

Kingston Cares

The 2022 Community Conversations

About the Community Conversations

- Kingston Cares initiated Community Conversations in 2018
- Co-sponsored by VGF, CoC, KCAC, PoK.
- With success of the first, planned to make it an annual event
- Second held in 2019. In 2020/21, Covid precluded in person events
- The sponsors made a decision to take the Conversations virtual
- Three Zoom Conversations January, February, March 2022. (Success!)

The Topics

- Racial Justice
- Growth and Growing Pains
- Emergency Preparedness
- Effective Community Communications
- Your Vision for Kingston
- Welcoming Community
- Parks and Trails
- Affordable Housing
- Economic Vitality

Racial Justice

- There is a problem here
 - Examples of local inequality in health, wealth, education, inclusion
 - Examples of discriminatory speech and actions
 - Problems with racist behavior Kingston High School
 - Arrest of Kingston man for planning violent racist attack

Racial Justice

- What is the problem we are trying to solve?
- What can be done about it?
- Actions with the Kingston High School
- KCAC Community Service Committee
- Get people talking
- Invite people to a movie followed by conversation
- Planning ahead for diversity in community events

Growth and Growing Pains

- Growth is happening whether we like it or not
- Growth impacts our infrastructure
- Upsides - more services, improve downtown, events
- Realignment of 104 and Ferry traffic changes
- Comp Plan update and Puget Sound Regional Council review process

Growth and Growing Pains

- Getting the word out about development plans and processes
- Connecting people
- Engaging the community in the process
- Advocating for infrastructure

Emergency Preparations

- Emergency services will not be able to reach or have capacity to deal with all demands (up to 2 weeks) after a major disaster
- We are on our own, but we are not alone.
Neighbors help neighbors
- Kitsap County DEM Map Your Neighborhood program provides a guide and resources

Emergency Preparations

- Kingston Prepares website
- Trap Line communications when all else fails
- Grow food for your neighborhood
- Reference Prepared Neighborhoods by local author Scott James

Effective Community Communications

- How do people find out what is going on in our community?
- Why is it so hard to get the word out? Information overload?
- There are lots of communications resources
- Key tools: electronic sign board, local websites, news outlets

Effective Community Communications

- Who can help? Village Green, Library, Port, Neighborhood Assn's, Service Clubs, County, KCAC, Chamber of Commerce, Schools
- Chamber of Commerce calendar initiative
- Not everyone cares, but those who do should be able to find out what is going on in the community

Your Vision for Kingston

- Safer for kids to walk to school
- More Closeness to nature
- More Affordable housing
- More Services in the urban core
- Small town feel/Less (negative) effects of growth
- Young people able to move or stay here

Your Vision for Kingston

- Participation in KCAC and the Comprehensive plan process
- Support local businesses
- Participate in the 104 realignment and ferry traffic planning process
- Community calendar

Your Vision for Kingston

- Save the Firehouse theater
- Foster youth activities
- Engage with the Port of Kingston development plan

Welcoming Community

- We are a friendly community, but newcomers may have difficulty engaging
- Diverse cultures are not well represented in our community
- Public art can be an asset for creating a welcoming space
- Provide more information about resources and recreation

Welcoming Community

- Respond to incidents of racism, bullying to support youth
- Bring youth representation into organizations and event planning
- Welcome Wagon
- Support Coffee Oasis

Parks and Trails

- Safe bike routes
- Walkability, including to schools
- Assure accessibility of quiet natural spaces
- Invasive species eradication
- MPD/VG wooded area improvement
- Preserve natural areas within the NK Heritage Park

Parks and Trails

- Apply for grants for Safe Route to Schools
- Update 2018 Trail Plan
- Write letters, engage officials, participate in public meetings
- Conduct surveys
- New website
- Publish news articles

Affordable Housing

- Young people are unable to afford housing
- Wages for essential workers fall below the cost of available housing
- Housing stock does not match the need in volume and price range
- Homelessness is complex, requiring broad spectrum of options
- Not in my backyard is a obstacle to many solutions
- The profit motive alone will not solve the problems

Affordable Housing

Actions:

- Support minimum wage increases
- Educate ourselves on the issues
- Talk to unsheltered persons in our community
- Advocate for policies and regulations which support affordable housing
- Join Kingston Affordable Housing Working Group

Economic Vitality

- Proposed definition of downtown: Shopping, dining, and entertainment in a pedestrian-friendly, intimate setting
 - Plan required
 - Clusters of businesses creating a critical mass
 - An anchor tenant worth driving an hour (or taking a ferry ride)
 - Activity after 6 PM

Economic Vitality - Issues

- Kingston residents need to pay attention and make input e.g.:
 - County Sub-Area Plan
 - Port of Kingston Strategic Plan for Development
 - SR 104 Working Group
 - Do businesses understand their needs/customers in a tough retail environment?
 - County design standard/permitting are burdensome
 - Leadership is key; now fractured and without adequate community input
 - There are no Kingston resident champions bringing the community together

Key Takeaways and Outcomes

- **Racial Justice** - There is a problem here. We all bear a responsibility to do our part to address it.
- **Growth and Growing Pains** - Like it or not, we are growing. The best way to deal with it is to proactively participate in the planning permitting process to ensure adequate infrastructure is included to support it.

Key Takeaways and Outcomes

- **Emergency Preparations** - Map Your Neighborhood! Get your own household ready, then engage your neighbors.
- **Effective Community Communications** - We have resources. Use all means available to get the word out.

Key Takeaways and Outcomes

- **Your Vision for Kingston** - We like it here! We will need to work to keep the things we like and manage the things that are going to change.
- **Welcoming Community** - We need to do more to make newcomers and visitors feel welcome here. Public art can be an asset in this. Information is vital.

Key Takeaways and Outcomes

- **Parks and Trails** - We want walkability, including safe routes to school. Information distribution is important.
- **Affordable Housing** - Housing stock does not match the need in volume and pricing. Public policy changes are required to address the issues.

Key Takeaways and Outcomes

- **Economic Vitality:**
 - The Port of Kingston and Kitsap County must work together.
 - Provide information to the community e.g. ferry traffic projects.
 - Community voices must advocate together with one voice. Need leadership.
 - Provide tools to local businesses e.g. Incubators

Key Takeaways and Outcomes

- Lack of Information about the community was raised in several groups.
- A Kingston Backgrounder with questions designed by several participants and answers provided by Kitsap County was created.
- Link on KCAC Website:

https://www.kitsapgov.com/BOC_p/CAC%20Documents/Backgrounder%20for%20Kingston%20Community%203-28-22.pdf

Thank you for your support!

