



KENSINGTON FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT
MEETING OF THE EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES
Thursday, December 2, 2021 3:00pm-5:00pm
Via Zoom Teleconference

1. CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL

Directors: Larry Nagel and Kevin Padian

Public Members: Lisa Caronna, Katie Gluck, Peter Liddell, Danielle Madugo, Paul Moss, David Spath

Staff: General Manager Bill Hansell, EC/K Battalion Chief Jose Castrejon, EC/K Chief Michael Pigoni, KPD Lt. Brad Harms

Consultant: Emergency Preparedness Coordinator Johnny Valenzuela

2. PUBLIC COMMENT

None

3. ADOPTION OF CONSENT ITEMS

- a. **Approval of Minutes** of the regular meeting of October 28, 2021 (Approve)

MOTION: Moss/Madugo to accept the minutes as corrected.

Motion adopted by consensus.

4. NEW BUSINESS

- a. **Proposed Modified Parking Configurations for Kensington**

Per request of Sup. Gioia's office through Chief Pigoni, discussion and possible recommendations to the KFPD Board on the attached, Item 1.

Kevin introduced the topic by noting that this agenda is undertaken at the request of Chief Pigoni, following a request from Sup. Gioia's office to get input from the Kensington community about proposed parking changes and a planned evacuation drill in the Spring. Emphasis that the EPC and in fact the Fire Board have no authority over parking; that is negotiated by Police and Fire with the County. Here, recommendations from our Traffic Evacuation Study are being examined and implemented as possible. We want to be transparent to residents and to get their views. Emphasis that this problem is NOT about individual streets or blocks; it affects all of Kensington as well as neighboring areas, because blockages in one area affect everyone upstream during emergencies.

Chief Pigoni noted that we need to take it in small steps. The County will support what we can recommend. Meeting at Gioia's office, they were very much in favor of parking changes at least on streets that we designated as primary evacuation routes coming off

the hill. Those plus dead-end roads, as outlined in the agenda, with the input of the police department, should implement those recommendations to the County and work with them along with Johnny Valenzuela through public education so that residents will understand what we need to do.

Lt. Harms agreed with Chief Pigoni that baby steps are needed. We should start with the Lenox corridor; then we can assess timing, pros and cons. The Amherst and Princeton junction curbs need to be painted red. We need to find critical junctures to address initially, then see ramifications of how that affects us on a daily basis. After that we can address other identified areas. Community buy-in is important but the safety of everyone is paramount. He would like to meet with both Kensington District Boards to explain this and do a site assessment of targeted street segments; then meet with County personnel.

ECFD Battalion Chief Castrejon noted that emergency vehicles need access into the areas. He thinks we should take small chunks of problematic street segments at a time. He participated in an Albany evacuation drill some time ago. He noted that we have to work on choke points.

Lisa Caronna stated that she thinks painting the curbs red should be a high priority item that can be implemented immediately. David Spath agreed.

David Spath asked the question of what the intent of this discussion is. Kevin replied that we are responding to a request from Chief Pigoni regarding what steps should be taken. The request from Chief Pigoni, in turn, came from a meeting between Chief Pigoni and Supervisor John Gioia.

Peter Liddell asked what if we need to evacuate when school is in? Danielle explained that there is a tentative plan, organizing teachers, but the scenario hasn't yet been developed. Meeting with new Principal and Lt. Harms on finalizing plans. Lt. Harms agreed we've been working on this, and the response of the Police Department will be proportional in case of evacuation need during school hours. The teachers now have two-way radios and Chris Hilliard provided them organization on running things during an evacuation.

Chief Pigoni addressed the question whether proposed changes should be year-round, during fire season, or only on Red Flag Days? He prefers full time. We're wet now with the recent rains, but we could dry out soon during a wind event. Not only fuel loads from Tilden are in the mix, but houses transmitting to other houses. So it's really a year-round problem.

Lt. Harms said he is not opposed to year-round parking changes, but would need an on-site survey to perhaps whittle down a certain amount of impact on neighborhood parking with John Swann and Monish Sen (County DPW) in order to meet the objective. The problem would be enforcement by issuing parking tickets. Lt. Harms noted that we will need an education campaign to let neighbors know how they'll be affected. He prefers fire season ban which would require mass notifications. We would need to place warnings on cars once fire season starts.

Danielle noted that Willamette needs to turn around parking between Highland and Purdue, which will be clogged by uphill parking. (This is already in progress, with

cooperation from the residents.) She agrees with temporary parking restrictions, preferably during Red Flag Days; would make residents more pro-active. Fire season is just going to get longer.

B/C Castrejon stated that he supports Chief Pignoni's point about vehicle access, and not only on Red Flag days.

Kay Reed (Ardmore resident) stated that she appreciates the work of the EPC, and Lt. Harms's view to treat every street segment separately. There is a large parking load on lower Ardmore because some lots have two or three buildings on them and inadequate off-street parking. Moving parking from west to east sides may eliminate up to 40% of spaces on the 700 block of Coventry. Good to bring in Public Works. Changing parking could increase damage to parked cars. Best to make it as brief as possible the times when people have to restrict parking. Kevin suggested that we might ask the county to install a couple of speed bumps on Coventry by the affected curve near the junction of Ardmore and Coventry.

Lt. Harms agreed with what Kay says. We should institute Neighborhood Watch with captains for street segments to text people to coordinate in case of evacuation need. We can build this into our neighborhood awareness training.

Lt. Harms noted that, as for the question of relaxing County requirements not to encroach on sidewalks, generally our police take this on a case by case basis. For example, they didn't ticket a car parked in front of a driveway leading to a non-operable garage. But then the owner of the house complained about the car parked in front of his non-operable garage. This is called "weaponizing the police" to get cars moved on the basis of technicalities, rather than neighbors talking to neighbors. The Police Department officers try to work by education. Lifting the restriction on cars blocking sidewalks would require a resolution by the KPPCSD Board. The Police District would then have to work with the County attorneys.

Lisa Caronna noted that putting up signboards for seasonal restrictions on main corridors is extremely helpful. Johnny Valenzuela supports electronic traffic signs on main avenues and triangular stanchions combined with QR codes for emergency alerts. David Spath agrees with Lisa and Johnny. Signs on streets will be most useful.

Lt. Harms noted that we now have blue evacuation signs at Sunset/Arlington; we'd like additional ones in upper Kensington.

Bill Hansell reported on a preliminary meeting initiated by Sup. Gioia's office with Bill, Johnny, and the Chiefs. Our Traffic Evacuation Study recommended that identified primary evacuation routes be labeled and/or named. County DPW resisted, saying that they don't have a precedent for "designating" specific roads as evacuation routes. The County is supposed to get back to us about what is possible. Any evacuation situation, they say, will be fluid and will depend on circumstances; won't Zonehaven be used on these? The response of Kensington is that major routes will inevitably be used and could be signed and posted. Discussions are still in progress. Bill says that Kensington residents and chiefs need to affirm that we need to do this in order to influence the County. New State laws will require identifying and signing evacuation routes, so the County may be behind the curve on this.

David Spath noted the need to coordinate evacuation routes with changes in parking configurations.

The question was raised whether certain roads would have to be designated “uphill only” so that emergency vehicles could get up to the ridge in an evacuation. B/C Castrejon noted that Fire engines will want to be up on the hill well before evacuations happen but there are too many variables to be precise about where that may be in any event.

Additional Public Comment on This Issue

Director Padian then communicated the substance of five letters received by the District office relevant to the possible proposed parking configuration changes.

Jason Taylor: likes Red Flag Days model; understandable to residents, like snowstorm days in the East.

Elaine Stelton: one part of Ardmore used to be a trolley turnaround. People can move cars around easily. Lenox needs to be changed.

b. Evacuation Drill

To the question of whether a drill should encompass the whole town or only certain neighborhoods or zones, Chief Pigoni suggested that we do two zones at first, preferably the eastern (uphill) zones, where traffic can be best assessed. Lt. Harms agreed; we can learn from a smaller drill. Would evacuate by Zonehaven zones.

Lisa Caronna stated that we need to be realistic about the capacity for running this. We'll need to open the gate to the cemetery as well, so we need to involve them. Paul Moss works with the PIO and Emergency Coordinator in Orinda; he observed their evacuation drill and it's a big deal. They used 100 people moving cars down Minor Road to Camino Pablo, including civilian volunteers. The Orinda PIO thought the virtual drill got more bang for the buck than actually moving cars; he said he would not want to do the big drill again. Paul said the drill ran smoothly at 7 am. A Fire engine led two lines of cars along the road; it was highly scripted, so not realistic. Paul thinks a full evacuation drill, moving vehicles, is what residents here want. Would Bill Hansell and the Chiefs want to have a consultant like the Orinda PIO on this?

Chief Pigoni: we would definitely have a check-in point during an evacuation drill (not necessarily at a Temporary Refuge Area) because you'd need the data on how many people participated. An Email survey would also be useful.

Lt. Harms: agree; Police take a back seat to Fire on organizing a drill. Dave: this discussion illustrates how complicated this kind of operation is and how much time and education it will take to put it together. Suggests taking two zones closest to WUI, but one of those zones also encompasses EC, so this will have to be considered, as well as another zone that impinges on Berkeley and its roads.

Paul Moss asked why does there need to be a tally of participants? Why do we need a destination point when the point is to get away? Also, donuts at the end will get people to participate, per the Orinda PIO.

Larry Nagel suggested that maybe we should form a subcommittee to look into some of these things, chasing down answers to questions. We don't need the whole EPC to hash this out. We need answers from people with experience. Kevin suggested that he and Larry compare notes from the meeting to identify exactly what questions we need to answer, and then we'll know whom to consult.

Danielle Madugo noted that previous drills have been at 8 or 8:30; maybe 9 or 10 would be better for families. Possibly an early start was to avoid tying up early morning Saturday traffic. Kevin noted that in Mill Valley they started at 8 am and the whole exercise was over in about 45 minutes.

There was no public comment.

5. EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS COORDINATOR'S REPORT

6. REPORTS FROM COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Danielle Madugo reported that Chris Hilliard gave a great presentation to the teachers at Hilltop School.

David Spath thanked everyone for the lemon tree that was given to him by the committee in memory of his wife Linda.

7. CALL FOR FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

8. ADJOURNMENT

The next regular meeting of the Emergency Preparedness Committee of the Kensington Fire Protection District will be held on January 27, 2022 at 3:00pm via Zoom Teleconference.

Meeting adjourned at 5:17 PM by Kevin Padian.

MINUTES PREPARED BY: Larry Nagel

These minutes were approved at the Emergency Preparedness Committee Meeting of the Kensington Fire Protection District on January 27, 2022.

Attest:

Emergency Preparedness Committee Member

Notes for Discussion of Proposed Modified Parking Configuration and Evacuation Drill

KFPD EPC Meeting, 2 December 2021

I. Proposed Modified Parking Configurations

- A. Focus on road segments that (1) impede emergency vehicle access and/or (2) require residents to turn their cars around in order to go with the traffic evacuation flow.
1. Beloit/Cambridge/Yale/Princeton/Amherst to the Arlington
 2. Junction of Princeton and Amherst
 3. Purdue/Kenyon/Wellesley or Westminster to the Arlington
 4. Windsor, York, St. Albans
 5. Sunset to Franciscan
 6. Mid-portion of Lenox
 7. Coventry/Berkeley Park and Ardmore
- B. Types of proposed changes:
1. Two-sided -> one-sided parking (eliminate one parking lane)
 2. Reverse direction of one-sided parking, possibly changing the side of the street for parking
 3. Elimination of street parking on some street segments
- C. Alternatives for proposed changes
1. Year-round: simpler so less confusing, but more inconvenient overall
 2. Fire season: from first forecast Diablo Wind Event to first heavy rains
 3. Red Flag Days: shorter durations but more confusing; notification difficult
- D. Considerations for alternate parking during restricted periods
1. Issue street permit for a second car if the first one is parked on the property
 2. Relax County requirement for cars in driveways not to encroach sidewalks
 3. Ensure that each household has at least one nearby vehicle for evacuating
 4. Enforce 72-hour parking rule on all streets; boats and RVs off the streets
- E. Public notification of Fire Season or Red Flag Days
1. Social media, District websites, CWS, Nixle
 2. Signs on stanchions posted on main traffic sites (Arlington/Amherst; Arlington/Ardmore; Sunset/Franciscan; W end of Vassar; Grizzly Peak/ Spruce; Colusa Circle)
 3. Education of residents must stress that these are not local block/street problems but problems that affect all neighbors in Kensington and beyond
 4. Encouragement of pre-evacuation for residents with mobility/time needs

II. Evacuation Drill

- A. Timing: as soon as practically possible but before Fire Season begins again
 - 1. County OES must agree to schedule and coordinate
 - a. Non-interference with other County drills or calendar holidays/events
 - b. Pre-education effort coordinated and approved with County
 - c. Evacuation destination(s) must be coordinated through the County
 - 2. Coordination of Police and Fire Departments
 - a. Adequate staffing from both Depts to coordinate the drill
 - b. Auxiliary staffing from County Sheriff's Office?
 - c. Possible role of citizen volunteers to help with traffic?
 - 3. Day/Time: Other districts have used Saturday mornings for alerts and drills
- B. Evacuation Area
 - 1. One or two "zones"
 - 2. Entire community
 - 3. Triggered by Zonehaven zone alerts?
- C. Destination
 - 1. What is/are the destination(s)?
 - 2. Drive-through check-in point?
 - 3. Virtual text/email check-in (by actual evacuees)?
 - 4. Reliable data on what percentage of residents received the alert (survey)
- D. Preparation and Education of Residents before the Drill
 - 1. Having go-bags and cars packed the night before
 - 2. Informing residents of their destination(s)
 - 3. Discussing traffic protocols and neighborly procedures during evacuation
 - 4. Taking care of less mobile neighbors
 - 5. Follow-up survey on how well the drill went / possible improvements