

**KENSINGTON FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT
NOTICE OF A MEETING OF A STANDING COMMITTEE**

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS COMMITTEE

Date of Meeting: October 24, 2019
Time of Meeting: 3:00 p.m.
Place of Meeting: Arlington Community Church, Fireside Room
52 Arlington Avenue, Kensington, CA 94707

In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, if you need special assistance to participate in this meeting, please contact the Office Administrator, 510/527-8395. Notification 48 hours prior to the meeting will enable the Kensington Fire Protection District to make reasonable arrangements to ensure accessibility to this meeting (28 CFR 35.102-35.104 ADA Title 1).

Committee Members: Kevin Padian, Larry Nagel
Lisa Caronna, Cortis Cooper, Katie Gluck, Peter Guerrero,
Peter Liddell, Paul Moss, David Spath
Staff: Brenda Navellier, Manager

AGENDA

1. Call To Order
2. Public Comment
3. Approval of September 26, 2019 Committee Minutes
4. Old Business
 - a. Paths: which agency/agencies should take responsibility?
 - b. Sirens
 - c. Fire Danger Signs: community responsibility?
 - d. Working with KFPD Board & EBRPD toward faster hazard mitigation
 - e. Next KPSC forum
 - f. Emergency Radios: discussion of a possible program
5. New Business
 - a. Possible coordination of efforts on CERT training, home hardening, FireSafe communities, etc.
 - b. OES control of possible sensory and warning devices in Kensington
 - c. What have we learned from the recent PG&E shutoff? Translation to EP
 - d. Community education: what should our next steps be?
 - i. mailers
 - ii. email / NextDoor notifications
 - iii. ads in the Outlook and elsewhere
 - iv. other approaches: passing out basic go-bags?
6. Agenda Items for Next Meeting
7. Scheduling Next Meeting
8. Adjourn

**MINUTES OF THE SEPTEMBER 26, 2019 EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS COMMITTEE
MEETING OF THE KENSINGTON FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT**

PRESENT: Director Kevin Padian; Committee Members Lisa Caronna, Cortis Cooper, Katie Gluck, Peter Liddell, Paul Moss, David Spath

ABSENT: Director Larry Nagel; Peter Guerrero

CALL TO ORDER: Director Padian called the meeting to order at 3:08 pm. All members were present except Director Larry Nagel and Peter Guerrero, who were both excused (out of town).

ORAL COMMUNICATIONS: None.

OLD BUSINESS:

The activities of the committee, how they relate, and the deployment of various members on them were briefly reviewed. Cortis Cooper raised a concern from the last meeting about hazard mitigation priorities along the EBRP ridgeline. Many residents are concerned that not enough effort is being expended in this area. We discussed the difficulties of the decisions of agencies charged with spending unfortunately limited funds on mitigation, needing to set priorities long in advance. We discussed whether the Fire Board could write a letter to the EBRPD asking that more effort be deployed in our area. Some members observed that discussions with EBRPD Chief Aileen Thiele had been constructive but that their funds for this year were at their limit and already committed. It was suggested that such a letter might have greater traction with a contribution in kind; for example, if the KFPD could offer to contribute financially on specific projects and if our neighborhoods on the ridgeline could commit to redoubled efforts in debris clearing and house-hardening. Further discussion with the EBRPD is probably desirable.

NEW BUSINESS:

Padian reported that the preliminary report of the Traffic Study was presented in the September Board packet, and that the consultants are trying to work with the County on ensuring that they use a methodology that will conform to County practices.

Caronna and Spath presented a perspective on the steps that need to be taken to resolve ownership and future care of Kensington's paths. These points are summarized on the attached handout. Of the issues involved, the first is public ownership, which will enable maintenance, resolve liability, and allow the submission of grant proposals for improvement. The three most plausible solutions are ownership by the KFPD, ownership by the KPPCSD, and joint ownership through a Joint Powers Agreement. The next goal will be to develop arguments and evidence for each position to discuss and bring before the Fire Board and eventually the KPPCSD Board.

Padian suggested a plan to contact the County OES office to discuss standards and procedures involved in declaring an emergency that would include Kensington. If the KFPD were interested in investing in emergency sensing and notification equipment, from sensors to sirens, it would be important to know more about control and actuation of these devices and notifications. He and Director Nagel hope to make inquiries in the near future.

Padian spoke with a County staffer about cell tower capability during an emergency (see article in *SF Chronicle* 9/25/2019). Apparently local agencies (County, municipal) have little influence on the number and positioning of towers, which is increasingly a Federal jurisdiction. The number of towers, whether they have backup power (and for how long), and whether they have or can be brought generators in case of emergency varies among the five carriers that service this area. More and better coverage by cell towers, which are greatly improved over earlier models, is seen as a public safety issue. The community needs information on this.

The purchase of two fire danger signs is on the agenda for the October Board meeting. One is suggested for the Arlington near the PSB and the other in the hills at a site to be determined. The cost for both would be about \$2500 plus costs of mounting, to be done by the County. Some members felt that permanent signs would come to be ignored by motorists, and that occasional placement of "Red Flag Day" and other signs would be more effective. Most members seemed to feel that the cost was small enough to be of benefit, but also that other avenues (such as a portable "Red Flag Day" sign) could be considered. For one thing, residents need education on what a "Red Flag Day" warning actually means in terms of what residents should do and not do, and this could be addressed by mailed and emailed communications.

The topics of CERT training and FireWise communities were considered jointly. Both need greater awareness and participation in Kensington. Fewer and fewer CERT areas have coordinators. Currently B/C Joe Grupalo is primarily responsible (under the Chief) for Emergency Preparedness for the FD in both El Cerrito and Kensington. The Committee discussed whether to suggest that the Board consider hiring an emergency preparedness coordinator whose job would be to work with residents and neighborhoods to promote CERT training, house hardening, and the establishment of FireWise communities. Paul Moss opined that there were few real benefits for neighborhoods in acquiring FireSafe status, although it was acknowledged that some funding agencies (e.g., DFSC) were favoring this status in giving mitigation grants. Otherwise most of the criteria were things that residents would be doing anyway. It was observed that FireSafe status, to our knowledge, does not affect insurance coverage for any carriers except USAA. These considerations, however, are independent of whether a coordinator would be a useful investment by the District.

We discussed the possible deployment of sirens. Gluck and Liddell have begun to canvass local and regional agencies about their decisions, criteria, and operational questions regarding sirens. A pattern that seems to emerge is that, whereas most local citizens are in favor of sirens (or assume we already have them), public safety personnel are generally against them. One main problem appears to be public education about what people should do when they hear a siren (this was reflected in a recent FEMA research report). Several members, including some originally skeptical about sirens, were impressed by Berkeley's commission report on sirens, which was balanced but overall positive (the \$1.1M projected cost was postponed for consideration until their City Council's next budget meeting). There are about

100 sirens with various functionalities in our County; areas of Marin and Sonoma counties are apparently purchasing some new ones.

Gluck and Liddell report that their plans for the next KPSC (Kensington Public Safety Committee) event are well under way; they would like to hold it in the renovated Community Center when it reopens because Arlington Community Church is booked far into the future on weekends. They propose a combination of demonstrations, exhibits, and informational updates on critical issues. Padian suggested that the Board might wish to discuss financial support for this event, which is traditionally organized by the independent and self-funded KPSC.

The Fire Board may consider a pilot program by which 500 emergency radios would be purchased and distributed on demand to residents, with the possibility of doing more if interest warrants. One model can be acquired for about \$30 per, including three AAA batteries to supply one of its four power sources; it features AM/FM/NOAA bands with two lights and a hand-activated siren. Another model would cost more like \$50 and it has most of the same features, plus it can automatically activate the NOAA band in an emergency (it can also flash a light for the hearing-impaired); it lacks the siren and its Li-ion battery is not replaceable.

Most members (as well as residents who attended) were strongly in favor of the program. We discussed which model would be better to offer; one possibility is to offer the \$30 model but to direct attention to the \$50 model that residents could purchase themselves if they preferred. Operational information, as well as local emergency frequencies, would be provided.

Another question is whether the radios would be given away free or if contributions would be encouraged. Most members seemed to feel that some contribution would provide "skin in the game" and better ensure that the radio would be used rather than shelved. One suggestion is that a "sliding scale" be used, although how to establish it could be difficult; another was that residents simply be informed of the attendant costs and advised that if they contributed what they could, more people could be helped. The mechanism for passing any funds to the District (cash or check) would need to be determined.

Committee members were informed that the Board may soon consider the question whether Committee members should be asked to submit State Form 700 (Financial Disclosure / Conflict of Interest), because some of its formal recommendations to the board (of which none have yet been made) may involve the use of District funds. The Board's attorney has determined that this would not be required by the State but it may be prudent.

Agenda items will be solicited by email for the next Committee meeting, which will be scheduled through an online poll, intended to take place in the latter half of October.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:37 pm.

These minutes were prepared by Kevin Padian and approved at the Committee meeting of 24 October 2019.

Attest: _____
Emergency Preparedness Committee Member

Emergency Prep Committee

— Kensington Paths —

Unresolved Public Path Ownership

- Currently 11 public paths - Unresolved efforts for public ownership over the past 100 years!
- Many were offered to the County in early 1900's - never accepted
- Per Assessor's office, no one owns them or pays taxes on them (with possible minor questions)
- 2012 KPPCSD In-depth Report and Action by the KPPCSD Board to acquire 1 path and then others - never happened

The Immediate Problem

- Deterioration and loss of a valuable community resource - continues
- Heightened potential wildfire threat and the need for as many options for evacuation and access by fire fighters as possible.

Importance of Public Ownership

The role of local government: “seek the welfare of the citizens and fulfill their need for the betterment of their community”

- Safety: Optional routes for evacuation and emergency access
- Health and Recreation: For all ages
- Community: Ped access to transportation and commercial areas
- Climate: More walking, less driving
- Liability: Immunities for agencies under certain conditions
- Planning: Coordinated plan for improvements and maintenance
- Grants: Able to apply for grants

Multiple Steps Toward Public Acquisition

1. Identify District: KPPCSD or KFPD or Joint Agency Collaboration
2. Determine Land Acquisition Process and Costs
Surveys, Agreements with adjacent land owners, CEQA, Land transfer documents and resolutions, ++
3. Identify Capital Improvement Costs
4. Identify Maintenance Costs
5. Liability Insurance Costs
6. Identify funding sources +++

Next Steps

- Continue to Build Public Awareness
 - Outlook Articles, Pathway Walk on Oct 13, Brochure, E-mail Newsletter
- Start small and prove success: Option: Pick 3 paths as phase 1
- Conduct pathway surveys
- Meet with adjacent neighbors
- Determine costs including Insurance and basic improvements
- Present to both K Districts

Excellent Examples of Volunteer Implementation

- Berkeley Path Wanderers
- El Cerrito Trail Trekkers

Role of Kensington Pathkeepers:

To partner with local non-profit and take the lead toward acquisition.

Once public ownership is established conduct fundraising for improvements and maintenance.

Discussion: Paths as part of Emergency Preparation

- Who is the target audience for path evacuation options?
Entire community, ±300 foot zone of homes? Immediate adjacent properties?
- What's the best District and structure for public ownership?
- What are the most critical elements for useful pathway evacuation options?
Usable paths, walkways and stairs, railings, signage, on-going maintenance +++
- A key critical evac path is currently blocked - How can this committee help resolve this hazard? I

October 18, 2019

Item 4f

To: EPC Committee Members

Fr: Brenda Navellier
KFPD Manager

Re: Proposed Emergency Radio Purchase

In regard to Item 4f of the Committee's 10/24/19 agenda, I contacted the manufacturer of the proposed \$30 radio back in August and enquired about a discount for a 500 volume order. That vendor, Fospower, offered the District the radios at \$24.00 plus tax and free shipping. That would be a total of \$26.40 per radio or \$13,200 for the pilot program.

1500 batteries on the Costco website in August was \$878 including tax making the total for both items \$14,078.

In addition, I contacted KFPD's auditors about the process of receiving donations in exchange for this item. Below is their response:

"As far as receiving donations for these, implementing proper controls could be a lot of work. Also, these donations could potentially be tax deductible to the donor. But that would only be a tax deduction to the extent their donation exceeds the value of the radio, which is presumably \$30. So every person that donates would need to be tracked and they would need to receive a letter or detailed receipt that indicates the amount of their donation less the fair market value of the item they received from the District."