

KENSINGTON POLICE OFFICERS ASSOCIATION

10940 San Pablo Avenue El Cerrito, CA. 94530



Kensington Police Protection and Community Services District Board of Directors
and Kensington Fire Protection District Board of Directors,

The Kensington Peace Officers Association (POA) is aware of efforts to return the Public Safety Building (PSB) at 217 Arlington Avenue to a joint-use facility for both the Kensington Fire Department (KFD) and the Kensington Police Department (KPD). While the POA encourages solutions to identify an adequate permanent police location within the District, we oppose any measures to re-house the police operations with fire operations at 217 Arlington Avenue.

During the past two decades, officers have adapted, improvised, and compromised to make working inside the Public Safety Building marginally acceptable. Our research shows that official documents, previous Chiefs, and members of both boards identified the previous PSB as **no longer able to accommodate both Police and Fire safely.** The POA strongly agrees with those conclusions. Most troubling is the uncertainty and division between both boards in recent years which has directly affected staffing and morale. In 2021, two recently hired sworn personnel both departed KPD citing poor working conditions and uncertainty as factors leading to their departure. Currently, additional police employees have been vocal of their intent to depart KPD if the inadequate working conditions return. The working conditions at the previous PSB by normal standards were obviously unprofessional and inadequate. Professionals from other agencies were astonished at the working conditions KPD endured in the old PSB. We also lost potential highly qualified police candidates. Many candidates referenced the working environment, as well as the lack of modern-day policing resources to handle normal day-to-day police functions as reasons to not proceed with the hiring process.

Recently, police operations were moved just outside the district to a modern facility that meets the needs of the officers, civilian staff, and operations. The POA is thankful and extremely excited to report to work in a facility that is leaps and bounds ahead of its previous location at the PSB. The current facility does not require improvisation or compromise for police or fire personnel. Our staff no longer competes with residents, their families, and visitors for parking. The POA may be fully staffed for the first time in many years, due in large part to recent facility tours we have given to prospective applicants. Moving the police department back into the old PSB would be an obvious step in the wrong direction and affect morale, recruitment, and the professional image the police department needs to portray.

The POA wants to highlight that the current facility located just outside of the Kensington jurisdiction has received ZERO complaints regarding officer response times or the inability to report crimes. This facility has a minimum impact on the budget while providing the working conditions necessary to have a professional functioning police department. Your police officers continue to be hard at work for the citizens of Kensington maintaining a low crime rate and providing consistent patrols of your neighborhoods, making it one of the safest areas in the state.

Respectfully,

Kensington Police Officers Association