

Cemetery

...from Page 1

which can be opened by cemetery personnel and nearby residents authorized to do so.

Anyone who has driven around the cemetery avenues can attest to their winding and sometimes confusing passages, so the crew installed two high-reflection “Exit” signs at intersections within the cemetery grounds to avoid confusion.

Please take this opportunity to plot out your own potential evacuation routes, and plan more than one! You may not receive

specific instructions about routes in the event of a disaster. And please—if you have issues with mobility, medical equipment, organization of kids and pets, or any other factors, or if you live close to Tilden Park, the most important word in your vocabulary is pre-evacuation.

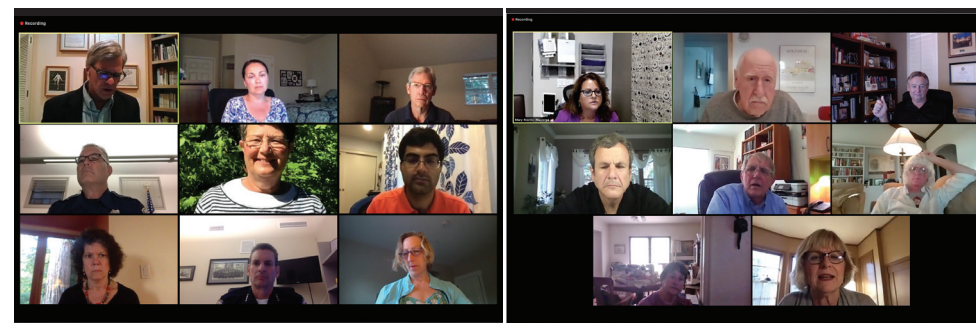
When a Diablo Wind Event is predicted, please leave town for a few days if you possibly can. It will be impossible to evacuate all of Kensington’s residents in their cars in a matter of a few hours, which may be all the notice we get.



SEPTEMBER 2020

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VOLUME 78 NUMBER 6



Screen shots of special district Zoom meetings—left, KPPCSD, right KFPD.

Kensington Districts Adapt to Zoom

By Linnea Due

Kensington is home to two special districts: the Kensington Police Protection and Community Services District (KPPCSD) and the Kensington Fire Protection District (KFPD). The last in-person meeting of the KPPCSD took place February 13, while the KFPD squeaked under the shutdown deadline March 11. After that, both districts switched to webinars on Zoom and plan to continue with that format for the foreseeable future.

Board presidents Chris Deppe (KPPCSD) and Julie Stein (KFPD) had to quickly figure out how to run a virtual meeting. Deppe said that his board was able to take a Zoom training session prior to the first meeting. “The biggest challenge at first was getting people onto Zoom,” Deppe said in a July phone interview. “Some people had trouble installing the software. And there were issues promoting people to panelist or their video breaking up. Even now, after three months, we’re still having technical issues getting the meeting going.”

Deppe said that he was advised that votes or discussions that were not time-sensitive should be put off as long as possible, with

the hope that they could wait until an in-person meeting.

Delay was not an option with the KPPCSD’s decision to pay off its unfunded CalPERS liability with a private pension obligate bond (POB). Papers for the Capital One-financed bond had to close by the third week of June, so the KPPCSD finance committee meeting and two regular board meetings discussing the POB were held on Zoom.

What happened during these discussions illustrated some of the problems with Zoom meetings. Said Karl Kruger, a long-time member of the finance committee, “During the finance committee meeting, Chris called on me. He said he couldn’t hear me because I was on an old computer and I should get a new computer. So I called the phone number so I could participate.”

Anyone attending a Zoom meeting can call a number given by the host—you cannot see the video but you can hear the meeting and also speak. However, said Kruger, “for whatever reason he could not hear me. So I was not a participant.”

See Zoom, Page 7

Open Up Those Pearly Gates

By Kevin Padian and Brad Harms

If a wildfire threatens Kensington, we now have another evacuation route: through the cemetery. Kensington’s Fire Protection District board and its police department have worked together to begin to implement some of the changes recommended by the fire board’s traffic consultants (report at kensingtonfire.org, also see April *Outlook*).

The consultants determined that if the cemetery gate at Sunset and Franciscan avenues were opened in an emergency, an estimated thirty percent of traffic draining west from the hills could be accommodated through the cemetery’s roads to the intersection at Colusa and Fairmount avenues. This would take a tremendous load off surrounding cramped and narrow roads, possibly saving many lives.

KPD traffic officer Brad Harms and KFPD director Kevin Padian approached Scott Pennington, the cemetery’s president, who quickly agreed to the proposal. He also OKed the placement of Emergency Evacuation Route and Exit signs on the cemetery’s property. Our community owes him a tremendous debt of gratitude.

On a late afternoon in late July, Officer Harms, Police Chief Walt Schuld, Sergeant Keith Barrow, KFPD directors Padian and Larry Nagel, and Pennington convened at the cemetery with Fernando Herrera of the county’s Department of Public Works to begin the installation of four signs. Residents will find two new signs at the Sunset/Franciscan gate,

See Cemetery, Back Page



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Dear Neighbors,

I'm running for the West Contra Costa Unified School District School Board in newly-created Area #5 encompassing Kensington, El Cerrito, East Richmond Heights, Richmond Annex, the Marina, and Point Richmond. Our family has lived in Kensington for over 20 years. Our children have attended our great local public schools: Brenna is a freshman at El Cerrito High, and Aaron graduated from El Cerrito High and now attends UC Berkeley.



For over a decade, I've worked as a parent leader in our schools empowering ALL families to have their voices fairly represented at every level of District decision-making – increasing equity, expanding programs and opportunities, and improving teaching and learning practices. I've earned the trust of the parents, teachers, and school administrators with whom I've worked. I'm honored to be endorsed by parents throughout our communities and the United Teachers of Richmond, the organization representing all teachers in our schools.

This is a critical election for our public schools, which face a fiscal crisis and the challenge of COVID-19. We need fresh ideas and new leadership to address these challenges. I'll focus on:

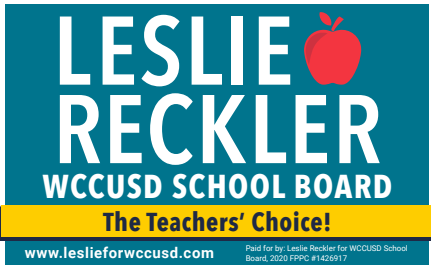
- ✓ **Campus and Educational Equity** ensuring all students have equal access to quality learning opportunities at schools; that we innovate teaching/learning practices.
- ✓ **School-Site Health/Safety** measures to protect teachers and children during COVID-19 and after, and secure our campuses once children and teachers are back at school.
- ✓ **Responsible Fiscal Management/Reform** ensuring transparent, accountable spending to the taxpayers, teachers, and families we serve.

As a successful businesswoman with a 20+ year track record managing hundred million dollar budgets, I have the fresh ideas and experience necessary to stabilize and lead the District.

Learn more about me at www.LeslieforWCCUSD.com. I'd love to have your vote in November.

Parent-Driven, Student-Focused Leadership

In Community,
Leslie (Brenna and Aaron's Mom)



Letters to the Editor

Reimagining Our Community

Dear Editor:

As we continue our staying-at-home time, I am reflecting on the true meanings of neighborhood and community. In the spirit of learning from a challenging time, I find myself gravitating toward a reimagining of community as we continue to move forward to whatever will become our new normal. During this time of COVID, I have sensed a warmth and genuine concern among neighbors. I see masked greetings with smiling eyes. I hear the genuine questions about each other's welfare and needs. I have enjoyed the physically distant conversations that bring us together socially. Frankly, it has been refreshing. Clearly our better angels have been at work.

Perhaps this all seems so clear and obvious when viewed through a lens of very different behaviors. Prior to the relatively minor inconveniences of COVID-19, which have actually brought out better behavior from so many, it was with great outrage and sadness that I also saw and was aware of conduct which can only be called shameful. Truly, there can be no place for actions that target intact families, exploit medical crises, or judge and shun people based on hearsay. We can all be better than that. We can be respectful and compassionate even in the face of things we do not understand, and we can open our minds and hearts to truth before we pass judgment.

So in going forward I am reimagining a community where we are respectful of each other's privacy, but not inhibited to ask about someone's wellbeing; a community where a family difficulty or crisis is not seen as an opportunity to drive people apart; a community where we actively show respect and concern by educating ourselves with the truth; a community where we are open to courageous conversations. None of this is new or original, but having experienced both kinds of behavior, I am hopeful that when we reach that new day at the end of this pandemic, we will continue to care genuinely for each other, even with all our human frailty and flaws. That is the community I reimagine for us.

Loretta McNulty

Less Police News, Please

Dear Editor:

I've lived in Kensington 20-plus years and feel compelled to send a short note to the editor regarding the content and images used in the *Outlook's* July issue. With everything going on in the world now, it was jarring to seeing large color images of two (white) police in uniform and so much editorial content devoted to the police department issues. The *Outlook* content often seems biased.

I would like less content about the police and more focus on community events and local businesses. Include larger photos of local events, artwork, musicians, artists, etc.!

The *Outlook* can do better about representing its entire community.

Peggy Judge

Survey Says...

Dear Editor:

The Kensington Pathkeepers has created a survey to gauge community support for public ownership of the paths. See <https://kensingtonpathkeepers.org/survey>. It will take

just a few minutes to complete. The website includes a map that shows the path locations.

The paths are an important component of the Kensington community. Many people use the paths for recreation and for getting around Kensington. They also could be vital escape routes in the event of a wildfire or other emergency.

Public ownership is critical for continued public access to the paths. Public ownership would make it easier to secure public and private funding to improve paths and put in place regular plans for their maintenance. Currently, two of the eleven paths have been blocked by adjacent property owners. Without public ownership, we run the risk that access to more paths will be lost.

It is important that we hear from all residents on this issue. Please help us by taking the survey and providing your perspective.

Rodney Paul

Words Matter, Director Hacaj

Dear Editor:

At the Kensington Police Protection and Community Service District's (KPPCSD) June 11 meeting, the board discussed whether to approve a deal to pay off \$4,544,000 of the district's CalPERS liability with pension obligation bonds.

Subsequent to the meeting, attorney Paul Dorroh raised questions on NextDoor about KPPCSD director Sylvia Hacaj's motion regarding this deal. Did she make a motion to vote on the deal, or did she make a motion to have the board approve the \$4,544,000 deal?

Here's the verbatim of what Director Hacaj said: "I move that we vote on Resolution #2020-8, a resolution of the Board of Directors of the Kensington Police Protection and Community Services District, authorizing the issuance and sale of a bond in the principal amount not to exceed \$4.544.000 to refund certain pension obligations of the district approving the form and authorizing the execution of a commitment letter and authorizing the action related thereto."

At the March 28,2019 KPPCSD board meeting, Linda Lipscomb, an attorney and former KPPCSD director, said, " In court, minutes are the official record of what happened with our district, and will be used as evidence." Did the board actually approve this \$4,544,000 deal, or not? Words matter.

Katie Gluck

Vote for Progress to Continue

Dear Editor:

As we move into the election cycle, incumbents Sylvia Hacaj and Eileen Nottoli are running for re-election for the KPPCSD board. Let's keep in mind how far we have come in terms of modernizing and significantly improving the district's operations and management structure.

Starting with splitting the conflict-of-interest-laden GM/COP position four years ago, the majority board with Eileen and Sylvia voted to authorize the creation of a comprehensive Policy & Procedures Manual, updated and in compliance with special district requirements. Throw in a total review of administrative and police staffing and operations by consultants in their fields, resulting in the elimination of an inefficient and wasteful district secretary position. Now we have knowledgeable experts in budget, finance, board operations, and payroll. Additionally, the directors managed a complicated renovation project—the community center—keeping it within budget.

At a recent zoom meeting, GM Lindsay said the district is in a very good place fiscally with the completion of the community center. He touted the competence of the finance

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OCTOBER 2020 DEADLINES:
Advertising Deadline ❖ SEPTEMBER 8
Editorial Deadline ❖ SEPTEMBER 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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K E N S I N G T O N

Community Education

KASEP

Kensington Afterschool Enrichment Program

Traditionally, Kensington After School Enrichment Program (KASEP) offers approximately 50 different classes to students in kindergarten through sixth grades. There are 3 sessions each year: Fall, Winter and Spring. Classes are held in the Recreation Building, Community Center and Kensington Park, just down the hill from Kensington Hilltop School. KASEP classes are run by the Kensington Community Council (KCC) a nonprofit organization in Kensington of over 50 years of service to the community.

For Fall 2020 KASEP classes are planned to resume online starting September 21st. Registration for the online classes will begin on September 1st. We will be offering many of your favorite classes including Judo, Circus Arts, Spanish, Math Club and Coding plus some new fun art classes. You can check our website for updated information at kensingtoncommunitycouncil.org. We are continuing to monitor the guidelines from WCCUSD and will phase in on-site classes once we are able. Health and safety requirements will be in place to provide a safe environment for our in-person KASEP classes including extra deep cleanings, masks, sanitizer and social distancing.

We will be following the new daily schedule adopted by the WCCUSD and will hold all our classes at 3:00 pm or later when the school day has officially ended. You will notice that we have scheduled two shorter Fall sessions. This will give us the flexibility to adjust our schedule if needed in these rapidly changing times. As the semester progresses, we will do our best to also adjust our classes to reflect any changes in the school schedule.

Parents will be happy to hear that KCC has gone back to our previous registration system, CivicRec, and we are working hard to have the program up and running smoothly before our September 1st registration date. Many of our longtime users will see that their registration information is still on the CivicRec site. We ask that all parents please update your child's or children's information before the registration on September 1st, especially contact and medical information.

KCC Summer Movie Night and Fall Parade

The Summer Movie Night and the Annual Fall Parade and Picnic have been cancelled due to the Pandemic. Although both events are held outside they usually attract between 200 and 300 Kensington neighbors and friends. We look forward to a time in the future when we can gather at the new Community Center or on the big lawn.



FIFTY YEARS AGO

Flashback

IN KENSINGTON

October 1970



Holding a ribbon-cutting ceremony on completion of the berm and walkway to protect students on Highland Blvd. are: (from left, front row) John Sturman, Dianne Berry, Sandra Sephton, Jenny O'Brien, and Dale Crawford, president of Dads Club, whose efforts brought about the improvement. In 2nd row, from left, are Alan Rice, Dave Cranston, Barbara Crawford, Doug Crawford, and Marcelle Dronkers. In back row, from left, are Hugh Sephton, Cary King, Carl Taussig, MaryLiz King, Gary Frisch, Suzie Cranston, Laura Rice and Mrs. Marilyn Jaeger, president of Kensington PTA.

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. Our website is: www.kensingtoncommunitycouncil.org.

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.

NEW WALKWAY ON HIGHLAND

The student-pedestrian walkway on the west side of Highland Blvd. is now completed. It was constructed on the Contra Costa County right-of-way, under a permit issued by the County Public Works Department, and in accordance with county specifications.

The Dad's Club would like to acknowledge the cooperation of property owners along Highland Blvd., from advice and assistance received from officials of the County Public Works Department and support from the PTA, to bring this project to completion. The Dad's Club, assisted by Kensington PTA, raised the funds to pay for the walkway.

The main purpose was to provide an unobstructed and safe passage way between hedges and street traffic for school children. Parents may wish to instruct their children to walk on the west side only of the berm, or ridge, painted white, in the interest of the child's safety.

Kensington Path Scavenger Hunt

We loved hearing about all the people who trekked the Kensington paths and answered the questions posed in our scavenger hunt. Two families managed to answer all correctly, and we congratulate and recognize them for their diligence:

- Rowan Maxwell with her mom Erin
- Natalia Montoyo with her sister and cousin

Raxakoul Coffee & Cheese has prizes for these diligent path adventurers!

Here at long last we provide the answers for everyone else. Note that we encouraged walkers to avoid the Westminster and Marchant paths, which are narrow and steep. The names of the paths can be found on our paper map and the one at <https://kensingtonpathkeepers.org/maps>

1. How many steps on all the Kensington Paths?
- Our count is 481. But there are paving stones that make an exact count difficult. We accepted any number between 475-525.*
2. Which path has the most total steps? Which path has the fewest?
- Beloit has the most and Beverly the fewest (although Westminster and Marchant were acceptable answers).*
3. Which paths have round utility holes about 2-feet in diameter (not including Westminster and Marchant paths)?
- Beloit and Stratford. Willamette and Ardmore were also accepted.*
4. Which path has two lanes (and is therefore well suited for social distancing)?
- Ardmore!*
5. Which path has the most wooden railroad ties?
- Beloit.*
6. Which paths have railings? Which do not?
- Ardmore, Beloit and Coventry are the only paths with railings.*
7. On which path or paths can you see the Golden Gate Bridge?
- Beloit, Willamette and Coventry. Stratford was also acceptable (you can see a tiny bit of the southern approach).*
8. There's a large metal gate on the Beloit steps. Find it and tell us which animal figures you see on it. How many people are on it?
- There are 4 animals: 2 cats, 1 dog and 1 squirrel (that might actually be a cat). There are 14 people: 6 members of the Altenberg family on a bus, Barb, the nuclear engineer, 3 people riding bikes, 3 workers and 1 gardener.*
9. There's a green sign on one of the paths. What does it ask path users to do?
- "Help keep paths clean and beautiful!"*
10. Which path has a sign with the path name on it (not a number)?
- Ardmore.*

Congratulations to everyone who took the Kensington Path Scavenger Hunt challenge. We hope more will follow in their footsteps!



Letters

...from Page 2

and business manager, office assistant, and clerk of the board. After some hiccups, our KPPCSD runs smoothly. Gains have also been made with the KPD, with recent recommendations from two interim chiefs to alter the culture and establish procedures.

We are truly on the path to 21st century governance. With our current board, we have directors who take input from consultants and implement the recommendations, a major change from prior boards.

I hope residents take the time to review the progress we have made and vote to keep us on track with trustworthy, meticulous governing. A vote for Eileen Nottoli and Sylvia Hacaj will keep us moving in the right direction.

Marilyn Stollon

Running Deficits

Dear Editor,

My wife and I have been Kensington homeowners for almost thirty years. I have attended KPPCSD board meetings regularly for almost ten years. I was appointed to the finance committee by then president Tony Floyd. Over the years our committee worked with three general managers. The last, Tony Constantouros, was a well qualified GM and was doing a good job. This spring the KPPCSD board decided not to renew Tony’s contract and to hire Bill Lindsay as interim GM, who then hired Walt Schuld as interim Chief of Police. Our community lost on both counts. Both managers came from Bay Area agencies with a long history of not controlling their budgets and running deficits.

At the first June finance committee meeting the new GM strongly recommended acceptance of a proposal from Kosmont TS to refinance our CalPERS Public Obligation Bonds of \$4.4 million with variable interest rates to a \$6.5 total obligation including a firm interest rate of 3.85 percent. This was done shortly after the city of Larkspur received a 3.05 percent interest from the same transaction service. And it was done over the very strong objections of a couple of finance committee members who insisted on a review of a competitive offer. During our second finance committee meeting in June the 2020/21 budget presentation was poorly done with documentation and fiscal year items missing from the budget.

At the July meeting the finance committee was asked by our interim police chief to approve leasing five new police vehicle at a total cost of \$326,725 over five years. It was a verbal presentation! In my many years on that committee, every request by a GM to replace a police vehicle was granted. All seven Kensington police vehicles drive only 40,000 miles annually. We never leased cars, especially for \$65,245 each. The board ultimately approved only three of these vehicles.

So what has our community gained by the board not renewing the contract of an experienced GM, instead bringing in a management team that does not know us, does not find out who we are, and may be very temporary?

Karl Kruger

Local Police Need a Home

Dear Editor:

Chief Schuld, and his predecessor Chief Simpkins, have done a remarkable job of

transforming our police force from an entity that was disfavored by some in the community to a force that is now respected by the vast majority. I do believe that our current KPPCSD board deserves credit for that; however, we cannot have local police unless we have a building to house them.

The remodel of the shared Public Safety Building is a real concern because if we have nowhere to house our police, we have no "local" police force. As members of the current KPPCSD have previously explored contracting out our police services to outside entities, such as El Cerrito, without having a vote of the public, one would hope the delay and inaction on the PSB is not another way to seek to outsource Kensington police by either KPPCSD or fire board members.

Election season will soon be upon us for both the KPPCSD and the Kensington Fire Protection District. I would urge all Kensington residents to learn about the candidates' and incumbents' views and opinions on finding a means to keep Kensington police in Kensington and within the same fire and police services building that has successfully housed both entities well before I first moved to Kensington in 1982.

Richard Karlsson

Follow the Actions

Dear Editor,

With election season on us, it is worth considering the voting record and actions of the KPPCSD incumbents up for reelection.

One such critical action was at the height of exploring contracting out on June 27, 2019. At that meeting, the board approved sending out a Request for Proposal to four agencies: the Contra Costa Sheriff, Berkeley, Albany, and El Cerrito. At the time, El Cerrito's financial duress was easily discoverable.

This meeting was noteworthy for another reason. Within the RFP sent to the agencies, there was absolutely no mention of the duly adopted 2009 Voting Rights Ordinance that requires a vote of the people regarding contracting out of our locally controlled police department. Further, the incumbents chose not to support a motion even reaffirming the intent to let the citizens have a vote. This can be found around 44 minutes in the meeting video.

The incumbents had previously run on transparency, responsible decision-making, and listening to the community. But do their actions reflect that?

Peter Liddell

Born to Be Weil

Dear Editor:

Thanks for the article about East Bay Heritage Quilters and all the great work they/we do (July *Outlook*). Carolyn Weil is listed as the distributor of crafts. Her name is Weil, not Wild. She's a wonderful, interesting person, and a great gardener, but not Wild.

Charlotte Strem


Special Candidates' Edition in October *Outlook*

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Zoom
...from Page 1

More confusion followed. During the board meeting at which the POB vote was taken, finance committee member Jim Watt was frantically trying to speak; he was waving his hand, thinking that Chris Deppe could see him. But the webinar format is different from the regular Zoom meeting format at which everyone is a participant.

In the regular version, the Raise Hand feature is obvious—plus people can see each other. In the webinar format, everyone can see and hear those who are designated panelists, but the audience is not visible and cannot speak unless un-muted. To raise one’s hand requires hovering over the lower part of the screen, which is otherwise blank, clicking on “participants” when that word appears, after which the Raise Hand feature is activated. If one is only familiar with regular Zoom meetings, this sequence is neither intuitive nor apparent.

The fire board has not had as much trouble with Zoom, though it too uses the webinar format. “The first one we were really nervous,” said board president Julie Stein. “It’s not hard to use, but you have to familiarize yourself with all the controls. If you don’t use it often, and then come in cold, you have to go look for who wants to talk.” The fire board has taken to trying to get the directors in place at least fifteen minutes before the meeting starts, to iron out technical difficulties before the public switches in. “You can do that as long as you don’t talk about business,” Stein said, referring to the Brown Act, which forbids directors from discussing district matters in private.

Stein thinks there are positives to Zoom: “I’ve found that we’ve gotten more work done than ever,” she said. “It’s easier to schedule meetings because we don’t have to find a room. We have more people attending our Zoom meetings than we’ve had in-person. And I think it’s added more structure to our meetings. I’ve been watching the El Cerrito and the Berkeley city councils, which are more formal. They don’t get all involved in a back and forth with the public. We’re in that little room [at Building E] and people shout things out from the audience. You can’t do that with Zoom.”

Zoom’s audio can be a blessing and a curse. Said Chris Deppe: “Only one person can talk at a time. It’s not a real-time collaboration software. Zoom lets one person be the speaker—and the software decides who gets the microphone, so it’s not really democratic. People have to coordinate their talking. The best way would be to have people raise hands if they wanted to talk, and then I would un-mute them. In theory, it sounds great. But not everybody likes to be muted by someone else. And also the muting/un-muting is a little funky.

“In person, you can get a sense of when someone is done talking. And you can make a gesture that you want to say something,” he continued. “You can’t do that in Zoom. So that’s been a real challenge to try to make things orderly and also give everyone a chance to talk.”

Jim Watt and Karl Kruger wanted the bond to go back to the finance committee for vetting before the board vote. Both believe that Zoom’s deficiencies added to the confusion. “That was a very important meeting, that’s where we decided whether we will go with the POB,” Watt said. “I never got a chance to talk. If it had been a regular meeting I can just walk up to the microphone. OK, Zoom is a godsend for the problem we have right now. But it’s not the same as having a meeting. I would go up to the microphone, I would hand them something I wanted them to look at, and I can’t do that. Your ability to communicate is restricted.”

Several people commented that these are public meetings—but you don’t know who is there. “You can’t see how many or who is in the audience,” Watt said. “You see the directors and the GM and nobody else. You don’t rate very well. It’s psychologically not good. You have no idea who else is there.”

Kruger also found the invisibility confounding. “Linda Lipscomb raised the issue of whether everyone can be seen,” Kruger said. “Zoom does not help because you don’t know where you are [in the speaker list] or how long the line is. Jim couldn’t get in there though he was trying so hard to talk. Zoom is not an ideal platform for a major expenditure. We committed the district for twenty-plus years.” But, he finished, “I understand why we’re doing it. We don’t have a lot of choice.”

Said Deppe, “This might be the new normal for an extended period of time. It’s true that as a member of the public, you can’t see other attendees. We try to delay board business that absolutely doesn’t need to be done. But I can’t see this changing before the end of the year. It’s getting worse, worse than it was when we did the first lockdown. We just have to make this work somehow. I tried to think of ways to streamline the meetings, but we have to let the public have their say and take the votes individually. It just takes longer.”

There’s no doubt that Zoom meetings are more cumbersome and may have negative repercussions. Unfortunately, while the virus has us in its sights, Zoom meetings are here to stay.



(See Christopher Deppe’s story explaining his reasoning for supporting the pension obligation bond on page 4.)



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The Library is Open!

By Kara Sheetz, Librarian

On June 15, the Kensington Public Library re-opened to the public for Front Door Service. Our building remains closed to visitors, but you can place items on hold and schedule an appointment for contactless pickup once they arrive. While the way we are doing things has changed to fit our new reality, we remain committed to serving the Kensington community as we navigate our way through current events.

In addition to filling holds for specific requests, we also offer grab bags for children’s materials. Grab bags include five books, chosen by library staff from what is on hand, and patrons may choose one or more categories. Currently the categories we offer are board books, picture books, easy readers, early elementary and upper elementary. The last two include both fiction and nonfiction books.

We hope to expand the grab bag options to include teen and adult options. Magazines are also available for checkout, including titles that usually do not circulate, such as Consumer Reports.

On August 6, the library began automatically renewing items. This service is especially helpful in our current environment as coming to a library may be challenging. Items that cannot be renewed, like our Lucky Day collection, will not be automatically renewed. If an item has been requested and is on hold, it cannot be renewed.

Our book drops remain open 24/7. We are currently quarantining returns for at least 96 hours, or 4 days. This does not mean you have to return items before their due date, as the library does not charge late fees.

As soon as our branches closed this past March, librarians across the county began migrating programs to an online format. One of the benefits of our programs going virtual is that location is no longer a limiting factor for being able to attend! There is a lot to choose from. From online story times to guided meditation; from ESL conversation groups to arts lectures, there is something for everyone.

For those that have enjoyed past arts lectures, we have two upcoming talks scheduled that may interest you: Bouquets to Art on September 22, and Last Supper in Pompeii: From the Table to the Grave on October 27. Docents from the DeYoung will give both lectures as Zoom presentations.

Join us for CoCo Reads, a community-wide read of *How Much of These Hills Is Gold* by C. Pam Zhang. We encourage you to check out a copy of this debut, Booker-nominated novel about two Chinese American orphans trying to survive during the California Gold Rush and find a sense of home. The author will speak during a Zoom presentation on October 28 at 7pm. Check our library events calendar and Face-book events page or call the library for more details on these scheduled events and more.

Beginning July 1, Kensington Library pivoted to new hours. Our new hours are Tues-days 1pm – 8pm, Wednesdays & Thursdays 11am – 6pm, Fridays & Saturdays 10am – 5pm. You are welcome to call us during our open hours for assistance with placing holds and making appointments for pickup, getting a library card, choosing grab bags, or questions. Connect with the library online at ccclib.org or at (510) 524-3043.

The next *Outlook* will feature multiple areas of Distance Learning Support offered by the library, including free online tutoring, ABC Mouse and many others. For help right now, contact the library.