

# SAY **NO** TO CONSOLIDATION AND **NO** TO TOOMBS

Since 2008, Chuck Toombs has served for two, 4-year terms on the KPPCSD Board. Over this 8-year period, the KPPCSD, and the police department that it oversees, have been embroiled in an unending series of misdeeds, disputes, legal actions and rancorous debates. The result has been a community that is polarized and embittered. Board meetings are known for their hostility, their length, their lack of concern about financial issues and the absence of long-term goals.

During this time, Director Toombs has been involved in a number of political miscues that have cost the Kensington community over \$600,000 – See next page. After all these mistakes, Toombs is once again running for a Board seat. At a Democratic Club Forum in August, in spite of a written statement that “I vow to keep an open mind”, Toombs emphatically stated that he favors consolidating the fire department under the auspices of the KPPCSD.

## **WE CANNOT LET THIS HAPPEN! HERE’S WHY:**

About 20 years ago, the Kensington Community Service District Board decided to contract out Kensington’s fire department operations to El Cerrito. The reason was because the KCSD was losing money trying to operate a stand-alone fire department. Contracting out fire services also resulted in a separate Kensington Fire Board that oversees the El Cerrito fire department contract and has the responsibility of replacing expensive fire trucks, replacing and/or upgrading critical water lines and hydrants and maintaining the fire/police station on Arlington Ave. This contract has proven very beneficial, and the Kensington Fire Board has managed our finances well with the result that we have built up an emergency reserve fund. That reserve fund will now contribute to a major project of retrofitting the fire/police station to current seismic standards.

### **Reasons consolidation does NOT make sense:**

- Our Fire Board is well managed and has served Kensington for 20 years with excellent financial controls, civil meetings and long term planning. During this time the Fire Board has improved our fire prevention interface with Tilden Park.
- The Kensington fire department has received recognition for its fiscal oversight and service levels, including providing medical emergency responses to Kensington residents. In the last 10 years there has not been one complaint about our fire department.
- All El Cerrito firefighters are rotated through the Kensington station giving them first-hand knowledge of Kensington’s geography and the ability to seamlessly coordinate with other El Cerrito fire stations in an emergency.
- The larger department gives firefighters access to better training, senior level experience and city services that are difficult to duplicate with a stand-alone department.
- If “consolidation” occurs, the existing contract will be severed and it is problematic that we will be able to renew on similar terms. If we bring these services in-house (under KPPCSD control) we will certainly pay more and have all the administrative issues that have plagued the police department.
- Rebuilding the fire/police station will consume all available surplus cash and require additional loans to complete. Only the Kensington Fire District has the funding resources and proven financial capability to complete this task.
- **A hostile takeover by the KPPCSD Board will once again lead to a polarized and embattled community.**

# THE TOOMBS LEGACY

## **Excess Costs incurred during Toombs Board tenure**

**Toombs was the primary backer behind Measure L** – This bond measure would have burdened taxpayers with a \$2.0 million bond plus \$700,000 of District funds to retrofit the 4,430 square foot Community Center for the primary purpose of serving as a party venue. It was wisely defeated by a majority of Kensington voters. Cost to taxpayers, over \$100,000.

**Bay View Contract** – Toombs voted to litigate a proposed resolution to a Bay View contract dispute resulting in legal costs of over \$150,000. The District lost in arbitration resulting in a fee increase of 21% instead of the 6% originally proposed by Bay View. This increased Bay View's rates to Kensingtonians by about \$150,000 annually.

Toombs approved a new contract, which added an unnecessary 2% franchise fee and a minimum annual cost of living increase of 3% (about 0.5% above actual). The cost to Kensington taxpayers is about \$35,000 annually, or \$70,000 to date under the new contract.

**Citizens Writ** – Voted to litigate an issue with citizens group rather than resolving it at another Board meeting. Cost to taxpayers at least \$150,000.

## **TOTAL EXCESS COSTS DURING BOARD TENURE – OVER \$600,000**

### **Other Examples of Poor Judgment**

**Police Contract (MOU) Negotiations** – Three years ago Toombs/Gillette proposed a 4-year police contract with a 17% salary increase that would have greatly increased pension liabilities. After considerable citizen pushback, the contract was shelved in favor of a 2-year contract with a 6% salary increase and some minor medical givebacks from the officers. This contract is not revenue neutral and basically continues a legacy of providing Kensington officers with some of the best benefits among small town communities.

**Support for former Chief Harman** – After a much publicized officer incident in Reno, the Board voted 4 to 1 to not extend Harman's contract. The dissenting vote was Toombs. Toombs also lavished praise on Harman's service, even though the department was in disarray.

**Concession to New Chief Hart** – After signing an employment contract with Interim Chief Hart, Hart discovered his existing health insurance would not carry over. Toombs voted for the District to pick up 2/3 of this \$17,000 annual cost; even though an important factor in hiring Hart was that no health coverage would be required.