

Kensington's 2022 Election – Fact Checks versus Claims

There have been many misstatements on the Public Safety Building (PSB) and decisions made by both the KPPCSD and KFPD as each Board has worked on solutions to house employees in a seismically safe structure with sufficient room to operate and in compliance with current requirements.

Claim: We should pause the renovation of the PSB and study it more.

Fact Check: If a new Fire Board abrogates the existing construction project, it will effectively halt work required to protect the lives of workers in the building for years. The Fire GM has estimated that a re-do of the project will cost conservatively at least \$1million, deplete reserves, and continue to put the lives of our first responders at risk. It will require a new permit and may also result in having no contractor bid on future Fire projects.

Fact Check: A seismic study from several years ago concluded that an earthquake would likely result in the collapse of the PSB with resulting loss of life.

Fact Check: We Owe It to the safety of Our First Responders to work in seismically safe structures. Both Chiefs believe that both the renovated building and module will withstand a 7.0 earthquake

Fact Check: We Owe It to Ourselves to have those responders available to assist us.

Fact Check: It is imperative that the PSB be made seismically safe.

Fact Check :The Fire District recently updated its [Frequently Asked Questions](#) which provides detailed information on the need for renovation, constraints on location and options.

Claim: The KPPCSD allowed the Fire Board to unilaterally evict the police department, to forge ahead with an expensive renovation of the PSB for the fire department's exclusive use, with no home for the police identified

Fact Check: In 2019, the two Districts formed a committee of two directors each that met many times to try to come up with an acceptable plan for police and fire to remain in the PSB. An architect prepared plans that would allow both departments to operate in the renovated PSB. But both police and fire chiefs concluded that the space allocated to each was inadequate. Because the KFD must be centrally located, the KFPD made the decision to renovate the building for fire use only. Both Districts held numerous public meetings to discuss the progress of studies and options.

Claim: The KPPSCD cannot afford to build its own structure.

Fact Check: The KPPCSD will use a modular building in El Cerrito as its interim headquarters while it looks for a more permanent solution hopefully using those cost-effective modular buildings. The District presently has very healthy reserves and there will be financing options available after a site has been identified. Using taxes for financing has not been discussed. Location is not as critical for police because police are patrolling throughout Kensington, whereas fire are at the PSB in Kensington prepared for emergency calls.

Claim: The KPPCSD limited community input to their decisions

Fact Check: The KPPCSD and KFPD held numerous public meetings to discuss the progress of studies and options. Both welcomed public comment at their meetings.

Claim: The proposed new Fire only building is expensive.

Fact Check: The KFPD worked hard to keep the cost of the renovation to under half the cost of a new building because of a state prohibition limiting renovations of public buildings in earthquake zones.

Claim: Jim Watt's Alternative Plan meets Fire and Police space needs

Fact Check: The KFPD has an extensive [analysis](#) on why the Alternate Plan does not allow police and fire to operate effectively and in compliance with current requirements. Among its many problems, the Alternate Plan would limit the fire department's ability to timely respond to fires and would not allow compliance with hazardous waste laws. That Alternate Plan would not meet law enforcement confidentiality requirements and would subject evidence to potential contamination.

Claim: The KPPCSD was Going to Stop After School Programs

Fact Check: The KPPCSD Board was NOT going to evict nor eliminate the KCC and its community programs. After negotiations failed to secure the space at 303 Arlington at a reasonable cost, the only option to the District was to look at all its buildings in the park. It evaluated both Building E and the Annex (which could be remodeled for KCC use) at a public meeting. A third option was also considered: to move the temporary facility modular building to the parking lot. This last was chosen at the best option.

Claim: The two slates will bring new people with fresh ideas

Fact Check: The KFPD worked hard to include both police and fire in the design of the renovated PSB. When many public meetings were held to review the various plan proposals, where were these people & their fresh ideas?

Fact Check: The people behind both slates used to play a key role in Kensington politics. Under their management, the KPPCSD Board incurred excessive legal fees and allowed the police department to be an embarrassment to the community. They resist change, often arguing we can't afford it. They opposed splitting the General Manager/Chief of Police position. That change led to a modern administrative structure and a vastly improved police department. The same argument is being used to fight the renovation of the PSB and relocation of the police station.

Fact Check: We can't afford NOT to provide seismically safe structures for our fire and police.

WE MUST DO IT NOW

Mabry Benson, David Bergen, Tom Dean, Marina Gutierrez, John Gaccione, Marilyn Stollen