

“NEIGHBORHOOD EXPECTATIONS” STATEMENT READY FOR COMMENT AND APRIL 17 VOTE

KPCA’s Executive Group has endorsed overwhelmingly a draft “Neighborhood Expectations” statement that is the next step in our community revitalization program. The draft statement is printed inside, starting on page 4.

The “Neighborhood Expectations” document is our vision for the future. It is an aspirational statement about who we are as a community, and our vision of the community we want to become. It is a positive document, emphasizing the strengthening of the bonds between people as the best way to strengthen the community. It is a document that seeks to improve the community not through mandatory rules (KPCA is a voluntary organization without the enforcement powers of a homeowners’ association) but through the power of friendly persuasion. Creating expectations for an increasingly diverse community means first strengthening bonds between people, through our block parties, our new neighbor welcome dinner, and block captain efforts. Once we get to know each other better, we will understand each other, and most importantly, respect each other. Respect for one’s neighbors is a key element of these Expectations.

There are three components to the “Neighborhood Expectations” statement. One, the statement calls for compliance with zoning and property maintenance codes. It calls for neighbors to work together to bring homes into compliance, and encourages residents to report continued violations. The statement condemns the possession, distribution, and use of illegal drugs and calls on residents to stop speeding, reckless driving, and driving under the influence of alcohol.

Two, the statement “codifies” the “unwritten” rules we generally think of concerning our homes and properties. It asks residents to shovel snow from their walks, rake leaves, prune plants, and mow yards. It asks residents to keep up the appearance of their properties. It encourages us to be good stewards of the environment, particularly pertaining to storm drains and adjacent park areas.

Three, the statement strongly encourages residents to build personal bonds with each other. It calls on us to make efforts to understand and get to know neighbors of different backgrounds, whether those differences be race, ethnicity, age, national origin, or socio-economic status. It urges us to respect others’ individuality, but seeks to balance individuality with “friendly persuasion” to consider the effect of one’s actions on the community as a whole. It asks us to help our neighbors in need. And, it encourages all of us to be active participants in the community. In short, it calls for us individually, and collectively as a community, to be the best that we can be.

KPCA intends to distribute the statement widely once a final version is approved. It will be posted on our website, printed in our annual directory, and included in our welcome packet for new neighbors. It may be provided to realtors and others with a business or other appropriate interest in the neighborhood. Residents will be asked to keep a copy handy and to work together to implement as many of the expectations as possible. In short, we hope the statement will guide the community for years to come.

Please take some time to review the draft statement. It is now open for public comment. If you have comments or proposed amendments, please send them to jcook@cookkitts.com. Most importantly, please come to the KPCA meeting on April 17, and be part of your community’s effort to set its vision for the future.

NEIGHBORHOOD EXPECTATIONS

We, the members of the Kings Park Civic Association (KPCA), adopt these neighborhood expectations and invite all residents of Kings Park to embrace them as well. This “Neighborhood Expectations” statement is our statement of who Kings Park residents are and who we want to be as a community. We participate in a voluntary organization, the KPCA, and this statement is not a “rule book” or other legal authority. Instead, it is an aspirational statement of the values by which we try to live, both for the betterment of our individual lives and for our community.

VISION: We seek to be a community that is safe, vital, and attractive, and where the rights of all people are respected. We celebrate our right to the “pursuit of happiness” in our individual homes and lives and through our community. Strong communities are essential for our individual as well as our collective happiness and success. But, we recognize that a strong community does not happen on its own. Our community will only be strong if we continually commit ourselves to making it that way. Getting to know our neighbors, showing respect for others, conducting ourselves and maintaining our properties in a positive manner, lending our time and talents to the community, and participating in community events and organizations will result in a strong community of which we can all be proud.

A. Who We Are

1. Kings Park is a neighborhood of single-family homes located in the center of Fairfax County, Virginia, west of the Capital Beltway, bordered by Braddock Road, Rolling Road, Lake Accotink Park, and the Danbury Forest Community.

2. We are an increasingly diverse community. Our diversity extends to race, ethnicity, national origin, age, religion, educational attainment, and socio-economic factors. We choose to focus on the positive benefits of our diversity, respecting our different backgrounds.

3. We are individuals. We celebrate our individual achievements and enjoy life in a society where the individual rights are valued, and where people have the opportunity to pursue their own goals and ambitions.

4. We celebrate our community. Living in a safe, vital, attractive, and respectful community brings benefits to us as individuals as well as collectively.

5. We welcome our new neighbors, and invite them to enjoy our community as we do. We look forward to the opportunity to grow personally by getting to know each other, respecting our differences and celebrating our commonality.

B. About our Homes

6. We recognize that our community infrastructure (driveways, sidewalks, water and sewer capacity, roads, etc.) is designed to support single-family homes, and not multiple-family dwellings. We recognize that Fairfax County has enacted occupancy, zoning, health, and safety regulations regarding the use of our homes to protect the individuals who live here, to ensure that our infrastructure can continue to support the community, and to maintain an environment of moderate density.

7. Fairfax County regulations permit three types of occupancy of our homes in Kings Park. First, a home may support an unlimited number of family members, that is, people related by blood or marriage, plus up to two unrelated boarders. Second, a home may support four unrelated occupants. Third, a home may support two single parents with their minor children, up to a total of six children. Because our community is zoned for single-family homes, regardless of which of these three occupancy arrangements exist in a home, the home must continue to be a single-dwelling unit. Primarily, that means the home may only have one kitchen, unless a special permit is obtained from Fairfax County.

8. Fairfax County Property Maintenance Code requires that each sleeping area be provided with an emergency access window, of a minimum area of approximately six square feet, and a smoke alarm.

9. Because these regulations provide for the health and safety of our residents, we encourage residents to become aware of these regulations and to comply with them. Residents should attempt to resolve violations by working together, and communicating directly. However, if issues persist, residents should report concerns to Fairfax County. Confidential reports can be made by calling 703-324-1300 or going online at www.fairfaxcounty.gov/DPZ/eservices.

10. Because we take pride in both our individual dignity and our community, we strive to maintain the outward appearance of our homes in an appealing way. We cut our grass, prune plants, rake leaves, and shovel snow from our sidewalks and driveways. We maintain our yards in appropriate ways, and do not pile up trash or storage items in an unattractive way. We understand that these efforts not only keep our homes and community attractive, but will serve to increase the value of our homes.

11. We only park vehicles on streets and driveways. The current Fairfax County ordinance prohibits parking on yards and we encourage residents to comply. We learn about and comply with regulations governing the parking of commercial and oversized vehicles.

12. We support the Fairfax County recycling, waste treatment, and environmental programs. We do not clutter our yards with yard waste and leaves nor allow environmentally unfriendly items to block/pass into the storm drainage system. We respect our parkland and stream valley and do not encroach on these lands. We are

aware of the fact that most of the storm water in the Kings Park Community eventually flows to Lake Accotink, the Potomac River, and the Chesapeake Bay.

13. We respect our neighbors' individuality, and strive not to judge their artistic or architectural tastes, recognizing that we may have different opinions on paint and siding colors, styles, and designs of our homes. We also strive in our artistic and architectural choices to respect the character of our neighborhood.

14. Because we live in relative proximity to each other, we are respectful of our neighbors' rights to peace and quiet, and we control the noise levels and celebratory and recreational activities in our homes so as to respect our neighbors, while recognizing that they respect our rights to enjoy festive occasions.

C. Helping Each Other and Our Community

15. A strong community is one where neighbors help each other. If a neighbor, due to age, disability, military service, or other reason needs help mowing the grass, raking leaves, shoveling snow, cleaning the house, or with simple maintenance, a neighbor helps out.

16. Strong communities are an asset to the individuals who live within them. Strong communities require individuals to participate in them. We encourage every Kings Park resident to be involved in at least one community activity: neighborhood watch, block captain, clean up projects, school volunteer, etc.

17. We help those who are not our direct neighbors through a neighborhood communication and assistance system. Block captains or others can put out the word that a neighbor is in need, and people will step forward to assist.

18. Neighbors watch out for each other's safety and for the security of their property. We support our neighborhood watch program, which helps us deter crime.

19. We support emergency preparedness measures, both for our own personal safety and also to be prepared to assist others in the community during an emergency.

20. Strong communities also require strong community institutions. Our youth community service committee, Boy Scouts, and Girl Scouts engage in projects to better the community. We encourage residents to support and participate in the KPCA, Kings Park/Kings Glen and Lake Braddock Parent Teacher Associations, Parliament Pool, Kings Park Band, area youth clubs, religious activities, and much more.

21. We encourage residents to follow the political process and those eligible to vote in each election.

D. Our Personal Conduct

22. We respect the law.

23. For the safety of all of our residents, especially our children, we encourage all to drive safely. We are mindful not to speed or drive recklessly. We do not drive under the influence of drugs or alcohol. If we see others with whom we socialize prepare to drive under the influence, we encourage and assist them to consider alternatives.

24. We strongly oppose the possession, use, and/or distribution of illegal drugs in our community and we report these unlawful acts to the police.

25. We take steps to keep our community litter-free. We place our trash at the street in containers or take other measures to prevent trash from blowing down the street. We remove trash containers from the curb promptly.

26. We treat each other with personal respect.

E. Our Community Traditions

27. To maintain the spirit and connectivity of our community, we participate in community events and encourage our neighbors to do likewise.

28. Through the KPCA, we sponsor an annual July 4th parade and picnic, and a December holiday party.

29. Each year we seek, through the KPCA, to hold a “new neighbor” welcome.

30. We encourage residents to have at least one block party each year.

31. Many of us decorate our homes for the holidays, special events, or to show national pride.

32. We sponsor, through the KPCA, an annual “seniors’ lunch” for our senior citizens.

33. Each year we sponsor, through the KPCA, a community yard sale and community clean up efforts.

SUMMARY: To work toward our community vision, we encourage Kings Park residents to abide by these neighborhood expectations. We welcome all residents to be active participants in the community and the Kings Park Civic Association. Additional information about the Kings Park community can be found at our web page (www.kings-park.org).