

LWV-Kitsap Bremerton/CK Unit Meeting Notes--Saturday, February 19, 2022

Kitsap United Way Conference Room/Zoom

In Person: Maureen Cervinsky, John Cervinsky, Amanda Rodgers, Connie Marchant, Janice McLemore, Raejean Bridges-Avalos, Candy Rankin

Via Zoom: Guests Katharine Shaffer, Kitsap County Commissioners; and Marlaina Simmons, Kitsap Strong; Pat Troxell, Gail Sackman, Kathleen Gallagher, Robin Muir, Debi Barner, Linda Museus, SK unit member Rochelle Karlsen

Maureen introduced Katharine Shaffer, policy analyst with the Kitsap County Commissioners office. Katharine gave us a tour of the KCC website and answered questions on where to locate particular topics.

Google **Kitsap County Commissioners** to access the **website:**

https://www.kitsapgov.com/BOC_p/Pages/default.aspx Email: kitsapcommissioners@co.kitsap.wa.us

The Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) is the governing body of Kitsap County, consisting of three members who each represent one of three geographical districts. Rob Gelder represents North Kitsap; Charlotte Garrido, South Kitsap; and Ed Wolfe, Central Kitsap. During the COVID-19 pandemic, Commissioners have been holding their public meetings remotely. With many restrictions now lifted, Commissioners have resumed in-person meetings, while maintaining the option for the public to participate virtually via Zoom.

Clicking on the name of each commissioner below their photo, you will find bios of each and helpful links to their newsletters and filmed talks with agency representatives and community leaders. Scrolling down on the webpage, you can click on links for: the full 2022 Board Meeting Calendar, upcoming Board Meeting Agendas, Watch Past Meetings.

The Commissioners meet most Mondays for morning and afternoon briefings. Regular BOCC meetings are held the 2nd & 4th Monday of the month at 5:30pm. Wednesday morning work study sessions include agenda review for the following Monday briefings. With the exception of executive and closed sessions, all BOCC meetings are open to the public. The Agenda page lists individual agenda briefings so you can learn what the Commissioners will be talking about. Attendance Options include a Zoom link.

Commissioners also serve on many different boards, rotating chairmanships each year. A look at Commissioner Boards & Councils under **Helpful Links** at the bottom of the page gives an idea of the large number of varied organizations the Commissioners play a part in, at local, regional and state levels. Look at the **Find...** section to access Meeting Minutes, Budget, County Organization Chart. **How Do I...** will help you learn which Commissioner represents you and how to contact him or her.

Katharine said the Meeting Minutes are usually delayed getting on the website, as they must first be approved and then are posted by the county auditor's office. For specific minutes, requests can be taken at KitsapCommissioners@co.kitsap.wa.us or please follow these steps: 1) From the Commissioners' homepage, scroll down to **Find...** then click on Minutes, Resolutions and Ordinances. 2) A page will come up with the words **Kitsap County Auditor** at the top. At the left bottom of that page, click on the small **Enter** box. 3) A page will come up saying **Enter search criteria**. There are 6 tabs above that phrase--click

on the far right tab **Minutes**. 4) Now a new screen says **To access Kitsap County Minutes**: Typing in the date in the Document Number Field, as the instructions on the screen say to do, did not work. Entering the same date for the Start and End date, as the **Searching Help** says to do, did not work. Entering a date range from 11/8/2021 to 11/22/2021 did work (only for the 11/8 Minutes because the 11/22 Minutes were not yet posted). 5) Click on the checkmark at right (to remove it) on **Search All Types**, then click on **Kitsap County Minutes** under **Document Type**. 6) If you have entered a date range for which there are Minutes posted, you should now be able to click on the small **Search** box at bottom left. 7) This search had 1 result (the November 8 Meeting Minutes). Under **Description**, click on the live link to **Kitsap County Minutes 1240-2020** (the document number that was not known when beginning this search). Under **Summary, Workflow Status**: it says "**This document is being processed. The information displayed is subject to change.**" They all seem to say that. 8) On this new screen, second box down on the left, click on **View as PDF 1240-2020**, and finally the Minutes come up and can be printed.

BOCC oversees all county government departments whose heads are not elected officials, including Community Development, Human Services, Public Works, Parks and County Administrator. Those department heads communicate frequently to the Commissioners and report to them during a regularly scheduled monthly meeting. BOCC oversight includes hiring those department heads.

When asked about her responsibilities as a policy analyst, Katharine said the position covers a lot of different areas. Because the Commissioners are in scheduled sessions much of the time, they sometimes rely on staff for preparation during back to back meetings. Katharine and the other two policy analysts have a varied role within the Commissioners' Office; for example, they may put together some talking points to support discussions. Other duties include responding to issues that arise in the community; when several derelict vessels in local waters became a hot button issue, the analysts found contacts through DNR and helped form a policy regarding the vessels. They follow bills in the WA state legislature that might affect Kitsap County and report on their progress to the Commissioners. Writing contracts in order to distribute CARES act money to county agencies was a large part of their job at the end of 2020, and they are called on to organize events such as Town Hall meetings.

Pat asked if Kitsap County employs an Americans with Disabilities (ADA) Act compliance officer. Since moving to Kitsap County in the 1970s, she has seen very slow progress in implementing the act's rules of requiring buildings to provide accessible ramps, for example. Pat said the compliance issue comes under the jurisdiction of Civil Rights rather than Human Services. Katharine said she will find out the answer and get back to us via email. If we come up with any further questions, she encouraged us to contact her--if she does not have the answer herself, she will know the right person in the Commissioner's office to contact.

Katharine's email: kshaffer@co.kitsap.wa.us

We very much appreciate Katharine's taking time out on a Saturday morning to speak with us, show us around the BOCC webpage, and give us some insight into the complex workings of the Commissioners' office. Thank you from all of us!

<https://www.kitsapstrong.org>

Maureen next introduced Marlaina Simmons, Networks Coordinator for Kitsap Strong, a multi-pronged community initiative to improve the health and well-being of all children, families, and adults in Kitsap. Created in 2014 out of Kitsap County Health Priorities, a collaboration of several agencies, Kitsap Strong was housed in Kitsap Public Health District offices until the pandemic. The backbone staff have now been working from home. Marlaina was Kitsap County Census Coordinator in 2020, serves as Co-Lead of Peninsulas Early Childhood Coalition and was recently appointed to the Kitsap County Council for Human Rights.

Kitsap Strong's team also includes Alyson Rotter, Graduate Strong Network Manager and Cristina Roark, Innovation Network Manager. It is a coalition of more than 110 organizations in Kitsap County, a group of community leaders whose shared agenda is to work toward preventing and overcoming childhood trauma by building a culture of empathy, equity, and connection.

Original funding dollars for Kitsap Strong came from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, through Kitsap Community Foundation, with United Way & Suquamish Foundation providing matching funds. Ballmer Group & Kaiser Permanente have provided support. Currently Olympic College, United Way & Suquamish Foundation provide annual funds and they receive grants from other sources. Kitsap County government is represented on Kitsap Strong's leadership committee by staff members of the Human Services department, and the organization holds a yearly event with elected officials.

Holding as a central goal to "Help All People Flourish", Kitsap Strong approaches that goal with collective action to shift community dynamics. The path to preventing childhood trauma begins with education; to date, Kitsap Strong has educated close to 9,000 people on the N.E.A.R. sciences (Neuroscience, Epigenetics, ACEs [Adverse Childhood Experiences], and Resilience). They estimate that over 400,000 others have interacted with organizations and community groups who have studied this science with Kitsap Strong and made changes to their services. The impact of Kitsap Strong partners is felt through the changes that ripple through our community and ecosystem.

Studies have shown that childhood trauma is the root cause of the most serious problems that people in our area face. Chronic health problems, high divorce rates, drug abuse, depression and homelessness have all been linked to childhood trauma. The more trauma a person has, the higher the risk for major challenges in adulthood. BRFSS (Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System) is a health-related telephone survey of adults 18 & older conducted in each state. Results for 2011 showed that 37% of Kitsap County residents had 3 or more ACEs--preliminary 2019 data showed a possible decrease to 30%. A circle graphic shared by Marlaina showed that through the prevention of ACEs in children and building resiliency with adults, we could eliminate 67% of suicide attempts, 78% of IV drug use, 61% of incarcerations, among many other markers.

Recent science has shown that making one important shift in the way we interact with people can be a huge difference with people who have suffered childhood trauma. The key is to put yourself in that person's shoes. We need to stop asking, what's wrong with you and start asking, what happened to you?

Marlaina shared a graphic of the overall structure of Kitsap Strong:

- Graduate Strong Network helps prevent & overcome childhood trauma by creating school and life success
- Innovation Network works with organizations to create a culture of empathy and connection
- H.E.A.L. Network (Health Eating, Active Living) promotes nutrition and physical health
- Thriving Neighborhoods Network promotes supporting one another
- N.E.A.R. Education shares new science about our brains and bodies

Graduate Strong Network: <https://www.graduatestrong.org>

We know that connections with caring and competent adults are key to overcoming childhood trauma. This is a cradle to career initiative to help children and youth have everything they need to flourish, which includes several focused action workgroups.

Mentoring Workgroup: Graduate Strong is a convener for local mentor programs in our county. If you want to get involved in our community helping kids, mentorship is a great way to do that. Check the website for a list of mentor programs available.

Future Bound Activities: Includes Scholarship Workshops and a program called "Welcome to the Real World", an experience for students in which they choose a career, which is associated with its average annual income. They then walk through the tables of life, covering housing & car costs, life mishaps, etc. so they can understand better what that income might provide with the career path they have chosen.

Financial Aid Navigators: It is estimated that by 2030, 70% of family-wage jobs will require some sort of credential, whether it be 2-year/4-year college, apprenticeship, tech school, etc. Having a trusted adult to help navigate financial aid applications could make a big difference. This program was piloted in 2019 with Kitsap Public Library, and since then, Graduate Strong has offered 2 trainings/year to various organizations and individuals.

Robin stressed that financial aid (loans) can easily translate to debt and students become overwhelmed financially for their foreseeable future. What steps can be taken to help mitigate that problem? Marlaina talked about the Washboard platform, used by Graduate Strong in their Scholarship Workshops. Students can create a profile, with their interests, transcripts, and be matched to available scholarships. A large number of scholarships go unclaimed each year. Olympic College now offers the first year free to any Bremerton High School graduate, and the plan is to expand that offer to graduates of all Kitsap County high schools.

Trauma Sensitive Schools/Collaborative Learning Academy: A collaboration with OESD in Bremerton (Olympic Educational Service District). A year-long journey, where teams from local schools apply to be part of a cohort and receive new knowledge & reflection to provide a perspective shift, leading to change in educators' beliefs and practices. The ultimate goal is that they lead and implement the new knowledge and skills in their school, resulting in changes system-wide. Graduate Strong pays stipends to the team

members, for release time to pay for subs or materials. Through grants they have been able to convene five cohorts, serving over 50 teams in our local schools. Many of their grant funders want to support only schools with high levels of free and reduced-lunch rates. However, ACEs occur in families of all income levels, so this year Graduate Strong is using some of its own money to be able to begin offering the year-long training to schools not falling into that lunch rate category.

Handle With Care: Originated in West Virginia. Any time a first responder or law enforcement officer responds to a call where a child is present, be it a medical emergency, domestic violence situation, or other crisis, that person will email the school district, writing only the child's name & "Handle With Care". No details of the event are shared. The intent is to let the school be aware that the child has had a traumatic experience. Maybe he or she is falling asleep at the desk the next day, not participating. That behavior might have otherwise been met with a punitive stance and can instead be met with compassion and understanding. Currently 4 of our 6 local school districts have implemented Handle With Care and Kitsap Strong is looking to roll it out county-wide.

Innovation Network:

Seeks to create spaces for leaders of organizations to incorporate trauma-informed practices into their work and evaluate their services through the perspective of the clients they serve. The model for Collaborative Learning Academy originally began with non-profit organizations within our community. Kitsap Strong provides funding to these organizations for the training because a lot of them use a fee-for-service structure and Kitsap Strong does not want them to lose income for their time not seeing clients. These teams spend a year taking a deeper dive into the N.E.A.R. sciences. A pilot program with law enforcement officers in Kitsap County breaks down 8 hours of content into 30-minute videos, allowing the officers to easily digest the content at their own pace.

Kitsap H.E.A.L. Network:

A partnership with WSU Extension & Kitsap Public Health District. The goal is to increase equitable access to healthy foods and opportunities for active living.

A corner store pilot project in an identified food desert in Bremerton has placed fresh fruit and veggies front and center when customers walk into the store. Another project works with early learning providers to increase their healthy food options and physical activity. A movement campaign to get Kitsap residents outdoors and moving is in the planning stage, to launch in May, 2022.

Thriving Neighborhoods Network:

Kitsap Strong believes that every member of our community can be a leader, so they strive to listen to all voices and empower them to take hope-filled actions in their lives. The program is still in its infancy--they are actively gathering natural leaders to develop community-based goals and take collective action.

Neighbors are encouraged to identify issues they want to tackle & then receive support.

Marlaina highlighted City Chapel of Bremerton (formerly Calvary Chapel, Silverdale) as a partner in this network. The church has developed a Love the Neighborhood initiative in Bremerton's Nollwood neighborhood. They really are walking alongside the residents of that neighborhood, setting up an after-school homework club, providing rides to the grocery store, hosting a back to school BBQ & giving school supplies to each student.

Marlaina stressed that all of these efforts are community work and we are all part of that. For our part, we are deeply grateful for the dedication and compassion of the three leaders of Kitsap Strong and all their partnering organizations and individuals. Together they are creating pathways of healing, hope and resiliency for each Kitsap resident. We truly learned a lot from Marlaina's informative and inspiring presentation. Thank you very much, Marlaina, for sharing with us. We applaud you and Kitsap Strong!

Know Your County Booklet Revision Plans:

The remainder of our unit meeting was spent talking about our planned revision of the *Know Your County* booklet, put together in 2005 by LWV-K members, with assistance from county staff. LWV-K member Judy Friedberg-Nerf led the project.

Raejean, our organizer and point of contact for this project, provided a working draft of the revised outline. She will send out an email to our members--join the project! Any and all suggestions and assistance will be welcome.

The goal is to have the information gathering phase of this project done by June.

The primary intent is to write a new downloadable e-version, and we also want to produce a more compact version published in booklet form. The finished product (booklet form) should be polished and professional-looking, and we intend to call upon outside help. Maureen will ask Amy Peloff from LWVWA about publishing resources and available grants.

Alicia Vause has developed a webpage for us, specifically as a place to post information sources and the work in progress: <<https://www.lwv-kitsap.org/know-your-county-revision-files/>> Do check it out. Some information has already been posted.

The 2005 booklet is broken into 5 sections--our revision may have 10 or 11 sections.

Some of our unit members have volunteered to take charge of some sections:

Pat: History, Geography & Population

Janice: Human Services

Amanda: Health District, Library, Kitsap Transit

Connie: Education

Linda Streissguth: Kitsap County Commissioners

Raejean: Voting & Citizen Participation

Maureen & Raejean: Elected Officials (except Kitsap County Commissioners)

When unit members are submitting information to the know-your-county-revision files, Raejean initially asked that it be written in MS Word. After further reflection, it has been decided that members can send their information in whatever format works for them and it will all be put into a unified format at a later time. We will not use photos at this point. We want to make the final product as concise as possible. We hope it will be a relevant and helpful resource for students and the general public.

Raejean noted that the section on voting and citizen participation in the 2005 booklet appeared at the end. She proposed moving it to the beginning of the revised version and making it a guiding principle of the whole project, a framework for helping to figure out what is important to include.

Some points of discussion:

- Maureen asked Katharine if we could have the county's permission to use their wording for some of the booklet's sections, i.e., Regional/County-wide Coalitions
- We would need to get permission to use the county logo for the front of the booklet, if that's what we choose to do
- Katharine will be a good resource to ask where to find information kshaffer@co.kitsap.wa.us
- We have a 2019 Kitsap County map--need one from a more recent year?
- We want to locate the 2020 census info with the county summary details
- We have a 2019 Kitsap County Functional Organization Chart from the Kitsap County Commissioners' website
- A separate publication of non-profit organizations in Kitsap County may already exist. On Giving Tuesday, Kitsap Community Foundation has an extensive online list
- Does the county have an impact on United Way? Are Kitsap Mental Health and Kitsap Human Society contracted by the county?
- What is the difference between non-county government agencies and coalitions? It would be helpful to have definitions. Some agencies have boundaries identical to county boundaries. It may depend on where the agency's funding comes from. Kitsap Public Health District is a junior district of Kitsap County. All their funds go through Kitsap County and get redistributed. Amanda, who works for the Kitsap Public Health District, is not a county employee.
- Many special districts exist within the county: schools, fire, water, sewer, ports, public health, public facilities, PUDs, KRL, Kitsap Transit. In order to remain concise, we could provide a link to some of these organizations rather than write about each one.

Debi shared that she has been attending a 10-week seminar entitled Cultivating Civic Conversations, led by Katharine Murphy of LWVWA. The class uses the LWVWA's elementary civics textbook, *The State We're In: Washington* as their framework. <<https://lwvwa.org/This-Month-in-the-League/12193230>>
The current series of classes is ending soon, but you could learn of upcoming dates for more CCC classes.

Maureen said it's important for LWV-K to support organizations in our community in ways we can be helpful. We are fortunate so many exist that are doing important and meaningful work.

MARK YOUR CALENDAR:

OUR NEXT UNIT MEETING IS SATURDAY, MARCH 19 @ 10AM

In person at United Way in Bremerton & via Zoom

Our guest will be Monica Bernhard, Chief Operating Officer of Kitsap Mental Health Services

Among many other topics, she will talk about Pendleton Place, the 72-unit apartment complex opening in March after five years of planning, fundraising and construction. Spearheaded by KMHS, it will have a lasting community impact by providing permanent, supported housing to people experiencing both chronic homelessness and serious mental health or substance abuse disorders.