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Matrix

...from front page

rounding agencies, which presumably would help recruiting. A full-time administrative assistant would provide support to the chief. (How this position coordinates or overlaps with the new administrative reorganization recently approved by the board, which includes a police services specialist, is not clarified.) The in-house approach increases operating costs to \$3,941,057, a million dollars over the current amount, a bump-up of approximately a third.

Brady then estimated a sample full-services contract, by which he means contracting out policing to another agency (Kensington would retain a station, its own uniforms, and cars). This came in \$150,000 cheaper than the in-house model, at \$3,791,902, still a 29 percent jump. However, Brady made clear that these figures were estimates, since no agency has given figures for providing services.

And in fact, after contacting El Cerrito, Albany, and Berkeley, agencies chosen because they are adjacent, it appears that no one is interested in taking on a contract to police Kensington. Brady seemed aggrieved that Berkeley did not answer multiple emails or phone calls, though the ad hoc committee discovered two years ago that Berkeley was not interested. Matrix met with Albany, which begged off due to its chief’s retirement this past summer, and El Cerrito, which expressed mild interest in hybrid solutions (for example, taking on the evidence room). Brady characterized such recalcitrance as “a snapshot in time” and suggested that agencies might be in a different position in six months or a year.

Brady made no recommendations beyond suggesting that the board issue RFPs to “test the waters.” He proposed that those RFPs be based on full-service contracts, though why any agency would spend time working up an RFP it did not want to offer is questionable. More realistically, the board, the GM, and the community will need to consider what specialized services it might want to contract for and then issue RFPs for those services.

Brady thought that one hybrid model could contract out the night shift—from 9pm to 9am. Kensington would have an officer on duty, but that officer would be supervised from, for example, El Cerrito. The thought that leaps to mind is that Kensington officers frequently provide outside aid to El Cerrito and Albany police. An average of one call per night comes in during those hours, and presumably the KPD officer on duty can handle the vast majority of those calls. How does having a supervisor in El Cerrito on the line differ from asking for mutual aid during the few calls per year that the officer cannot handle him- or herself?

Brady’s answer to a member of the audience who raised that idea again mentioned risk and best practices.

During the question period that followed, several residents voiced fears that the board would unilaterally choose to fully contract out, would not let citizens vote on contracting, and would delay recruiting new officers so that the department would flounder, making contracting out necessary. The fact that nobody wants to take Kensington on, even if the board *desired* to contract out, did not alleviate these fears, nor were detractors swayed by Interim Police Chief Rickey Hull’s description of the many steps he has taken to recruit officers—or Brady’s note that the difficulty of police recruiting is nationwide.

Several people raised the specter of CalPERS, which would, if the department goes inactive, require substantial payments. (For a full discussion, see Chuck Toombs’ “Citizen Forum” piece on page 6. The Matrix report is available on the district website, as is the video of the meeting.) Others seemed confused by Brady’s estimates, believing these to be real figures or not realizing that a near-million dollar raise in both models underlay the estimated \$150,000 difference between contracting and staying in-house.

At the end, board director Sylvia Hacaj reminded the audience that the ad hoc committee had recommended precisely this study (the ad hoc committee was not tasked with identifying problems within the department). She said that it would take months to decide where to go from here, involving public meetings, community input, and decisions on what, if any, hybrid solutions might prove desirable. This speech raised an objection from at least one person on the basis that the police were on tenterhooks, yet discussions of contracting have been ongoing for at least a decade—and one could argue that we’ve never been farther from that possibility.

Matrix’s two-phase study has been useful to identify problems, yet its proposals are likely outside the realm of reality, because of lack of funds and interest in adjoining municipalities. Still, we must do something to attract good candidates from a shrinking pool. It might have been useful if Matrix had been directed to devise an option that Kensington could afford (Matrix’s recommended in-house model would raise the special tax to support the police an additional \$500 per year per household, which would continue to rise with salary increases). Interestingly, most who spoke, including board candidates, mentioned favoring some kind of hybrid plan, such as contracting out the evidence room or HR. Drama and hyperbole aside, Kensington residents are perhaps more in agreement than we think.



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Bubbles, Pumpkins, and Jazz Highlight KCC Parade



Retiring fire chief Lance Maples enjoys KCC’s parade with his wife Anna and son and daughter Joe and Adrianna. Maples has been with the El Cerrito/ Kensington fire department for 27 years and chief for 11. He retires at the end of the year. Photo by Renee Hoyer-Nielsen.

By Anne Forrest

On a beautiful fall day, Kensington came together for the Kensington Community Council’s Annual Fall Parade and Picnic. Our Grand Marshal this year was retiring Fire Chief Lance Maples. As a firefighter for over 25 years, he said he has done many things in his career, but he never thought he would be asked to sit in the back of a convertible as the Grand Marshal in a parade.

The Korematsu Middle School Jazz Ensemble, under the direction of Tiffany Carrico, played familiar jazz songs as people ate BBQ lunches and enjoyed the sun. Kids were so happy to have Sterling Johnson, the BubbLesmith, back to thrill everyone with his giant bubbles. People of all ages lined up to be encased in a giant bubble multiple times.

Our continued thanks to our sponsors Mechanics Bank and Marvin Gardens Realty for ensuring that we would have another successful event. Our local Mechanics Bank folks were there to answer questions and give out \$25 gift cards as prizes to our three coloring contest winners: in the 4 to 6 age group was Roxy S., in the 7 to 9 age group Katya S., and in the 10 to 12 age group Elsa B. Marvin Gardens had its pumpkin coloring booth set up to inspire kids to decorate their pumpkins and collect donations for UNICEF. Thanks to the jazz ensemble for some great music, and to commu-

nity members from KCC, KIC, and the Kensington School Dads’ Club who worked hard to make the day a success.

For more pictures, KCC has started an Instagram page at thecommunityofkensingtonca.

Matrix Report an Exercise in Guess-Work

By Linnea Due

The special KPPCSD meeting October 4, called to present the Matrix Phase 2 report that investigated policing options (Phase 1 examined the present department), had few attendees considering its import. Scheduled for the convenience of Matrix Consulting Group’s president Richard Brady, the meeting was first mentioned as a possibility by board president Rachelle Sherris-Watt during the candidates’ forum September 29. The Phase 2 study was posted on KPPCSD’s website the night of October 1, leaving little time to absorb the material. Two directors could not attend due to prior engagements. Matrix’s offices had been burglarized the week before, so Brady showed up with a new projector that could not be coerced to show his PowerPoint slides. Those were not the only setbacks.

Brady and Matrix’s senior manager Greg Mathews teamed their presentation, while the audience of about 40 followed along on printed copies of PowerPoint slides. Brady reminded everyone that the Phase 1 study had identified problems with the current department: Kensington pays approximately 25 percent less than surrounding agencies; it is hard to recruit for such a small department with little chance for training and advancement; Matrix believes that having only one officer on duty (on graveyard shifts) is risky both to the officer and to the public; there is no “deep bench” to cover vacations, illnesses, or administrative leaves; the officers often work without adequate supervision. The plan for Phase 2 was to offer options to correct these problems.

The first solution is to improve the in-house model by hiring or promoting two more sergeants, to total four, plus a chief and a corporal, all of whom could supervise four officers. Each shift would have two people, one a supervisor. Matrix also proposed to raise salaries 25 percent to match sur-

See Matrix, back page

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Letters to the Editor

From Chaos to Professionalism

Dear Editor:

Kensington is fortunate to have two well-functioning agencies at the present time. The fire board has guided that agency to two awards from the State of California as a District of Distinction. The present police/community services board has taken that agency from chaos to professionalism.

I read through the literature from the challenging slates of candidates and wondered if their assertions were inaccurate due to naivete or purposeful stoking of dissatisfaction and fear. I am voting for the incumbents and Mike Logan for KPPCSD and only the incumbents for the fire board.

Cathie Kosel

Violations and Delays

Dear Editor:

The current KPPCSD board majority came in with the stated desire to outsource our police. Yet, after a study that does not indicate clear support for such action they seem unlikely to change course. And they, led by the current board chair, have failed to promise to take this very serious issue to the voters.

They also promised better fiscal management, but they refuse to work with the fire board to help fund the Community Center. The fire board has a mandate to protect citizens from fire and earthquake hazards and enjoys much higher tax revenues. Instead, the KPPCSD wants to dip into its crucial reserves, continue to request donations from citizens, and “hold bake sales” to fund the project. This naivete about construction and finance has caused multi-year delays, reduced project scope and needlessly increased costs.

The board abandoned written minutes last spring, in violation of its own Policies and Procedures, and they ignore those who correctly request an accessible written record of what officially takes place at their meetings.

For all these reasons it is time to get fresh board members with no agenda other than to ensure good, cost effective police and park services. Candidates Spath, Modavi, and McKenzie offer a new and collaborative approach to governance where facts, appropriate norms, and reason are the order of the day.

Andrew Reed

Embracing Change

Dear Editor:

There are many words connoting change in different languages: Cambio, modifcare, changement, but here some fear change. The board voted to separate the GM/COP, due to documented questionable fiscal practices, conflict of interest, police issues, and poor management. We currently have an extremely capable and experienced GM, i.e. Tony C., (selected by the current board), who knows how to manage, budget, and plan. He is an excellent problem-solver, familiar with identifying administrative/fiscal problems and implementing changes, yet we have residents who push back on improvement. In fact, one asked in a meeting for things to go back to the way they were!

Would you have an inept person invest your money? Sell your house? Build your addition? Of course not, so why should we settle for less than the best employees, consultants and top notch GM?

When you find that your contractor doesn’t measure up, costs you money, do you stay loyal, or switch services? We all know the answer—we thank them and move on.

Tony recommended administrative changes to the KPPCSD board, which were accepted and involve changing job titles, duties, responsibilities—so that Kensington begins to use best practices, such as computer accounting programs, specialized business skills, outsourcing, and ultimately resulting in our tax dollars being used wisely.

Let’s embrace administrative change. Let’s vote to keep Change with Integrity moving forward by electing Rachelle Sherris Watt, Chris Deppe, and Mike Logan for KPPCSD.

Marilyn Stollon

DECEMBER/JANUARY 2018 DEADLINES:

Advertising Deadline ❖ NOVEMBER 8 Editorial Deadline ❖ NOVEMBER 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.

K E N S I N G T O N
O U T L O O K

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Conflagrations

Dear Editor:

How would you know if there were a conflagration burning at night through Kensington? It happened in Santa Rosa and so many places. It happened here 95 years ago. On September 17, 1923, a fire started in Wildcat Canyon, in what is now Tilden Park, blew over the hill and burned out Kensington and northeast Berkeley. That’s why my house on York Avenue, built in 1926, is the second home on my lot.

We have no warning system, no system to warn us if a fire is raging towards us, killing people in their sleep. How many died in Santa Rosa? How many will die in Kensington when the fire, inevitably, comes again?

The members of the Kensington Fire Protection District board are up for re-election. The incumbent members have been serving for 8 to 24 years—and they have been failing us all that time. Despite repeated requests from concerned citizens, there are no sirens or any other system to awaken us at night and warn us that the hills are ablaze. Nor is there any evacuation plan. The people who should be leading the charge have done nothing but make excuses. They have been fiscally conservative and have saved plenty of money, so they have the resources, but they have not done their job to make us safer.

Don’t believe the incumbents if they now, in fear of being swept out of office, suddenly say that they’ll do what they should have done decades ago. Instead, vote for the concerned citizens who have thought about this problem, have plans to increase our fire safety, and whose pleas for action have gone unheard at fire board meetings. If you value your life and those of your neighbors, even if you think nothing else matters, go to the polls on Tuesday, November 6, and vote for Paul Dorroh, Kevin Padian, and Julie Stein for the KFPD board.

S. Robert Diener

Coalitions Confusing

Dear Editor:

I attended the community meeting on September 29 specifically to listen to and learn more about the candidates for election to our two important elected boards: KPPCSD and the fire board (KFPD). I appreciate the diversity of thought among the candidates and the fact that there are interested persons to serve on these boards. I do not like candidates linking up with each other to appear as a block vote. I especially do not like three candidates for the fire board against two others who aspire for the election individually, and especially when it was three-to-one on the dais on Saturday.

The fact is we vote for each person individually, and I prefer to consider each individually for my vote. I think it potentially causes confusion to many who may not realize they can still decide for each candidate individually. I also think it is mean as it pits groups against these individuals. When I see the signs out with the pairing of candidates, and the trio on one placard, this confirms this concern for me. I believe whichever committee or relevant board should consider this issue strongly for future elections, to handle this as a real issue. I have spoken to neighbors who had similar concerns and also spoken to neighbors who really didn’t understand that it is OK to consider each candidate individually regardless of that candidate’s appearance as part of a coalition.

Donna Breger Stanton

Financing our Future

Dear Editor:

Most of us are very careful about taking on large capital expenditures for things like home improvements or expensive cars and often scale back rather than be burdened with long-term debt. By contrast, we are often less concerned about public expenditures, perhaps because these costs are spread over many households and often paid out over an extended period of time, thereby softening their immediate impact. These public costs burden future taxpayers and hurt those Kensington families with limited income. In the next few years, Kensingtonians may have to consider how to proceed with the following costly projects.

First, the KPPCSD must bring the existing Community Center into seismic and ADA (disability) compliance. Additional, but not legally required, enhancements are also included in the plans. It is possible that we will only have sufficient capital to complete the seismic and ADA work and may need to postpone additional upgrades rather than accepting long-term financing obligations.

Second, an evaluation of our police department prepared by Matrix recommends that we make significant changes to our department that will drive up existing costs by over \$1.0 million annually, requiring a new tax assessment per parcel of about \$500 per year. Given that we have one of the lowest crime rates in California, I believe the benefits of adding more staff and other financial changes are not warranted, but adequately explaining why requires more time than the space allowed for this letter.

Third, seismic and ADA upgrades are also required for our Public Safety Building (fire/police station). Some believe the size of the building should be more than doubled and relocated to Kensington Park south of the library. The estimated costs for this project could exceed \$12 million and also place a long-term financing burden on taxpayers. The much lower cost of bringing the existing building into seismic compliance needs to be pursued.

The KPPCSD has an existing long-term debt of \$3.9 million for unfunded employee pensions and \$3.1 million for medical retiree costs. This \$6.9 million should be paid down before we take on further significant costs. It’s time for financial caution.

Jim Watt

Residents Advocate with EBRPD for Fuel Removal

Dear Editor:

Following a sobering reminder of our vulnerabilities to the devastating effects of wildfires, concerned Kensington residents living near the wildland-urban interface formed a group, Kensington Neighbors for Wildfire Protection, to track the fuel management practices in the East Bay Regional Park District (EBRPD). It is the position of our group that fuel removal efforts need to be accelerated beyond recent historical rates.

Members of our group met with Aileen Theile, Acting Fire Chief and Brad Gallop, Deputy Fire Chief of EBRPD, to review their plans for reducing fuels in Tilden and Wildcat Parks. They have obtained funding and permits to proceed in the spring with fuel removal in 200-foot wide treatment areas, including three areas in Wildcat Canyon just east of Kensington. We support this plan, but the treatment areas designated for 2019 represent just over one percent of the area in those parks. This falls short of what

we feel is necessary to reduce the fuels that have built up over the past ninety years.

In 2010 the EBRPD issued a fuel-management plan which included removal of Eucalyptus trees, but lawsuits by the Hills Conservation Network led to a settlement preventing the removal of Eucalyptus trees more than 2 feet in diameter. This must be revisited, as we believe it is essential to incorporate lessons from the recent fires, and increased drought severity, in all fuel-management plans. Recent events emphasize how the dangers from the new generation of super fires could reach homes and businesses miles away from the park. That would put everyone in Kensington, El Cerrito, Berkeley, and even Albany at risk.

Visit our blog at <http://kensingtonwildfire.blogspot.com> and see what other activities Kensington Neighbors for Wildfire Protection are pursuing. Read and sign our petition to EBRPD online at <https://www.ipetitions.com/petition/aking-ebRPD-to-accelerate-fuel-load-reduction-in>

Cortis Cooper, John Maccabee, Peter Guerrero, Kay Blonz, Doug Stewart, Cathy Lerza

See more letters at kensingtonoutlook.com

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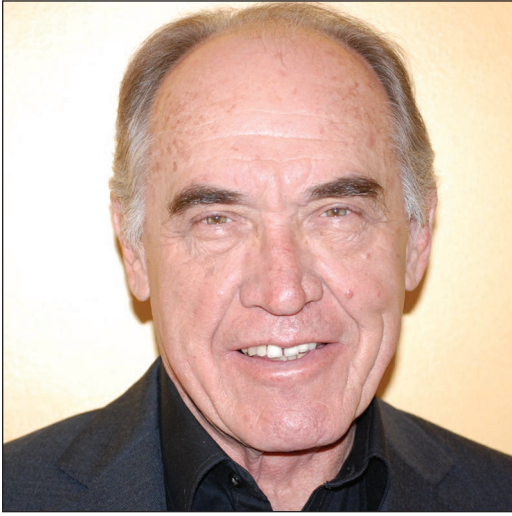
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Fall KASEP class are flourishing with creativity and fun. Come by anytime in the afternoon for a boost of energy and witness the amazing community of our children.

Circle the date: Tuesday, December, 4th is the online Winter KASEP Registration. Kinders at 7pm, grades 1-6 start at 7:30. Walk in registration at the office is also available at the same times. The Winter Brochure will make its way from Hilltop School the week of November 26, 2018.

The KCC Office will be closed and no KASEP classes held on Thursday, November 1, (Conference Day), Monday, November 12 (Veteran's Day), Monday, November 19-Friday, November 23 (No School).

THANK YOU!

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Tennis Court Reservations: For weekends and holidays only, beginning at 9am. Call the KCC office for info. Court Fees: 45-min. singles reservation: Residents: \$2; Nonresidents: \$5.
Kensington Community Center Rental Info: Please call Andrea at the KPPCSD (Kensington Police Protection and Community Services District) at 510-526-4141.

Tai Chi for Arthritis and Fall Prevention

Tuesdays, 9:30-10:30am, Community Center, \$10

In the United States, it has been recommended by the Arthritis Foundation and the Center for Disease Control and Prevention for its effectiveness in bringing pain relief, improving balance, and significantly reducing falls. This class is suitable for all people, regardless of physical condition. It is however, especially helpful for people who may be experiencing some health difficulties. The exercises incorporate all the health enhancing benefits of regular tai chi, but focuses on movements that are safe and relatively simple to do.

For further information, contact Nobuo at: nnishi50@gmail.com or 510-495-4860

Acrylic Artists

Wednesdays, 9:45 - 12:30pm, Community Center, \$9

Open Studio, lots of natural light. Come paint with other artists. Easels and tables are provided. Bring your canvas, paints, and creativity. Friendly group!

Tai Chi Chuan
Fridays, 9:30-10:30am, Community Center, \$10

A gentle martial art, tai chi is a safe, rewarding activity for people of all ages and all levels of health. Tai chi incorporates both mind and body. Nobuo Nishi, instructor, has been teaching for 18 years.

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. M-F, 11:30am-5pm.

Art For Adults
Art Journal Stew- Anyone can do this class – this workshop is open to beginners, artists, or non-artists alike. I believe we are all artists. We study and apply new techniques: make a piece of art or a fun and simple visual art journal. This class will give you a chance to try new materials: watercolors, colored pencils, markers, inks and papers. You will learn techniques; create wonderful backgrounds: resist painting, work with writing/fonts, tissue paper graffiti, gesso and lots of collaging. You will receive one on one instruction and you can create you book of dreams. You will leave each session feeling inspired to create art and make additional books on your own. Students need to bring a thin tip sharpie and a white sharpie pen. Also, any pictures, fine papers, or photocopies of your own to class. I have a material fee to cover supplies of \$20.00 paid to instructor the first meeting-less if you bring your own mixed media art journal pad. The class is payable to Kensington-@135.00 for 6 classes. Class is ongoing. Times: 9:50-12:10pm.

Come join the fun with our local artist- Jamie Aberegg. Drop in \$30.00 materials included

What to Bring
White sharpie, black fine tip sharpie, theme, imagination and \$20.00 material fee due at the first meeting. Pics, memorabilia, fine papers/collage mag. pieces, art bits for small embellishments, (optional). \$15.00 material charge if you bring your own mixed media art journal. Canson-XL mixed media pad.

Wednesdays- 6 weeks and on going. Sept.19,-Oct.24
2nd session-Oct. 31-Dec.7,

Art is in the Cards- It is Mail Art. This is a class to try out new art techniques and create postcards, artist trading cards or mini masterpieces. It is a way to put creating art in your life! You can do the index card challenge, or just send a cheery note to a friend. We use index cards and recycled materials to make postcards, journaling backgrounds, Mail art to be see by others when sent. I is an easy and fun way to create and try new collage and mediums. Anyone can do this class – this workshop is open to beginners, artists, or non-artists alike. Put art into you life!

The class is payable to Kensington-@125.00 for 6 classes. \$5.00 fee. is paid first day to instructor: Jamie Aberegg. Times: 9:30-10:45 am

Mondays- 6 weeks ongoing. Sept. 24-Oct. 29th 2nd session Nov. 5-Dec. 10

Jamie Aberegg is also teaching "Art techniques & Mixed Media Workshop" in Albany Comm. Center. (Tues.)



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Just Sold! Classic 50's architecture. Enjoy Bay views from the living room. Spacious 3BR/2BA. Beautiful, state of the art kitchen. Updated throughout with refined quality finishes. Inviting terraced garden. Prime location sited on a private cul-de-sac.

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Just Sold! Fresh New England Coastal Style. One of a kind, exquisite home. Refined sophistication yet elegantly livable. Panoramic Bay views. Separate garden studio workshop. Tastefully updated. Blocks to Hilltop school, TransBay & BART
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If you are considering selling your home or if you simply wish to know the value, call me! The appointment is complimentary and confidential.



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IS KENSINGTON PREPARED?

Kensington needs a more proactive Fire Board.

“FIRE SEASON” IS NOW VIRTUALLY YEAR-ROUND. KENSINGTON DESERVES MORE THAN BUSINESS-AS-USUAL.
Tilden Park hasn’t burned in over 125 years. It’s a tinderbox that could ignite at any time, any day.

- **Sirens are the best means** to alert us in case of emergency. Oakland has 27. Berkeley has recommended investing in more. There are over 100 sirens in this county. **Kensington has none.** Sirens are the only sure way to alert a majority of residents day and night.
- **Present emergency warning systems aren't guaranteed to reach residents in a disaster.** Reverse 911 calls only reached 14-40% of land lines in the Sonoma fires. Too few of our residents are signed up for Nixle, County and NextDoor alerts.
- **We need published options for evacuation routes,** practice drills, and sensible, safety-oriented parking configurations to avoid gridlock and preventable deaths in the event of an evacuation.
- **Our Fire Board must work with East Bay Regional Parks** to reduce the fuel buildup and create defensible space in Tilden Park. We need more help for our volunteers who are dedicated to removing juniper and clearing our public paths and trails for safety and emergency access.
- **The Fire Board banks hundreds of thousands of tax Dollars each year** beyond funding its obligations and planning needs. We need to invest more on mitigation, public education, and disaster planning.
- **We must investigate every possible way to make the existing Public Safety Building meet our community's needs** for our firefighters, police and District administration.
- **Our Fire and Police districts need to consult and coordinate** in a regular, open, and publicly accountable way on integrated emergency planning and shared priorities.

Our Fire Board has not implemented any of these and other recommendations dating back to the Oakland Hills fire (1991) and the district's own wildfire (2017) and emergency operations (2009) plans.



- Cal Engineering Ph.D. with 23 years of public management experience.
- Proven leadership in launching new programs.
- Committed to resident outreach and engagement.



- Biologist, science educator, Berkeley professor for nearly 40 years.



- 45-year Kensington resident active in civic affairs.
- Attorney and retired business executive experienced in managing people and finances.

Elect Julie Stein, Kevin Padian, and Paul Dorroh to the Kensington Fire Board.

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CalPERS Costs Loom Large in Police Services Options

By Chuck Toombs

The Matrix Consulting Group presented its Phase 2 Report, Police Contract Services Feasibility Analysis, to the KPPCSD board October 4. The report projects several service models with increasing costs over the current services based primarily on the size of the force and further predicts that under any scenario, the district will remain liable for substantial Unfunded Accrued Liabilities covering past pension plan investment shortfalls and for retirement health and dental plans.

The report is provocative reading; it makes clear that police services are expensive no matter what choice we make. We must carefully weigh the available alternatives, decide what level of services we want, and then decide how we will pay for them. There are no shortcuts.

Matrix Model Costs

The report projects current base service costs totaling \$2,933,762 annually for nine sworn officers (the district has historically had 10 sworn officers but recently decided to use the salary of one of those officers to pay for its general manager, reducing the force from ten to nine). Base service consists of eight officers, one chief, and a half-time police services specialist. A full services contract with another agency increases those costs by \$858,140 to \$3,791,902 and provides for eight sworn officers, consisting of five full-time beat cops, one captain or lieutenant, two full-time equivalents for shared sergeants and a shared corporal/detective, and a full-time civilian Police Services Specialist. The Phase 1 Report model that corrects perceived defects in current basic services increases basic costs by \$1,007,295 to \$3,941,057, while providing nine full-time officers, one full-time chief, and a full-time Police Services Specialist. Matrix recommends that the district issue a request for proposal with El Cerrito (the only agency with an expressed interest) to define actual costs. The report, available on the district website, is worth a close read.

CalPERS Costs Do Not Go Away

The California Public Employees’ Retirement System (CalPERS) administers most California public pensions, including those for Kensington’s police officers. The August Annual Valuation Report for fiscal year June 30, 2017 requires that the district pay CalPERS 21.927 percent of current officer salaries for future pension costs (the Employer Normal Cost), and \$3,699,905 towards the Unfunded Accrued Liability (UAL) for past investment shortfalls.

The UAL for 2019 is payable in monthly amounts of \$20,870, totaling \$250,446, or with a lump sum discounted pre-payment of \$241,833. Currently, the district amortizes its payments over thirty years, with annual payments ranging from \$250,446 to \$437,072. The district could switch to a 15-year amortization period, trading higher annual costs in exchange for significant overall cost savings of almost \$1.3 million; however, that requires a political discussion on whether these higher costs and accompanying savings outweigh current services that the district must forego to achieve them. See the audit at the district website.

If the district outsources police services and closes our department, the district can become inactive or terminate further participation in CalPERS. If the district goes inactive, it will no longer owe any Employer Normal Costs and will continue to pay the unfunded liability of \$3,699,905 with equal annual payments of \$431,045 over 15 years.

If the district terminates its CalPERS participation, intentionally or inadvertently, it must pay a dramatically increased UAL of upwards of \$13.8 million to \$16.5 million all at once, unless it can negotiate a different payment horizon. Realistically, the district cannot afford to pay the termination cost without borrowing money; it could seek a parcel tax and bond but any parcel tax requires a 2/3 vote, which may be hard to get today.

These UAL costs will continue whether we contract out or not, and CalPERS reserves the right to adjust them based on investment returns, discount rates for projected future costs, and demographic and economic changes. The district will continue to pay for retiree medical and dental care, with annual payments currently set at \$400,693 regardless of the services model selected; these costs will only decrease as the retirees pass away.

New Service Costs Are Unknown

If the district outsources police services, it will have to negotiate with a new agency for an unknown share of that agency’s salaries and benefits, as well as its own past and future pension costs, payable out of annual district revenues. Indeed, the Phase 2 Report projects that outsourcing may increase current salary and pension costs by roughly \$858,140 although an RFP may be the only way to define future costs.

And there is no guarantee that we will retain the right to contain or control future costs of service. For example, the Kensington Fire District under its contract with El Cerrito pays 27.27 percent of the El Cerrito Fire Department’s total annual CalPERS costs. Our fire district recently agreed to a nine percent increase in the contract with no apparent negotiating power to control rising costs.

What Options Do We Have?

Our options are limited. If the district retains a local force, it will remain liable for all current costs of services, along with past UAL costs, future Employer Normal Costs and OPEB costs. If the district outsources, it will pay the salaries, benefits and a share of past and future pension costs for a replacement force which are likely to be higher than current costs, and it will continue to pay off its own past unfunded liability of \$3,699,905—either with annual payments of \$431,045 over 15 years, or in one huge lump sum of up to \$16.5 million. And it remains liable for annual retiree health payments of \$400,643.

These choices are not easy and will require that the district and the community be extremely careful in managing future services together as we move through some pretty swampy waters. Bring your life jackets!

Police Log

August 1 SUSPICIOUS CIRCUMSTANCE Franciscan Way. Reporting party was told by AirBnB tenants across the street that there was a person shining a flashlight on the front of his house at 0500.

August 2 SUSPICIOUS CIRCUMSTANCE Berkeley Park Blvd. Shed door open. Someone tried to get into the basement.

August 4 SUSPICIOUS PERSON, Highgate Rd. Older WMA Tan plaid shirt, jeans, seen by passerby using tools to get into the front door.

August 5 IDENTITY THEFT Norwood Ct. Filed report.

August 6 ANIMAL CALL Highgate Rd. Dog tried to attack reporting party’s dog. Responsible lives on Highgate Rd. Brown 50lb dog. RP’s dog wasn’t injured.

August 7 BURGLARY Ardmore Rd. Vehicle burglarized during the night. IDENTITY THEFT Arlington Ave. Officer-initiated activity. NATIONAL NIGHT OUT, community policing. HIT AND RUN, property damage, Arlington Ave/Amherst. Possible DUI driver sideswiped SUV on Arlington. Knocked off the side view mirror.

August 8 RECOVERED STOLEN VEHICLE, Purdue Ave. IDENTITY THEFT, reported at KPD. SUSPICIOUS PERSON/S, Franciscan Way. WMA white hooded sweatshirt grey sweat pants. Going in and out of neighborhood yards. Last seen north-bound on Franciscan Way heading towards El Cerrito. SUSPICIOUS VEHICLE, Cambridge Ave. Vehicle blacked out and stopping at multiple vehicles. Unable to locate.

August 9 VANDALISM, Cowper Ave. Busted vehicle window.

August 13 SUSPICIOUS CIRCUMSTANCE Arlington Av, Kensington. Male subject attempted to take abandoned motorcycle parked in the area.

August 14 ANIMAL CALL, Columbia Ave. Ongoing issue, husky loose, belongs to house in neighborhood. Animal Control contacted.

August 18 DISTURBANCE OF PEACE. Norwood Ave, report of large party.

August 19 BURGLARY Highland Blvd, preschool.

August 20 BURGLARY, library on Arlington Ave. Cold burglary to rear library storage shed. BURGLARY, Highland Blvd., preschool. #1 Back parking lot near solar panels. Lock cut from container. Possible items missing from container. #2 Lower yard of school. Lock cut from container. Items missing from container. #3 Rolling storage shed pushed downhill & possibly damaged. SUSPICIOUS PERSON(S) Arlington Ave. Agitated female yelling at staff. Unable to locate source of complaint.

August 22 PETTY THEFT Beloit Ave. Bed stolen on 08/17 and another delivery was stolen last week.

August 23 IDENTITY THEFT, reported to KPD.

August 24 SUSPICIOUS CIRCUMSTANCE, St. Albans. One subject sitting on roof, one standing in front of residence talking. IDENTITY THEFT report taken at KPD. PETTY THEFT Kenyon Ave. Package stolen from porch contained one pair of shoes. Value is \$90.

August 25 FICTITIOUS INSTRUMENT (Bad Check) Norwood Ave. Subject tried to cash a \$968.16 check this morning that she passed off as being issued by the reporting party. HIT AND RUN - Property Damage, report taken at KPD. VEHICLE THEFT KPD investigating if vehicle was “misplaced” or stolen.

August 29 BURGLARY Ardmore Rd. BURGLARY Oberlin Ave. BURGLARY Williamette Ave.

August 30 RECOVERED STOLEN VEHICLE, Ardmore Rd.

August 31 BURGLARY Oak View Ave. Car ransacked and reporting party found gate open. BURGLARY Oak View Ave. Bike stolen from gated side yard.

September 1 DISTURBANCE OF PEACE Ocean View Ave. Subj 20-30yo WMA, beard, blue/teal jersey, sweats, flip flops, ran away on Ocean View towards Colusa Cir. Called RP’s wife names and threw coffee on vehicle. IMPERSONATION Beverly Rd. Victim of scam. Someone masquerading as her grandson called her. Said he was in an accident. She would get a call from lawyer. Caller gave her a name and phone number. Grandson needed cash bail \$3200. Sent the money thru UPS.

September 3 CITIZEN ASSIST, Sunset View Cemetery. RP at exit gate, locked inside.

September 4 BURGLARY, preschool on Highland Blvd. Food service kitchen and classroom broken into over weekend. VANDALISM Franciscan Way/Sunset Dr, Graffiti abatement.

September 5 RECKLESS DRIVING. Occurred at Arlington Av/Sunset Dr, Kensington. Heading towards Berkeley. Unable to locate.

September 8 DISTURBANCE OF PEACE Coventry Rd. RP complaining of music and traffic starting early at fundraising event. Event wasn’t supposed to start until 1730. Event is scheduled to end at 2200hrs. CITIZEN ASSIST Coventry Rd. Heavy smoke in the area bbq or fireplaces related to concert event venue approx 200 people. DISTURBANCE OF PEACE Coventry Rd. 98 yr old rp says event has been going on since noontime not 1800 hrs as indicated on notification, says there is still a lot of noise, another rp/neighbor advising of the same. Responsible/s Advised of Complaint, Will Correct Situation.

September 9 RECKLESS DRIVING Beloit Ave. Juveniles associated to 4-5 late model 4d sedans one w/missing window and plastic covering it, juveniles seen running down street and departing in vehicles. DISTURBANCE OF PEACE Kenyon Ave. Loud party/music on Kenyon at end of Grizzly Peak. FOUND PROPERTY REPORT Kenyon Ave. RP went outside to take a walk and noticed a silv handgun in the street. Not sure if a bullet is in the chamber. He called non-emerg. nbr and no one answered so he left a message on a KPD number he located online. Gun currently in his garage on his refrigerator.

September 10 BURGLARY PRESCHOOL, Highland Blvd.

Kensington Calendar

Locations:

Arlington Community Church (ACC), 52 Arlington Ave., 526-9146
Kensington Community Center, 59 Arlington Ave., 525-0292
Kensington Library, 61 Arlington Ave., 524-3043
Unitarian Universalist Church of Berkeley (UUCB), 1 Lawson Rd., Kensington, 525-0302, www.uucb.org

Ongoing:

Tai Chi for Arthritis and Fall Prevention Tuesdays, 9:30-10:30am, Community Center, \$10
Acrylic Artists Wednesdays, 9:45-12:30, Community Center, \$9. Self-directed artists come together to paint. Easels and tables provided. Friendly group.
Tai Chi Chuan Fridays, 9:30-10:30am, Community Center, \$10
Jazzercise with Kevin Knickerbacker ACC, Mondays-Fridays, 9am \$20 class or \$55 unlimited per month. ACC.
Mindful Yoga with Wendy Beckerman Tuesdays, 9:15am, bring yoga mat. \$18 drop-in or discount for series. ACC.
Israeli Folk Dance Wednesdays, \$6, lessons/beginners 8pm, request dance party starts at 9pm. ACC.

November

November 1 Everybody’s Fellowship 6PM, ACC. Free monthly potluck supper and program for ACC members and guests. Open to all.
November 1, 8, 15 & 29 Baby & Toddler Storytime Stories, songs, puppets, scarves, shaky eggs, and loads of fun! Kensington Library. Two identical sessions 10:15am & 11:15am. Free.
November 1, 8, 15 & 29 Read to Dogs Each week one to three calm & gentle therapy dogs will be at Kensington Library, waiting for kids to read to them (or parents of younger kids can do the reading). Call or come by to schedule an appointment. Drop-ins often also work. 2:30-3:30pm. Free.
November 3 Drone Demonstration. Come see the Kensington Fire Department’s new heat sensitive drone. It can sense a fire rekindling, find escape routes, and more.10am, Kensington Park, next to Building E.
November 3 Garden Party Hilltop Elementary fundraiser. 5pm, Berkeley Country Club (formerly Mira Vista Country Club). Silent auction, casino games, dancing, hors d’oeuvres, raffles, live band, and more. Supports Kensington Education Foundation.
November 4 D. Patrick Miller, author, investigative journalist, and more. He has intensively studied fields of contemporary spirituality. “How to Be Spiritual Without Being Religious.” UUCB, 9:30am, free.
November 5 Kensington Library Knitting Club “The Castoffs” All levels welcome. Please bring your own needles and yarn. Learn new stitches, share your talents, and meet new friends. 6:30pm, free.
November 5 & 19 Kensington Library’s Digital Docent will answer your eReader and digital library questions every other Monday by appointment. This one-on-one 60-minute appointment is intended for people seeking assistance with eBooks and eReaders. Sign up onsite at Info Desk. Please bring your device. 1pm, free.
November 6, 20 & 27 Family Storytime Lots of picture books, songs, rhymes, and fun! Stuffed animals & pajamas welcome. Kensington Library, 6:30pm. Free.
November 7 Kensington Unit League of Women Voters will meet at 1:15pm

at 631 Parkside Court to discuss local issues. All are welcome! 527-1266
November 8 “Inspirational Snippets” Floral designer Linda Sanderson of the Shibui Flower Arrangers Guild in Benicia explains how she makes tranquil, subtle floral arrangements in the Shibui style. El Cerrito Community Center, 9:30am for sale and auction. 11am, speaker.
November 10 & 24 NEW PROGRAM!! Technology Tutoring for Seniors!! with Kensington Library’s New Teen Tech Expert Aliya. Aliya will provide answers to all of your Apple brand device questions every 2nd & 4th Saturday from 10am-1pm in the Adult Reading Area. Sign up for a 60-minute one-on-one session for beginning to intermediate Apple brand product users. Bring questions, device(s) and necessary passwords along with you. Sign up at circulation desk or telephone for assistance. Free.
November 11 Dr. Bill Garrett, former Professor of Religion and Philosophy at JFK University, UC Berkeley and now teaches at Osher Lifelong Learning Institute. “The Living Universe: Astrobiology and the Deep Story of the Origins of Life.” UUCB, 9:30am, free.
November 13 Challenge the Librarian Come and play a game of Set with the children’s librarian. Beat him and win prizes. 3pm, free.
November 13 Karen Quest-Cowgirl Tricks Cowgirl Tricks is a vaudeville-style comedic bonanza of trick roping, whip-cracking, music, magic, audience participation and lots of kooky cowgirl shenanigans, perfect for the family!. Kensington Library, 6:30pm. Free.
November 18 Wyndy J. Knox Carr, writer, librarian-archivist. “Here I Am, Lord: Rediscovering Practices of Self-Worth and Community for Now and Our Future. Part 1.” UUCB, 9:30am, free.
November 19 Memoir Group 10am, ACC. Free Monthly Memoir Group led by Ruth Robinson in the Fireside Room.
November 19 Live Wild Raptors in the Library with Native Bird Connections, a rescue and rehabilitation group. Native Bird Connections will be at the Kensington Library with live birds! Come see some big, amazing birds up close and learn about their habits, diets, habitats, and how you can help conservation efforts. 6:30pm, free.
November 25 Wyndy J. Knox Carr, see 11/18. Part 2. UUCB, 9:30am, free.
November 24 Green Holiday Bazaar ACC. One-of-a-kind items created by a large number of local vendors— wooden trays and cutting boards, hip clothing from recycled garments, bags, honey, and much more. 11-3pm. Sponsored by Person of the Planet.
November 26 Build with Polydrons & K’nex Polydrons are fun hinged interlocking geometric shapes, and K’nex is a snap-together construction set you can use to create small items such as guitars, boats, and more! Best for ages 5 through elementary school. Kensington Library, 3pm. Free.
November 26 Kensington Library Book Club Discussion of *Brothers Karamazov* (cont’d) by Fyodor Dostoevsky. Open to all. 6:30pm. Free.
November 30 Bridge Night 6pm, ACC. FREE monthly potluck and bridge play at all levels for ACC’ers and new guests.
Dec. 1 Holiday Boutique, 10-2, ACC.

PE container broken into and attempted breaking in of bookroom.
September 11 BURGLARY Ocean View Ave. Occurred in the past hour, gone through the residence, nothing appears to be taken, only moved mattresses possibly looking for cash.
SUSPICIOUS CIRCUMSTANCE Kerr Ave. Residence is an Airbnb numerous people coming and going, blk vehicle drving up and down the street multiple times, appeared to be casing scoping out the houses and stopping ifo each one. 3-4 BMAs 20s 30s, not currently there. RP is also requesting extra patrol. Unable to locate.
September 13 Suspicious Person/s Stanford Ave. RP wants to report a phone scam asking him for \$20,000. Phone call occurred at noon and RP spoke with the subject over the phone.
ANIMAL CALL Lenox Rd. Large male deer with antlers laying in yard for a couple of hours. Unkn if injured. Misc Public Service Provided.
SUSPICIOUS VEHICLE Coventry Rd. Large male seen in driveway with dolly. Subject left in white van going south on Coventry. Unable to locate.

Town Meetings Kensington Community Center

KCC-NOVEMBER 5, Kensington Community Council 1st Mondays, 6:30pm. 525-0292 KPSC-NOVEMBER 12, Kensington Public Safety Council Earthquake/Disaster Preparedness 2nd Mondays, 6pm. 501-8165 KARO/ECHO-NOVEMBER 12 Amateur Radio Operators, 2nd Monday of every month, 7:30pm. 524-9815 KFPD-NOVEMBER 14, Fire Protection District 2nd Wed., 7pm. 527-8395	KIC-NOVEMBER 26, Kensington Improvement Club 4th Mondays, 7:30. 524-7415 KPPCSD-NOVEMBER 15, Police Protection and Community Services District Only one meeting in November 7:30pm. 526-4141 Kensington Farmers’ Market Live produce & live music every Sunday, 10am-2pm, Colusa Circle
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Contested Fire Board

To the Editor:

It’s unusual for Kensington to have an election in which seats on the fire district board (KFPD) are contested. For about two decades incumbents or appointees have mostly filled vacant slots without opposition. Residents have paid relatively little attention to the workings of the fire board, which has been regarded as fiscally prudent and politically insulated from the travails of the police board.

The fiscal prudence of the fire board masks the fact that they have done relatively little to prevent damage from the outbreak and spread of a major fire coming from Tilden Park, which has a huge tinder buildup, or alternatively from the Arlington and adjacent streets, in the event of a major earthquake and rupture of gas mains. Although the fire board banks hundreds of thousands of our tax dollars each year, presumably in part to fund a future rebuild of our Public Safety Building, it spends only about \$50,000 a year in education, fire safety mitigation, and equipment for everything from neighborhood CERT training to the removal of highly flammable plants. Its poorly publicized programs over the past two years have strained only about half of their allotted budgets. But rather than redouble efforts to educate the populace, the fire board has chosen to cut those budgets.

The current board is against providing residents with detailed guidance about possible escape routes in the event of an evacuation (you’re on your own). They are content with present phone warning systems, which statistically reach half or less of the populace on landlines (if you still have one). Our Nixle and county warning systems for cell phones are still relatively untested. They are against installing sirens, even though there are 100 sirens in the county, and nearby municipalities are investing in them. Citizens who ask them to help negotiate with the parks district to reduce tinder or modify parking receive little response.

Everyone appreciates the long service of the present fire board members, but we need change. Please vote for me, Julie Stein, and Paul Dorroh so that we can bring Kensington the protection it needs.

Kevin Padian

Fear Tactics

Dear Editor:

A flier depicting a wildfire ravaged area in Northern California—a burnt-out car amidst the devastation with the message that our current Kensington Fire Protection District board (KFPD) isn’t up to the job defines fear-mongering. And yet all of the evidence is to the contrary: the median KFPD response time is 4.5 minutes, it has an emergency plan in coordination with El Cerrito and nearby districts; the KFPD has made significant improvements in water availability to fight fires coming from Tilden Park (33 new hydrants and +8000 ft of additional piping) and has developed a robust vegetation management program with annual inspections to assure compliance; the fire truck is specifically designed for potential wild fire conditions, the KFPD is fiscally sound (fully funded pension and health insurance); money is set aside to replace the fire truck while at the same time it is one of the lowest cost fire stations in the region. This despite the fact that fire protection in Kensington was contracted out to EL Cerrito about 20 years ago because fire services at the time were chaotic. Kensington now has an award-winning non-litigious fire department.

The Kensington police department (KPD) has been litigious and in disarray for years and this needs to change. Measure G was placed on the ballot a few years back to help fund the KPD, with ample fear-mongering that failure to pass G would put us all at risk—mongering that continues to this day via lawn signs, glossy anonymous fliers and, questionable political campaigns. The KPD has not been fully staffed for a few years despite recruitment efforts and yet crime remains very low.

Recruiting is difficult because our salaries are about 25 percent below those of neighboring municipalities; because a very small department has few opportunities for promotion, and maybe we have a bad reputation. The Matrix study on policing options suggested that we would continue to have a local police station regardless of the changes. However, I can’t imagine why any neighboring agency would want to deal with the craziness of Kensington’s politics.

Andrew Paul Gutierrez
