

Kensington Outlook October 2009

Almost 1,000 Signatures on Petition

The possibility of having Kensington police services contracted out to El Cerrito is such a concern to many residents that, despite the stated intention of the KPPCSD Board to put the matter in front of Kensington voters before taking any action on this critical matter, a number of residents, headed by Paul and Vida Dorroh and John Stein, banded together last month to gather over 950 signatures on a petition proposing the adoption of an ordinance which would maintain *an independent police department employed directly by the District* (the current status quo)...*to ensure that no action can be taken to dis- band or eliminate the District's independent police department, or to subcontract, assign, or delegate the District's police protection and law enforcement responsibilities, without prior voter approval.*

The petition, presented to the Board at the August 27th meeting, requested that the Board submit such a proposal to the voters *for their adoption or rejection at a special election to be called immediately for that purpose.*

Two concerns of having police services contracted out to El Cerrito include the increased possibility of Kensington being annexed by El Cerrito, and the possibility that an El Cerrito police force charged with covering Kensington would be pressured to put officers where the most crime is – leaving Kensington with less coverage than it has currently, using its own force.

While the Board took no immediate action in response to the petition, on its agenda for that night was a proposal to hire a consulting firm to poll residents' preferences for raising the police tax vs. continuing at reduced police coverage, or contracting police services to El Cerrito. That survey was estimated to cost at least \$15,000. When a motion to

retain such a firm failed, several residents volunteered to conduct a survey at no cost.

And so, this month a volunteer group will be conducting a random telephone survey of registered voters in Kensington – its purpose to determine voter opinion on maintaining an independent Kensington Police Department, and a parcel tax increase to close the current budget gap.

The survey should take no more than two minutes, according to John Stein, a leader of the volunteer effort, who asks residents who are contacted: “Please don’t hang up. We’re your neighbors and this is important.” Residents who are interested in helping to conduct the survey can contact Vida Dorroh at 527-3169.

Paul Dorroh contributed to this report.