

Raiding Fire District Treasury Is Not Good Government

Dear Editor,

Paul Dorroh's letter to the editor, "Time to Consolidate," in the February 2016 Kensington Outlook advocates a "single government body" for Kensington. In other words, he wants to eliminate the Kensington Fire District and turn the management and resources of Kensington's emergency medical and fire services over to the Kensington Police Protection and Community Services District (KPPCSD). Given the source, the proposal is particularly concerning.

In 2010, Mr. Dorroh was a leader of the campaign for Measure G, a supplemental tax put on the ballot by the KPPCSD board to increase taxes on each Kensington homeowner by an additional \$200 per year for the purpose of supporting police services. An Outlook ad for Measure G, signed by Mr. Dorroh, threatened that failure to pass the new tax would force the police district "to shrink the police department and eliminate patrol shifts," requiring the community to rely on a "distant and expensive County Sheriff Department."

At that time, Measure G proponents strongly rejected consolidation of the fire and police districts, writing in their ballot statement that "there is no assurance that a single combined district would receive as large an allocation from the County of general property taxes as the two, separate districts now receive."

What has changed since the stern warnings of the Measure G campaign? Very little. KPPCSD continues to experience serious financial and managerial problems even though in the last three years its coffers have been enriched with over \$1.5 million of new Measure G monies. Given this infusion of new tax dollars, shouldn't we be concerned that during the same three years KPPCSD's reserve balance has been depleted by over \$300,000?

Rather than raiding the fire district's treasury, Mr. Dorroh should urge KPPCSD board members - three of whom appointed Mr. Dorroh as their campaign treasurer - to stop their profligate spending, control

their expenses, and begin to seriously explore real options for getting the KPPCSD's house in financial order.

Meanwhile, if Mr. Dorroh's opening salvo is an accurate indicator, Kensington residents should be ready for a slick, well-funded pro-consolidation campaign centering on the themes of efficiency and good government. Between now and November, expect to see mass mailings and full-page ads promising that consolidation and only consolidation can solve the police district's problems.

The reality is that consolidation will threaten the high quality services of our Kensington Fire District, a district that assures us a quick response when we have a medical emergency, and services that might let us survive the fires that someday will come roaring out of Wildcat Canyon.

John Sullivan