

Governance and Civic Involvement in the Unincorporated Community of Kensington, CA (January 2017)

Contra Costa County's Board of Supervisors is the governing body for Kensington. Kensington is part of District 1, along with El Cerrito, Richmond, San Pablo, North Richmond and parts of El Sobrante and Pinole. Two independent special districts were created by vote of Kensington residents: the Kensington Fire Protection District (KPFD) and the Kensington Police Protection and Community Services District (KPPCSD).

Each district is an independent, self-governed agency responsible directly to its constituents and is administered by a local board of five directors elected by Kensington voters. Services provided by the two independent districts are primarily funded by property taxes allocated by the County and supplemented by special taxes approved by voters. The Stege Sanitary District is also a special district, although its services cover a larger geography than the Kensington area.

(For more information, see Kensington Past and Present published in 2000 by the Kensington Improvement Club.)

Kensington Special Districts

Kensington Police Protection and Community Services District (KPPCSD) -
www.kensingtoncalifornia.org; 217 Arlington Avenue, Kensington, CA
(510) 526-4141

The Kensington Police Protection and Community Services District is governed by five District Directors elected to staggered, four-year terms. The Chief of Police, who is also the General Manager of the District and reports to the KPPCSD Board of Directors, handles day-to-day operations. *[Ed. note: This job may be split into two positions in the near future.]*

The Kensington Police Protection and Community Services District provides police protection services including patrol, response to crimes in-progress, traffic enforcement, first aid and CPR, investigations, warrant and subpoena service, and other law enforcement duties. KPPCSD also manages Kensington Park grounds and facilities (including booking rentals at the community center). The KPPCSD has a longstanding agreement with the Kensington Community Council, a nonprofit organization, for use of the recreational building and community center in the park and for providing recreational services in Kensington. The District General Manager also oversees Kensington's garbage collection and solid waste disposal and recycling programs.

Active committees serving the Board include: finance, public safety building, park planning and recreation (park grounds, buildings and funding), solid waste, community outreach, District policy and procedures manual, intergovernmental /external issues and emergency preparedness.

Board meetings are held monthly on the second Thursday of the month at the Kensington Community Center, 59 Arlington Avenue. *[Ed. note: A second monthly meeting may be held on the fourth Thursday of the month.]* Further information: <http://www.kensingtoncalifornia.org/>

Kensington Fire Protection District (KFPD) www.kensingtonfire.org, 217 Arlington Avenue, Kensington CA (510) 527-8395

The Kensington Fire Protection District contracts with the City of El Cerrito for all fire prevention, fire suppression and emergency services provided to the Kensington community and maintains automatic response agreements with other West Contra Costa County fire agencies. The District public safety building (also the home of the Kensington police department) houses two Kensington-owned fire engines, one specifically engineered for the steep, narrow streets of Kensington and the other, a wild land engine for use during high fire season.

The District implements water system improvements (with the East Bay Municipal Utility District) to enhance the provision of water along the wild land interface and to optimize the placement of hydrants throughout the community. KFPD provides paramedic and advanced life support services and delivers a Community Emergency Response Team Training (CERT) program. A five-person, elected Board of Directors governs the District. Board meetings are held at 7:00 p.m. the second Wednesday of the month at the Kensington Community Center.

Volunteer Civic Organizations: the “K” groups of Kensington

Kensington residents contribute to the community via a variety of volunteer civic organizations that monitor community governance and finances and provide services that Kensington does not receive from the County. Examples of these services are: a park and playgrounds, after-school programs, town hall meetings, the Kensington *Outlook* community newspaper, civic improvements and emergency preparedness.

Kensington Community Council (KCC) www.kensingtoncommunitycouncil.org

The Kensington Community Council is a 501c3 nonprofit corporation that, under an agreement with the KPPCSD, provides educational and recreational programs for the community such as the Kensington After School Enrichment Program ("KASEP"), Summer Day Camp and a variety of adult classes. KCC sponsors two annual fundraising events: Family Movie Night and the Fall Picnic and Parade. A Board of Directors oversees KCC, which is funded by contributions from the community and class fees. KCC hosts an annual meeting for all the “K-

group” community organizations to share information regarding community service priorities.

KCC also oversees *The Outlook* community newsletter, which is published ten times a year and covers local news, issues and events. It is mailed free of charge to every Kensington residence, made available to business in the commercial districts on Arlington and Colusa avenues and is posted on the web at: <http://www.aboutkensington.com/outlook.html>. The *Outlook* is funded by classified and display advertising and the KCC’s annual fund drive.

Editorial contact: Lin Due (510) 525-0292; editor@kensingtonoutlook.com

Advertising contact: Alma Key (510) 508-3241,

Advertising@KensingtonOutlook.com

KCC Board meetings are held the first Monday of the month at 7:30pm in Room 3 of the Community Center.

Further information: Anne Forrest, (President); KCC Administration : (510) 525-0292; kccrec@yahoo.com

Kensington Municipal Advisory Council (KMAC)

<http://ca-contracostacounty2civicplus.com/1641/Kensington-Municipal-Advisory-Council>

The Kensington Municipal Advisory Council (KMAC) is an appointed advisory body to the Board of Supervisors with a broad charge to advise the County Supervisors on county services, community concerns, and to serve as a liaison between the community and the District One Supervisor. KMAC provides input and recommendations to the County Community Development Department on matters related to land-use, planning, zoning, variance applications, code enforcement, and code changes.

KMAC has five members and two alternates from the Kensington community who serve staggered four-year terms. KMAC meets the last Tuesday of each month at 7:00pm at the Community Center.

Further information: Contact Kate Rauch at (510) 231-8691.

Kensington Property Owners Association (KPOA)

The Kensington Property Owners Association is a 501(c)(4) nonprofit organization that collects and disseminates information on issues affecting Kensington property owners. KPOA publishes an annual Kensington directory, hosts an annual meeting of Kensington property owners, serves as key liaison to Contra Costa County and other bodies on infrastructure-related issues such as road resurfacing, undergrounding of power lines and other topics which require Kensington property owner input and coordination. KPOA also collaborates regularly with the other K groups on matters of interest to the community such as the annual KPPCSD district board candidate forum. Membership is open to all

Kensington property owners and member dues are typically used for community educational outreach and to promote civic projects. KPOA is governed by a board of directors that meets periodically at the Community Center.

Further Information: Gail Feldman (President) (510) 559-8232;
KPOAssoc@gmail.com

Kensington Improvement Club (KIC)

The Kensington Improvement Club was the first volunteer organization in Kensington, founded in 1921. It is dedicated to promoting and fostering the general welfare of the community and to cooperating with county and local authorities on necessary community improvements.

KIC sponsors an annual Town Hall Meeting in the early fall as a forum for candidates and other important local issues; acts as liaison with other Districts, the County and local and regional agencies and monitors and makes civic improvements to public property along streets and walkways such as the entry gateways along the Arlington and Colusa Circle, sign-board, plantings, public benches and trash receptacle. KIC donates funds to critical public improvements such as the Community Center and the Park; monitors the activities of the county tax assessment for the Kensington Landscape District; initiates volunteer beautification projects such as pathway cleanups and median plantings and authors and publishes the book *Kensington Past and Present*.

The KIC is administered by a Board of Directors of community members and welcomes the involvement all Kensington residents and property owners. Regular meetings are held the 4th Monday of the month, 7:30pm, in the Kensington Community Center Conference Room. All meetings are open to the public.

Further information: Lisa Caronna (President) (510) 524-7514;
KICpost@gmail.com

The Friends of the Kensington Library: <http://ccclib.org/friends/ken.html>

The Kensington Library is a branch of the Contra Costa County Library System and houses a collection of over 34,000 books and periodicals, and a continually refreshed selection of recorded books, movies, and music CDs. The Kensington Library also offers a variety of programs for all ages, including book clubs, crafts, story time for babies and toddlers, and a family story time for older children.

The Friends of the Kensington Library is dedicated to improving library services in Kensington. Through membership donations and book sale earnings, the Friends provide the library with books, tapes, magazines, and compact discs and support children's and cultural programs for the community. Friends help with exhibits, programs, membership development, volunteer coordination, fundraising, book sales and sorting, and publicity.

Kensington Amateur Radio Operators

The Kensington Amateur Radio Operators is a group of amateur radio operators who live in Kensington and have agreed to participate in the support of Kensington's emergency preparedness program. The operators have been incorporated into the CERT training and are part of the Kensington Emergency Preparedness Council.

Further information: Marian Gade, (510) 524-9815, mgade@berkeley.edu

Kensington Public Safety Council; <https://kensingtonpsc.wordpress.com/>

The mission of KPSC is to educate our community on how to prepare for emergencies, strengthen our citizen emergency response infrastructure, and promote community public safety initiatives. The council will address topics related to earthquake, wildfire/fire, hazardous material spill or release, crime prevention.

Safety Council objectives are to significantly increase the number of Kensington residents who have a basic level of emergency preparedness including an emergency plan and survival kit with 21 days of food and water and dwellings that have been seismically upgraded. The Council also distributes safety information and supports citizen response and watch groups with CERT-trained leaders and annual earthquake drills as well as the Kensington Police Association Citizen's Academy.

Further information: kensingtonpsc@gmail.com

The Kensington Farmers' Market

www.kensingtonfarmersmarket.org

A California Certified Farmers' Market, the Kensington Farmers' Market is a nonprofit community-based organization open every Sunday from 10am to 2pm on Oak View Avenue between Colusa Circle and Santa Fe avenues in Kensington. It also serves the neighboring communities of Berkeley, Albany and El Cerrito and features live music and fresh, local produce.

By Kristine Hafner (Kensington Property Owners Association)