

Hello Bremerton/CK Unit Members,

Here are the notes from Saturday's unit meeting.

Please note the March 21 Program Planning Meeting & plan to attend!

Candy

LWV-Kitsap Bremerton/CK Unit Meeting Notes--Saturday, March 18, 2023

Kitsap United Way Conference Room/Zoom

In Person: Raejean Bridges-Avalos, Denise Justice, Katie Pratt, Connie Marchant, Candy Rankin, Debi Barner, Kathleen Cahall, Victoria Hilt, Susan Griggs (NK)

Via Zoom: Pat Troxell

While Maureen is traveling, Denise & Katie were our Zoom hosts, Raejean led our unit meeting, Connie opened up the building & provided refreshments.

MARK YOUR CALENDAR:

LWV-Kitsap Program Planning Meeting

Tuesday, March 21, 10am to Noon via Zoom <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85253119275>

Meeting ID: 852 5311 9275 Passcode: planning

Affordable Housing for Those in the Middle

**Saturday, March 25, 1:00pm to 3:00pm In Person at Village Green Community Center
26159 Dulay Rd NE, Kingston**

or via Zoom: [click here on March 25 at 1pm](#) to join Zoom (or go to lwv-kitsap.org website)

Webinar ID: 821 3634 2236

Bremerton/CK Unit's Next Meeting

**Saturday, April 15, 10am to Noon, United Way, 645 4th St., Bremerton or via Zoom
Unit member Katie Pratt will talk about her extensive work in historic preservation.**

LWVWA Redistricting Reform Campaign:

In advance of our Kitsap League's March 21 Program Planning Meeting, Susan Griggs joined us to talk about LWVWA's planned multi-year statewide campaign to reform the structure and procedures of the Washington State Redistricting Commission through a state constitutional amendment and statutory changes prior to the 2031 redistricting cycle.

As we know, the 2021 Washington State Redistricting Commission failed to create maps that represent the people. The commissioners met behind closed doors, past the midnight deadline, rushing to approve maps they had barely seen. Incumbent protection & partisan tradeoffs dominated district line decisions, one local example being the city of Bremerton remaining divided into three districts rather than all parts of the city being placed into the same district. The State Supreme Court let the negotiated maps stand.

The Redistricting Reform Task Force strongly feels that the people of Washington State deserve a transparent, equitable and accessible mapping process and to be well represented by their maps. It seeks to:

- 1) Broaden the Commission**, adding commissioners who are not political operatives & not affiliated with the two major parties; a structured process to identify & select commissioners is recommended
- 2) Create permanent staff** to support redistricting data collection, analysis, technology & public communication
- 3) Create True Process Transparency**
- 4) Put into law Definitions of all Redistricting Mapping Criteria & how they will be Ranked**
- 5) Insure Universal Access with language & physical accessibility for input & information output**
- 6) Guarantee comprehensive & inclusive process for Extensive Outreach**

The Task Force is currently developing a survey to learn what the public knows about redistricting and what people think might be important in the process, i.e., not dividing up towns into different districts; keeping communities of interest together; creating more competitive districts, so elections are actually giving people choices. **Instead of officials picking voters, full-scale reform would have voters pick their officials.**

With a current budget estimate of \$1.5 million, this major advocacy campaign will require significant time and energy to be successful over the next 8 years. The Task Force has outlined four major phases of work over that time frame in order to achieve reform before the next Commission is seated in January, 2031:

- A. **Build a Network (2023-2024)**
- B. **Speak Out (2025-2027)**
- C. **Pass Legislation (2026-2027)**
- D. **Implementation Watch Dog (2028-2031)**

The 20+ Local Leagues in Washington State are critical to the success of this campaign.

We can begin by attending our Kitsap League's March 21 Program Planning meeting & voting with the membership to encourage the LWVWA Board of Directors to commit to this redistricting campaign and to raising the resources to be successful.

Know Your County Project:

Raejean gave us a thorough summary of the extensive work that has been done by several members of our unit on the "Know Your County" ongoing project. The project began as a revision of the *Know Your County: Kitsap* 2005 booklet put together & published by LWV-Kitsap members. Wanting the completed report to be comprehensive, committee members quickly learned that the project would be much more involved than originally anticipated.

The Phase One report concentrates on elected Kitsap County officials and the various government departments that serve the citizens of the county. It gives an overview of the workings of the county government, bringing the information together in one place to illustrate how the county operates. Each of the elected officials graciously either reviewed the material personally or gave the committee a contact person to review and approve the various articles. County Administrator Karen Goon gave generously of her time and answered many questions.

The online information report covers 39 pages. It begins with a flowchart of all the entities within Kitsap County government, followed by a preface about the League of Women Voters and about the project itself. A live link to Return to the Table of Contents allows for easy reading; the report is very interactive.

Section 1: County Elected Officials contains 9 subsections, each with the website, email/phone number, job description and detailed information concerning one of the elected offices. Section 2: Kitsap County Board of Commissioners Divisions lists the 6 departments operating under the jurisdiction of the county Board of Commissioners and follows the same format as for the elected officials.

After hearing Raejean's presentation of this Phase One report at its March 4 meeting, the Board wants to put the report on our lww-kitsap.org website. Raejean will also be talking about the project & report at the March 21 Program Planning meeting.

Phase Two's proposed topics include: Voting; History, Geography & Map of Kitsap County; Special Districts; Municipalities; Military Facilities; State Government and Tribal Government. The committee invites anyone interested in researching a topic to contact Maureen and join in when members resume their work in the near future.

At some point, the online version of this Know Your County report may be condensed for publication into a booklet. The committee envisions partnering with our libraries, Chamber of Commerce, community agencies for public outreach and distribution, both for the online and printed versions. As well, members hope that schools in our county will want to use it as a resource for their Civics classes.

Summer Book Discussion Group:

Kathleen Cahall is once again graciously offering to choose a book for unit members to read & to lead us in our discussion. She will be reading a title she has in mind. We will most likely meet on two occasions for a brownbag lunch discussion. July & August or August & September. Specifics to follow.

Ideas for Future Unit Meetings:

We came up with numerous ideas of speakers/organizations we would like to come speak with us, and we decided to prioritize these three:

1. **Keta Legacy Foundation**--Unit member Amy Lawrence is on the Board and will either speak with us herself or suggest names of other board members.
2. **Kitsap County Sheriff's office**--We have not yet had an officer from the County Sheriff's department speak with us. With police reform currently on the legislative agenda, it would be particularly timely to hear from our sheriff/undersheriff.
3. **Public Utilities District (PUD)**--We talked about how many Special Districts exist in Kitsap County. PUD is one of the largest, covering water & wastewater, fiber internet.

We happily came up with a long list of additional possibilities for future unit meetings:

--Central Kitsap Fire & Rescue: Lots going on with new construction, public education offerings, strategic plan
--U.S. Navy: Naval Base Kitsap is by far the county's largest employer, with close to 20,000 civilian & over 11,000 active duty employees. Raejean has the email address of their Public Affairs officer.
--Kitsap Public Health District: Currently finalizing their Strategic Plan & 5 initiatives based on community input
--Kitsap Community Resources: Community action agency providing services from birth on, currently doing needs assessment, with their report due soon
--Sound Publishing: Talk about their group of local newspapers, how they're faring, future plans
--Jim Aho, Port of Illahee commissioner & long-time steward of Illahee Preserve
--Kitsap Strong: Community initiative to improve the health & well-being of all children, families & adults in Kitsap, currently working on its Strategic Initiatives. Unit member Victoria Hilt is Kitsap Strong's Community Facilitator.
--Kitsap County Commissioners Katie Walter (Central Kitsap area) & Charlotte Garrido (represents part of Bremerton)
--Great Peninsula Conservancy: A regional land trust, protecting natural habitats, rural landscapes & open space of the West Puget Sound (Kitsap Sun 12/2022 article about GPC)
--Central Kitsap School District Superintendent (Dr. Erin Prince was our guest December, 2019)
--Bremerton School District Superintendent (then Superintendent Aaron Leavell joined us August, 2020)
--Food insecurity in Kitsap County: per Maureen, The Seattle Times published an article about food insecurity in the state that included a chart from the UW ranking all the counties (In June, 2020 we invited three representatives of organizations in Kitsap striving to ease food insecurity in our communities)
--Kitsap Immigration Assistance Center: Hear again from KIAC with an emphasis on how we can help (KIAC representatives were our guests August, 2019 & September, 2022)
--Update on Kitsap County's Comprehensive Plan 2024 (Eric Baker, Deputy Director, Kitsap County Dept. of Administrative Services, spoke with us October, 2022)
--Behavioral Health Navigators: Addressing homeless & addiction. Pat told us that, following an incident at The Pearl, where she lives, an official will be giving a presentation to residents on how the 988 mental health line is integrated, now most often coupled with police response. She will gather information and report back to our unit.

Thanks to all for your great ideas and for helping to keep us a strong, cohesive unit.

Recorded by Candy Rankin