it very much because we are very serious about our classes. No KASEP classes would also really affect parents too because most parents need the KASEP classes to take care of their kids while they get some work done. The loss of KASEP classes would mean parents have to struggle and find people to look after their kids. At KASEP classes kids get a chance to get together with other kids—we make tons of new friends, have fun, and learn new skills: lego, cooking, carpentry, etc. I don't think the police should be OK taking that away from us.

I personally don't understand why the fire department wants the police out anyways because they are perfectly fine right now. I think that the fire department should be OK sharing with the police because sharing is an important part of being a community. I hope the fire and police departments see my logic.

Winston Jennings, 3rd Grade, Hilltop Elementary

No Police in the Park

Dear Editor:

The police should not be stationed in the park. From kindergarteners to 6th graders, we have all grown up going to the park, and we love the park. In my class (a 3rd/4th grade split), a lot of kids go to KASEP and play in the park. I've also celebrated eight out of my ten birthdays so far in the park.

The park does not need police traffic preventing us from playing in the park. We need to go outside and get some exercise.

Zachary Wetter, 4th Grade, Kensington Hilltop

Plan Must be Stopped

Dear Editor:

I am outraged that this plan may go forward. I can't believe such a plan to locate the police in our children's and community's common area. This is something that should be planned, discussed, and voted on by the people of Kensington. This plan must stopped at once! My kids use the park most everyday! Mary Jo Starkey

Better Solution Needed

Dear Editor:

I am writing in support of the invaluable community resource provided by the Kensington After School Enrichment Program (KASEP). These classes provide our youngest residents an opportunity to learn based on their own curiosity, experience a level of independence, and meet children outside of their grade level. The classes are already extremely competitive to get into and the proposal of moving instruction to the Annex, as a result of the police needing a new headquarters, would undoubtedly lead to reductions to the number of classes offered. The robust and economically accessible KCC Summer Camp program will also be adversely impacted. These programs are a community treasure enjoyed by generations of Kensington kids—providing the campers a fun, safe, and community-centered experience while also offering our local teens an opportunity to grow valuable work skills in leadership, communication, and teambuilding. These are precious resources we should be working to augment, not curtail. There has to be a better solution!

Emily Jennings

A Bright Spot Deep in the Pandemic

Dear Editor:

We were surprised to learn that Building E in Kensington Park is being considered as a potential location for our Police Dept., and we attended the KPPCSD meeting on April 7th to voice our opposition to it. Although it was apparent that there is substantial community opposition to this idea (every single public commenter was opposed), the board still voted to authorize funding a consultant to further study this idea, which was disheartening.

While we're not sure of what the best solution is to this dilemma, housing our police department in the heart of our park is not a feasible option. There's currently no vehicle access/egress to/from Building E that wouldn't involve driving over a grassy field or up/down a steep incline onto a narrow residential street, both heavily used by children, parents, seniors, residents walking their dogs, etc.

Furthermore, housing our police department in the park would completely change the nature of our community's open space, disrupt our children's afterschool and summer programming, and increase traffic on nearby streets, potentially impacting pedestrian safety.

Personally, having access to our beautiful park has been very important to our family. We don't have much of a backyard, so this is where our two children have been able to run around and explore, meet friends, celebrate birthdays, take KASEP classes, attend summer camp, and generally enjoy the great outdoors. It was also a bright spot deep in the pandemic when it provided a safe place to socialize while schools were closed. It would be a shame to lose this, so I hope a better solution can be found. **Maureen and Michael Wetter**

Local Treasures on View at Kensington Library By Linnea Due

As a child on Long Island, Kensington resident Robert Becker asked his dad for a camera. For years, he says, he used that 110 camera, introduced by Kodak in 1972, with its iconic film cartridges containing 24 exposures—pop them in and you're ready to go. "I gradually began upgrading as the technology got better," Becker says.

No matter what camera he uses, he has always been passionate about photography. "As a kid, I'd take photos of summer camp, then a teen tour camp, taking photos of places we visited. Like a lot of photographers, I wanted to remember the past. I still have photo albums of high school and college."

The Becker family, with their two-year-old daughter, made the move to California ten years ago. "It was a big life decision," he says. "Before we moved, I used to come out here once a year by myself to go to Yosemite. I love the outdoors and open space."

Becker, who works for SalesForce, says he takes photos every day. "When they first reopened the office a year ago last May, I wanted to take photos of people returning to work. This was when they thought the pandemic was ending. But then they shut it back down. Now it's reopened again, but I still mostly work remotely."

Becker's wife works even more remotely—she manages several Haagen Dasz ice cream stores in New York. "It was fun in New York-free ice cream-but here not as much," he says. The Beckers now have another daughter, and Becker says that his daughters and wife sometimes get impatient with him. "They don't have the patience to wait for me to take photos," he says.

"I'm something of an introvert," he admits. "I can quietly take pictures. It's so fun and relaxing, such a great sense of presence. If my kids have swim meets, I can be in the background taking photos. It feels good to make art at the moment."

The show at the library contains nine photographs taken in Kensington and others from Berkeley, Yosemite, the Albany Bulb, and more. Becker's website, robertmbecker.com, has a link to the Fine Art America site where viewers can purchase his photos sized as they wish, on a variety of media.

The photos are nothing short of stunning. The library is open Tuesdays-Saturdays, and the show will be up past the July 4 weekend.



How You Can Help Ukraine

By Michael Baar

The Kensington Benefit For Ukraine (KB) will be held on June 12, 1-4pm, outdoors, on a drop-in basis, at the Kensington Community Center. COVID regulations then in effect should be observed. Everyone, with the possible exception of Mr. Vladimir Putin, is invited to attend. There will be a videographer, filming.

Things have evolved since I sent an email on March 22 to eight neighbors, suggesting a block event, hoping to raise low four-figure money. Current goals for the KB are that 100+ people attend and that \$100,000+ is raised. Four weeks ago, I would have thought these numbers to be delusional. (FYI: A Matching Donor Group has been established, \$30,210 has been pledged.) Donations began online May 19. You can receive an email updating KB progress, describing the four supporting charities (see below), and specifying donation links. To be included on the email, contact BenefitForUkraine@gmail.com.

Regarding volunteers: twelve savants have come forward. I estimate another ten volunteers will be needed. Volunteering should be thought of as a maximum three-hour commitment. Most volunteer tasks do not require attendance the day of. To receive more information, contact the email address.

I realize most people will not attend. However, there are ways to pitch in that do not involve showing up (forward this article to your friends, register to receive updates, volunteer yourself or your staff, donate, become a Matching Donor, etc.).

Here's what is currently being planned for June 12. 1) Four charities will participate, share information about their work, and receive donations. Having learned about what these charities do, these people are heroes. I am working with ShelterBox, MedShare, Alight, and World Hope International, all rated four-star by Charity Navigator; 2) Music will be provided, hopefully by Ukrainian musicians. 3) There will be desserts and non-alcoholic refreshments for sale; 4) Event-related items for sale are in the works (i.e., 3"x4" photo booklets, T-shirts, coasters). All profits will go to the charities; 5) There will be a one-hour presentation, mostly from the participating charities; and, 6) A long shot hope: several activists, with international reputations, who live locally, will be invited to be honored.

Whether or not you attend, consider making a generous donation. Putin's war on Ukraine is an obscenity, thousands of people are being murdered, and the country is being decimated. Now is a real good time to take action. I hope to see you at the KB. Venceremos.

April Police Patrol Log

On April 4, KPD was dispatched to an online scam. A resident agreed to pay \$960 to ship a piano to Kensington. However, after the shipping costs were paid, the piano was never shipped, and the entire incident was an online fraud.

On April 7 at 09:20am, KPD was dispatched to a "Cold" hit & run in the 100 block of Kerr Avenue, where the owner's parked vehicle was sideswiped in the middle of the night

On April 8 at 10:01am, KPD was dispatched to a non-injury collision involving a large truck and another vehicle in the 200 block of Lake Drive. At 8:39pm, KPD was dispatched to a commercial burglary in the 300 block of Colusa Avenue. The investigation determined that an unknown subject entered through the rear of the business and fled without stealing anything, after the alarm sounded.

On April 9 at about 6:32pm, KPD was dispatched to the 100 block of Avon Road on a report of a disturbance.

On April 11 at 2:21am, a KPD officer spotted a vehicle near Lake Drive and Beloit Avenue and initiated a felony traffic enforcement stop after dispatch confirmed the vehicle was stolen out of San Rafael. The solo occupant was arrested for CVC 1081-Possession of a Stolen Vehicle, PC 496-Possession of Stolen Property, PC 466-Possession of Burglary Tools and H&S 11364-Possession of Drug Paraphernalia. The vehicle was returned to the owner.

On April 16 at about midnight, a driver possibly fell asleep and collided into two parked cars around Colusa and Lynn avenues. The driver stopped as required by law and called the police. While awaiting the arrival of KPD, the driver was hit by another vehicle, and the driver of the other vehicle fled the scene without exchanging informa-

On April 21 at about 8:34am, KPD was dispatched to a report of mail stolen out of the mailbox in the 100 block of Kenyon Avenue. An investigation was initiated in conjunction with the United States Postal Inspector's Office.



In-person storytime is coming back to the Kensington Library! Beginning in June, in-person storytime will return to all Contra Costa County Library branches. Children and families will once again be able to enjoy stories, songs, and finger plays performed by their favorite librarians. Storytime marks the return of in-person programming for the first time since March 2020. The library paused all in-person programming

Police and Firefighters take Paper and Pills off the Streets

By Johnny Valenzuela During Kensington's Shred & Meds on April 30, 155 residents dropped off 8,155 pounds of paper to be shredded on-site, reducing combustible material. The police coordinated the medical drop-off, which gathered 203 pounds of expired or unneeded pharmaceuticals to be disposed of safely. "This is the first time police and fire went together to dispose of pharmaceuticals at the Oakland Drug Enforcement Agency headquarters," said Sergeant Amit Nath, who delivered the pharmaceuticals along with firefighter Matthew Clarine. The medical drop-offs filled nine three-foot-tall collection boxes. Disposing of pharmaceuticals safely diverts them from abuse or entering our water supply. Thanks to Kensington residents who held on to their pharmaceuticals for proper disposal. The next Shred & Meds collection will be in October, with the date announced in the Outlook and on the KFPD website. To sign up for email notifications, request to be subscribed to subscribe@kensingtonfire.org.





Storytime Returns By Kara Sheetz

at the beginning of the pandemic. At the Kensington Library, Family Storytime with Mr. Charles will be offered on Tuesdays at 6:30pm beginning June 7. Baby and Toddler Storytime with Ms. Mary will begin in July, date and time to be determined. Please call the library at 510-524-3053 for more information.

Prospect Sierra students engage in deep academic work, practice skills to hone greater self-knowledge, and demonstrate compassion and care for others. Immersed in a joyful school community, they develop a lifelong love of learning.



Kids Play with Fire (Hose)

By Johnny Valenzuela, Emergency Preparedness Coordinator Residents delighted in children's excitement at the sight of the big shiny red fire engine at Kensington's Wildfire Community Preparedness Day May 7. This event provided residents with safety information from the Kensington Fire Protection District, El Cerrito/Kensington CERT, Red Cross Bay Area, Contra Costa Health Services, Community Awareness Emergency Response (CAER), East Bay Municipal Utility District, and Mobility Matters.



Fire Captain Brian Cheshareck gave a tour around the "giant toolbox on wheels" to the many bright-eyed kids sporting new plastic fire helmets and Station 65 backpacks. The "touch-a-truck" activity allowed kids to spray water out of the EBMUD fire truck, also on display. Last but not least, everyone enjoyed the Tacos el Rulas truck, which caused a bit of a traffic jam on Windsor Ave before doling out delicious authentic Mexican cuisine. Kensington residents walked away with the latest edition of the Wildfire Preparedness Workbook. This publication was updated at the end of April. For yours, stop by the Public Safety Building or visit online at www.kensingtonfire.org/workbook.

Residents Mobilize, Hundreds Sign Petition By Linnea Due

Following the police board's March meeting, worry arose about the police being headquartered somewhere in the park—in Building E, the recreation building, or the Annex, a long disused building at the lawn's north end. Residents met in private homes and formed a group called Save Kensington's Future; committees designed a website and devised a petition all within two weeks.

The petition asks both the fire board, which announced in 2021 that the police could not fit in the soon-to-be-remodeled Public Safety Building, and the police board, to revisit plans already slated to cost millions of dollars, and that's without factoring in a temporary or permanent home for the police, a figure as yet unknown. The committee's main ask is that citizens must participate in decisions of this magnitude.

Distributed at the park and other locations, the petition, which also can be signed at savekensingtonsfuture@info.com, has garnered over 460 signatures (382 Kensington residents) by May 21. This figure is approximately nine percent of Kensington's 4,400 registered voters, achieved in only three weeks, with signatures still being gathered. Said John Price, a member of Save Kensington's Future, "We have started a communityorganized campaign to oppose the current plans to relocate the police department in the park. You either have a park or you have a police station, but you cannot effectively have both in the same space. This should be entirely obvious to anyone who considers the proposal." Price encourages residents to visit the park and learn more about the issues.

The Save Kensington's Future petition will be joined by another petition aimed at consolidating the two districts into one board able to look at overall fiscal and services impacts to Kensington rather than two boards stewarding their own districts. (See Citizen Forum, page 6, for a description of that petition.) A longer story about the impact of the petitions will be in the July/August Outlook.



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CITIZEN FORUM

It is Time to Consolidate Into One Efficient District

It is high time to consolidate our two local governance districts into one. A rapidly expanding number of Kensington citizens has come to the same conclusion after many years of witnessing our dysfunctional system. They have spontaneously formed multiple committees that support consolidation to prevent our uncoordinated two-district structure from making dysfunctional errors in governance in the future. Contra Costa County's Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCO) must consider their petition, according to California law, to unify (consolidate) the two districts into one, with one elected board. We urge you to read this Citizen Forum to understand how you can help reform our dysfunctional district structure, read the petition when it comes around, and then sign it if you agree. Unification will increase efficiency and transparency for citizens enabling optimized town-wide budgeting and forecasting, and eliminating wasteful spending on redundant, high-turnover, part-time General Managers (GMs), staff, and outside services. Consolidation will create a unified district that will continue all services that the two districts presently provide.

All existing contracts, including with El Cerrito for fire services, police unions and command staff, Bay View Refuse & Recycling, KCC, and private contractors, will



transfer to the unified district intact. Here is what consolidation accomplishes: Little Kensington is locally governed by two boards of directors in two independent districts representing exactly the same citizens. We know of no other city, town, or special district governments with the same boundaries in California that are split this way, for good reason. Our two districts have a long history of practically no coordination with each other. Each district receives a rigidly fixed percentage of your property taxes: over two times as much for fire as for police, parks, and refuse, so financial plans are artificially inflexible. Unification directs all property tax revenue and additional special fees to the unified district.

In our current system a minority of three or four votes on one board, out of our ten local representatives (five on fire board, five on police board) can in effect commit both districts to huge expenditures and increased debt and taxes. These independent decisions for how to spend your tax dollars, and when and how much to increase debt or increase taxes, are made without any joint financial planning or budgeting across the two boards, regardless of citizen recommendations.

The most recent example is the decision by four fire board directors to convert the Public Safety Building into a fire station only, thus forcing the police board to find over \$1 million and more likely \$2 million—money it does not have—to relocate the police. This also initiated plans to possibly put the police in the park. This real-life example highlights the system's vulnerability to governmental dysfunction with its ability for only three or four representatives out of the total ten to vote to force disruptive commitments on both boards. This minority commitment cannot happen in a unified, more transparent district, where commitments will require majority votes of the single elected district board.

The Public Safety Building conversion will not be the last requirement for major capital decisions in Kensington. Destructive earthquakes and wildfires can happen without warning, for example. There will be unanticipated events in the future. All planning, budgeting, forecasting and more needs to be done in a unified district in which decisions will be made with all functions weighed considering the whole picture. This is a fundamental principle of good management and good government. It will save significant money that can be applied to short- and long-term needs, including reserves for the future.

After unification into one district, the board will be made up of members of both districts' existing boards until the first election after consolidation, which will reduce the single board to five directors. Please stand up in favor of a rational Kensington government, read the consolidation petition when it is presented, and sign it if you want a better government. Thank you.

-Alexandra Aquino-Fike, Rick Artis, Candace Capogrossi, Laura Chick, Lisa Caronna, Paul Dorroh, Vida Dorroh, Gail Feldman, David Fike, Rob Firmin, Pat Gillette, Kris Hafner, Karl Kruger, Linda Lipscomb, Eileen Nottoli, John Perkins, Andrew Reed, Kay Reed, Sylvia Rosales-Fike, Laurie Schumacher, Micha Segeritz, Chris Sorensen, David Spath, Julie Stein, Jim Watt, Len Welsh

Citizen Forums are guest editorials written by Kensington residents. To submit a Citizen *Forum for consideration, email editor@kensingtonoutlook.com*



BLOOD DRIVE Kensington Community Center 59 Arlington Avenue Tuesday, June 7, 2022 10:00 am - 2:30 pm To make an appointment, visit donors.vitalant.org. Use your unique blood drive code: Kensington



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> RED OAK





Page 7

KENSINGTON Community Education



KASEP- Kensington After School Enrichment Program Congratulations on completing a successful school year. We are gearing up for summer camp that begins on Monday, June 13th. We wish you a fun and adventurous summer and look forward to seeing you in the fall. Fall KASEP registration is scheduled for Tuesday, August 30th at 7:00pm for kindergarten and 7:30pm for grades 1-6. Classes begin on Monday, September 12th, 2022.

Karma Smart started teaching Dance Fitness for KASEP during the pandemic outside at the community center. Karma has a passion to share her experience of personal healing and liberation through music and dance. She currently teaches dance to adults, teens and children of all ages at various community organizations. Most recently, she performed in the Yemanja Festival with the Damasceno Dance Collective at BrasArte in February 2022. Currently, Karma teaches dance classes for adults called World Dance Workout at Cedar Rose Park, where she incorporates the dance styles of the African diaspora from West African, Congolese, to Afro-Beats and samba to name a few.

In addition, for the last ten years she has taught as a guest dance teacher at St. Mary's College High School as well as taught a variety of movement arts from gymnastics, circus arts, yoga and kung fu and more for Fitness In Transit, at various schools and camps. Teaching children movement arts is her passion and inspires her daily.



Tennis Court Reservations: For weekends and holidavs only. Call the KCC office to book your reservations 510-525-0292 New KPPCSD Court Fees:

1 hour reservations- residents: \$7 non-residents \$10

The Kensington Outlook can now be found at: KensingtonOutlook.com Archive copies can also be found on our website dating back to 2003.

KCC

KCC/KASEP Office: 59 Arlington Ave., Recreation Building (Across the grassy field above the tennis courts in Kensington Park), Kensington CA 94707. E-mail: kccrec@yahoo.com, or call 510-525-0292. Our website is:www.kensingtoncommunitycouncil.org.

KCC Summer Camp

Summer Camp is here! We have a wonderful and talented staff waiting to greet your campers upon arrival.

Kelly Barry is returning as the KCC Summer Camp Director for the second year in a row. Kelly grew up in Kensington and attended Hilltop School. During the school year she works with the KEF PE program and teaches several dance classes at Katie's Dance studio and performs with the San Jose Dance Company. We are thrilled to have Kelly return for another fun summer at KCC.





KCC Summer Camp is filled with outdoor team games, arts & crafts, dance, sports, Olympic week, cooking, tennis, and much more. Campers will be grouped in pods of 15 according to their age and friends (when possible)

Teacher Vicky Brodt will host a craft project every week and create some yummy food creations in the Community Center kitchen. Each week tennis instructor, Kim Roots, will host the campers on the tennis court practicing their swing and playing some games.

Our enthusiastic camp counselors, many of them former campers, will engage the pods in a variety of sports and games making sure there is plenty of laughter, team work, and fun!



Letters

...from Page 3

Why "Fix" It?

Dear Editor,

The KCC has been running a very successful low-cost neighborhood recreation program, beloved of generations of children since 1960. After great public outcry against pushing the KCC and its recreation program [KASEP] out of Building E in Kensington Park in favor of putting in a new police station, the police board is now trying to force an overly complex and deleterious rental contract on the KCC. It includes doubling the rent, micromanaging the KASEP programs, possibly moving the KCC out of Building E, and permitting double-booking the park and buildings; all this again without consulting the KCC or its staff.

The proposed rental contract is so harmful to the KASEP recreation program that it might force it to close or vastly increase its fees for a more restricted program. By threatening these harmful actions to KASEP, the police board appears to be interested in getting rid of KASEP and running the recreation programs itself.

What a bad idea.

If it's not broke, why fix it? Leave the park, the contract, and the KCC and KASEP alone. At the very least, the police board should be working on a mutually agreeable contract with the KCC that leaves out the micromanaging and double-booking. **Catherine de Neergaard**

Why Offer CalPERS Benefits to KPPCSD Staff?

Dear Editor:

The police board is considering offering CalPERS benefits to future general manager and other staff appointments in a move to attract candidates for its GM job, which has been open since November 2021. Two concerns: First, the record shows that CalPERS has historically overestimated investment revenues and consequently granted larger benefits than fiscally prudent. Long-term growth estimates have been 7-8 percent or more, but over a recent eleven-year period, average revenues were only about 2.5 percent (but sometimes much greater).

When revenues come in short, taxpayers have had to shoulder the burden of that beneficence. State tax dollar contributions have increased 3000 percent since 1999. CalPERS is currently underfunded by 30 percent of its potential liabilities. CalPERS may be good for employees but perhaps not for agencies.

Another problem is that if an agency wants to leave CalPERS, it is required to pay off its entire future indebtedness immediately. That could easily bankrupt a district. Is this an organization that looks out for our interests?

The KPPCSD board holds that it cannot attract good candidates for GM and other positions because it does not pay benefits. But the fire board has had no problems hiring top candidates without supplying benefits. Instead, allow administrative career employees, who seldom spend a lifetime in one place, to establish and contribute to their own plans, to which other past and future employers can contribute. Give them the money and let them invest it. Don't chain Kensington to a retirement system. **Kevin Padian**

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Drop off your ballot at the elections drop box in the Library employee parking lot



WE LOVE KENSINGTON! Our love for our community is central to our mission. Here are a few updates about what we've been up to in Colusa Circle this spring.



COLUSA CIRCLE 5K Thanks to everyone who participated in the 4th annual Colusa Circle 5K run on March 19th. We raised \$6,000 for Sogorea Te' Land Trust, which will support growing medicine gardens, creating emergency response hubs, and distributing fresh food to elders.







EARTH MONTH CLEAN-UP The ZCEB team gathered in April to celebrate Earth Month by cleaning up litter in Colusa Circle and the surrounding neighborhood. We love helping our streets sparkle. We also host frequent recycling drives, such as our annual battery recycling drive which diverted 200 pounds of batteries from the landfill this year.

NEW OFFICE LOCATION We're spreading our roots! You may have noticed that we have secured a new office location right down the street at 388 Colusa Ave, formerly the Hendrickson Clinic. This new location provides us with more space to host community events, meet with clients, engage with neighbors & friends, and continue having fun while doing so! Stop by to check it out and say hello!

IF YOU'RE INTERESTED IN BUYING, SELLING, OR FINDING OUT YOUR HOME'S VALUE, GIVE US A CALL OR STOP BY THE ZCEB OFFICE.

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