



Date: January 11, 2024
To: Board of Directors
From: David Aranda, Interim General Manager
Subject: General Manager's Review For 2023 And Thoughts For 2024

Time goes by very quickly and so it seems it was just yesterday that I arrived at the District on February 13, 2023. Upon arrival, I found four board members eager to do their best for the community (Director Spath joined us a few months later and was just as eager). I found a Police Chief that cares about a top-quality range of police officers and focuses on policing Kensington in a community-oriented manner that protects and serves the community.

I was initially tasked with working for the Board as we tackled two large projects. One of the projects involved determining the ability for the Police Department to move back into the Public Safety Building with the Fire Department. The second task involved moving toward reorganization by performing studies that would determine the advantage or disadvantage of KPPCSD and KFPD becoming one entity.

Through the efforts of everyone involved with KPPCSD, a well-presented explanation of why the KPPCSD should find its own residency in Kensington was presented. The Board, General Manager, Police Chief, staff, and many in the community found the facts and figures to be overwhelmingly supportive of finding a suitable location for the Police Department in Kensington.

FOR 2024 THE RESPONSIBILITY OF CONTINUING TO WORK TOWARDS THAT GOAL IS ONGOING. I along with staff and the Board will continue to look at the property south of the Kensington Library on Arlington and search diligently for grant money that would allow a police building to be constructed with minimal impact to the community. This will take time, a great amount of effort and communication so it is hoped that the community will be patient with this process.

The task of a financial study for both organizations regarding reorganization seemed like it was going to come to fruition this past month, only to see the Fire Board not approve the proposal with Ridgeline. It is now questionable if the financial study will happen in the next few months. I know the Board will continue to pursue obtaining information that will assist in determining if reorganization makes sense and I hope to be very much a part of that. Let's hope that the Fire District will join us.

A third project that I encountered without advance notice was the financial situation of the District. Upon arriving, I found little or no information on the financial position of the District, an absent

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Finance Director, two very expensive consulting firms handling finance and yet no information was available. With a great amount of effort from financial contacts, a plan was developed to terminate the two consulting firms along with the Finance Director and use the District's accounting clerk in conjunction with a company called EideBailly.

Thankfully, because of the diligent work of the part time accounting clerk in the office and EideBailly along with a great amount of work on the part of the Chief and I, a clear financial position for the District came about. There was a great amount of work that needed to be done. There were financial records that needed to be addressed, audits that needed to be done (I want to emphasize that no malfeasance was noted), failure on meeting CalPERS retirement regulations needed correcting, and the entire Human Resources program at KPPCSD needed to be properly addressed. I am happy to report that as we end 2023 all these issues have been resolved.

FOR 2024 it is my goal to continue to have our in-house finance person do the great job she is doing and continue to work with Eide Bailly with the needed financial information that the Board and the community deserve. I believe we can continue to reduce the consulting costs now that CalPERS is in order and soon our payroll should result in more efficient processing each pay period.

Upon my arrival I heard a great deal from various individuals that requests from the community to the then General Manager were not being addressed. I have attempted to be responsive to all inquiries. It should be noted that inquiries come in many forms. FOR 2024 I would encourage residents to reach out to me with questions so that they can be addressed in a timely and cost-effective manner.

For 2023 the District received 12 Public Records Requests. Of those requests the Chief and/or I handled them, but we needed assistance with two requests from legal. One of those requests ended up costing the District over \$10,000 in legal fees.

Kensington has beautiful park facilities that are very well used by the community. Included in this operation is the important work of KCC. The hard work of one director on KPPCSD in particular along with much in the way of communicating, negotiating and moving forward produced a renewal agreement between KPPCSD and KCC.

I have had the pleasure of collaborating with Jenny Parks, KCC Recreation Director. And we have open communications and a cooperative relationship that has benefited the park operations and the community. The other important aspect of park administration involves Rosa Ruiz, who oversees much of the day-to-day park operations that fall on the District and her diligence has allowed residents and non-residents to utilize the various facilities of KPPCSD for their personal enjoyment.

I have found that the maintenance and janitorial requirements for the park are significant. I am planning on a more detailed report on maintenance and janitorial needs and costs as we come to the end of our fiscal year in June of 2024. Our contractor Fernando is outstanding in caring for the park. He is responsive no matter the time and day. The hiring of an in-house janitor has reduced costs and added to the daily cleanliness of the Community Center.

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Prior to my arrival a contract was signed to remove a number of dying or dangerous trees in the upper portion of the park. This project was completed. In conjunction with that a park improvement committee was formed with two directors doing research and gaining input for some improvements in the area where the trees were removed. With their hard work the project was approved by the Board. The General Manager has attempted to follow through on seeing the overall project being completed. About 90% of the project is done. New trees were planted, a view deck was constructed and benches are in the process of being moved and refurbished.

FOR 2024 it is hoped that by April the \$180,000 of park grant money will be received and therefore additional projects can be addressed. These projects would include continuing to address safety concerns, attempting to obtain additional grants for park and park building improvements and developing a master plan for the front entrance of the park (i.e., signage and beautification).

During 2023 I have been involved in the Annex building to determine if the building can be inhabited. The initial review is that the building can be saved. There is some more research to be done to determine the best use for the building. FOR 2024 I am hopeful that not only will we be able to determine the best use for the Annex building, but we will also apply for and receive grant money to make structural improvements to both the Annex building and the Recreation Building.

Solid waste responsibilities presented an interesting scenario for me. On the surface there seemed to be very little work for the administrative handling of solid waste. However, there is a great deal of work to be done. For 2023 a legal opinion was developed that provided directions to the Board and staff regarding meeting Proposition 218 requirements and assisting in moving forward with additional studies that determine justification for franchise fees.

FOR 2024 it is hoped that proper studies can be done for both the franchise fees justification and the costing of services provided by Bay View Refuse. There is a need to bring all parties to the table and work out a new contract that is adhered to, this involved the county, Bay View and of course the District. I have found the managers of Bay View to be very responsive to my questions and concerns, and I think we all agree that the clean-up week in September was a big success. FOR 2024 we will continue to work together for another successful clean up week.

The community of Kensington has a unique group of "walking paths" that add to the beauty and enjoyment of the community. Upon my arrival it was brought to my attention that essentially no one owns the paths and thus the repair and upkeep have fallen on volunteers. Through 2023 I have met with and worked with the Path Keepers and the county supervisor as we study the best way for the paths to remain an integral part of community by someone taking actual ownership of the paths. I have also collaborated with legal counsel and our risk management agency in looking at the liability of the paths should the district wish to take ownership of them. FOR 2024 it is hoped that some kind of resolution, with a funding plan and operation plan can be determined so that the paths will be properly cared for.

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Another area that is of concern to the community and the Board of Directors is that of the emergency needs for the community as well as what mitigation plans can be addressed to make the community a safe place, considering the high risk of earthquakes and wildfires. The District is working with the County in developing a mitigation plan, and with that plan there will hopefully be grants available that assist in making the District's facilities safe by retrofitting them for earthquakes. In addition, it is hoped that an evacuation plan can be developed and presented to the community. FOR 2024 I will attempt to keep pursuing this.

During 2023 I have had various meetings with the County Supervisor's Office, the City Manager of El Cerrito, and other individuals from various agencies. FOR 2024 it is important that I, along with board members, develop relationships with individuals from other agencies including the State of California.

It has been a privilege to work with the KPPCSD Board of Directors, the staff, and the many residents that make up various organizations that serve the community and the County and our vendors and contractors. I hope that all will agree that it has been beneficial to have an engaged General Manager in the office a few days each week to oversee the operations. As all of you know, it takes a team of dedicated people to see a community function in a positive manner. So, let us continue that road for 2024.

My General Manager's report for the February 2024 Board meeting will include a detailed comparison of the Fiscal Year Budget as compared to the actual income and expenses for the first six months of the fiscal year.

Please contact me at daranda@kppcsd.org should you have any questions or comments regarding this 2023 report. Thank you.