

**Friends of Sausal Creek
Board of Directors Meeting
Wednesday, October 13, 2021, 7:00 p.m.
via Zoom**

Friends of Sausal Creek works to restore, maintain, and protect the Sausal Creek Watershed. We educate future generations, involve the community in local environmental stewardship, and collaborate with agencies and other nonprofits to have a positive impact on the local ecosystem.

Present Richelle Jacobs, Tim Vendlinski, Jeff Stephens, Barry Stenger, Rob Leidy, Eleanor Dunn, Beth Keer, Mark Rauzon (Board Member Emeritus)

Absent Harry Schrauth, Sean Welch, Carl Kohnert, Steve Ritchie

Staff Present Anna Marie Schmidt, Executive Director; Jay Cassianni, Restoration and Nursery Manager; Satoko Takeda Mills, Watershed Restoration Technician; Elizabeth Boegel, Communications and Community Education Intern

Board Involvement

16th Annual Native Plant Sale - Online sale begins at 5:00 p.m., October 22, and ends at 5:00 p.m., October 26. Pickup will take place October 30 and 31, 9:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.

Community Walk & Talk - November 26, 2021, TBA

Remarks from the President, Jeff Stephens

Jeff thanked everyone for showing up. He emphasized his appreciation for staff presence.

Board Discussion: Youth Scholarship

Rob brought up the subject of achieving diversity on FOSC's Board as well as promoting watershed science among a more diverse youth population. This idea was raised: how about our *For the Future Fund* offering an annual scholarship to social or environmental science students attending Merritt, Laney Community College, UC Berkeley? The board brainstormed about what such a scholarship might entail. Would we offer short term trainings? How much should the scholarship offer -- \$1000? \$1500? Annually? Would students compete for this scholarship? What would their volunteer commitment be? How would we go about recruiting them? What about creating a "Watershed Academy" to administer the program? Rob agreed to write up these ideas.

Jeff was clear any such allotment would have to be a line item in the budget. Mark said that a basic science scholarship -- STEM -- could attract corporate funds as well. Though this might not be a through-line to creating a more diverse board, the salient point here would be to bring a broader population into the sciences. Mark said that since Merritt already has watershed programs, this would be a good place for us to start. Tim especially liked the idea that such a scholarship would truly be "for the future", but was concerned about a "pay to play" ethos. He suggested the scholarship be a separate and adjunctive category of the FTF Fund, and asked, "What would the students' obligation in the watershed be? How could we make the experience as rich as possible for them, and not be menial?" Rob suggested perhaps a 20-hour program where the students spend a few weekends experiencing FOSC. An additional perk for them would be that students would have something to put on their résumé. Elizabeth reminded the Board that Merritt students often could use help paying for classes, books, childcare, and rent.

Fundraising Updates: End-of-Year Appeal 2021, Jeff Stephens

The logistics are now in place to have the End-of-Year Appeal letters ready by November 11. Harry has agreed again to see to the printing and assembling of the BOD packets. As with last year's, there will not be a group letter-signing event. Instead, packets will be delivered to each Board member to annotate and sign on their own.

Financial Report, Anna Marie Schmidt

Anna Marie outlined details of FOSC's Project Timeline and Cash Flow, as well as grant applications in progress and on the horizon. She reminded the board that we have been short staffed, we are still seeking to hire an Education and Outreach Coordinator, and Jay worked part-time over the summer instead of full-time. This accounts for why we have more cash on hand than we otherwise would have.

Board Approval

Ricky has spearheaded new "25th Anniversary" tee shirts, designed by graphic artist and FOSC volunteer May Woo. The Board agreed to allocate \$3000 for an initial order of short-sleeves-only shirts. The Board directed her team to sell the shirts for double our cost in the hopes of creating a small but steady income stream. With these requirements in mind, Beth moved to allocate these funds. Eleanor seconded the motion, which was then passed by majority, with one abstention.

Previous Student Board Member Ivan Yan had to leave the board prematurely. The Steering Committee then instigated a requirement that before inviting anyone new to join as a Student Board Member, someone on the Board had to volunteer to be a mentor to that person. Beth agreed to fill that role. With that, Anna Marie announced that she will invite Aneeshi Sandip Desai to step into the Student Board Member position. Jeff then moved that we continue to have a Student Board Member with Beth serving in an undefined mentor role. Tim seconded the motion and thanked Beth. "You will be an excellent mentor." The motion was passed unanimously.

Minutes

Tim moved to approve the Minutes from our August meeting. Barry seconded the motion, which was then approved unanimously.

Commitments Review

Anna Marie thanked Carl, Mark, Jeff, Rob and Beth for signing up to help with the upcoming plant sale. Customers will drive directly to the nursery entrance to pick up their purchases. She requested there be a volunteer at the gate to act as greeter. Rob made the point that some of the plants, though natives, have not been propagated in the Sausal Creek watershed, and urged that this be clarified for potential customers.

She also announced there will be a creek tour (details not yet specified) the day after Thanksgiving as we continue our Community Talks out of doors. ("Community Walk & Talk").

Staff Report:

Anna Marie enthusiastically announced that groups are returning!

She also gave a shout out to Tim and Rob who have received approval from the Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee for a series of fencing and habitat protection projects in Joaquin Miller Park. FOSC, Friends of Joaquin Miller Park, Bicycle Trails Council of the East Bay, and Oakland Trails have all committed to helping fund these projects. These organizations are now recruiting skilled volunteers and Scouts to install protective fencing and a footbridge near Fern Ravine and the CSSC pallid manzanita colony.

She informed the board that in September Rob had alerted FOSC of several discharge issues in the creek in Dimond Park and Canyon -- first, of an increased flow in the creek caused by water entering the creek from Wellington; then about a heavy flow of brown muddy water draining from the Whittle Creek culvert. Then a creekside homeowner alerted us to an uptick in

muddy milky flow. Anna Marie now has personal cell phone access to someone at EBMUD.

She reported to the Board that she is in communication with a possible candidate for the Education and Outreach Coordinator position.

Anna Marie reminded the board that at our December meeting we will vote on the steering committee officers. She invited anyone interested in volunteering in that capacity to be in touch with her.

Jeff announced that Carl is leaving the Board, and that unfortunately he wasn't able to attend tonight's meeting -- his last. (He had to go to Montana to combat bats.) Jeff also reminded everyone that December will be his last meeting, not only as President, but as a FOSC Board member. He has moved to Oregon. He encouraged people to step up to help Anna Marie and staff. He thanked Mark and Eleanor for their 25-year commitment.

A conversation then followed about the vacancies on the Board. Some expressed concern, others optimism. Mark reminded the Board there is a new paradigm about volunteerism, that many of his peers have aged out, and 40-year-olds are no longer volunteering. He wondered if we should be searching for a different modality. Rob expressed concern about our becoming too lean to follow through with what we discussed tonight. Jeff added that there are new considerations for hiring staff as well: of pay, of whom we're competing against for personnel. "We can't put on ten programs with 2.5 staff members. We need to pick our core areas and fund them appropriately."

Adjournment The meeting ended at 8:24 p.m., followed by a closed Executive Session.

Next board meeting: December 8, 2021, 7:00 p.m. Location TBA.