

NEWS

North Kitsap schools superintendent contacted in investigation of stolen campaign signs

A witness saw two signs opposing the upcoming bond stolen off a road in Kingston early Friday morning.



Jeff Graham
Kitsap Sun

Published 4:58 p.m. PT Jan. 26, 2024 | Updated 5:59 p.m. PT Jan. 26, 2024



"Vote-no" school bond signs, similar to the ones shown here along Highway 308 in Poulsbo, were reportedly stolen off a road in Kingston on Friday morning. Kitsap County Sheriff's Office confirmed that a woman has been interviewed in relation to the theft and the investigation is ongoing. *MEEGAN M. REID/KITSAP SUN*

North Kitsap School District Superintendent Laurynn Evans was contacted by law enforcement Friday morning as part of an investigation into the theft and disposal of signs opposed to the district's upcoming bond measure.

The Kitsap County Sheriff's Office confirmed in a written statement that a woman was questioned in Poulsbo and is considered a person of interest in the investigation, but did not identify who the woman was. The woman told KCSO she was not involved with the thefts, according to a statement released Friday.

North Kitsap School District spokesperson Jenn Markaryan on Friday afternoon told the Kitsap Sun that the district had "no information to provide." KCSO spokesman Kevin McCarty told the Kitsap Sun that Evans herself has been questioned. The investigation is ongoing and will be forwarded to the Kitsap County Prosecuting Attorney for review.

The incident began when two opponents of the ballot measure for a \$242 million bond observed an individual taking signs from the side of Little Boston Road early Friday morning. The bond is up for election on Feb. 13, and would [rebuild Pearson Elementary School and Wolfe Elementary School, among other projects around the district](#). It is the first bond proposal by the NKSD in 23 years.

Scott Henden, a former North Kitsap school board member who helped craft the "against" committee argument in local voters' pamphlet and is part of a citizen committee opposed to the bond, said that he and fellow committee member Kim Gerlach were witnesses to the theft, which involved what he characterized as a "blonde gal" in her 50s.

Henden told the Kitsap Sun that his committee's signs, some reading "VOTE NO NKSD BOND," have been disappearing frequently, leading him to use outdoor trail and game cameras, which take photos based on motion detection. Images captured on those cameras led Henden and Gerlach to stake out a location on Little Boston Road in Kingston on Friday morning where two anti-bond signs were located.

After Henden arrived at the location at around 6:10 a.m. Friday morning, he took cover behind some bushes. Shortly after, Henden saw a grayish Ford pickup truck slow down and stop. Around 6:30 a.m. a woman exited the vehicle, pulled the signs out of the ground, put them in the back of the truck, and then drove off. Henden then made a phone call to Gerlach, who was parked in her car off Eglon Road.

"He called me and said, I can't believe it, someone just put two of our signs in the back of their truck," Gerlach said. "He told me what the truck looked like and I followed it."

Hoping to identify the driver, Gerlach began to follow the truck southbound on Hansville Road and onto Bond Road toward Poulsbo. At a stop light, Gerlach took a photo of the truck's license plate. Later, Gerlach said the truck left Bond and briefly stopped on Stottlemeyer Road.

Henden and Gerlach said they lost track of the truck as it approached Poulsbo city limits. Gerlach drove downtown to see if she could spot the truck again, and saw Evans entering the Poulsbo Sons of Norway building, where the Poulsbo Rotary Club held a meeting

Friday morning. A gray truck that Henden and Gerlach believe was the same one they followed was parked in the Sons of Norway's small parking lot off Front Street.

At that point, Henden called 911 to file a report. Two Poulsbo police officers initially met with Henden and Gerlach in the Sons of Norway parking lot before they contacted the Kitsap County Sheriff's Office, since the report originated outside of Poulsbo city limits. KCSO sent multiple deputies to the scene and to a site on Stottlemeyer Road identified by Gerlach.

The woman questioned by sheriff's deputies at the Sons of Norway confirmed that she was the owner of the gray truck, according to the KCSO statement.

At one point, a KCSO deputy asked Gerlach if the bond signs had grease on them. Gerlach noted that Henden had used grease on the signs, hoping they'd be a theft deterrent. What the deputy told Gerlach next came as a surprise: "I've got grease on my uniform," Gerlach said the deputy told her. "I picked up the signs on Stottlemeyer where you said she pulled over."

Gerlach and Henden eventually went home, hardly believing what they'd witnessed during the course of the morning.