

**Friends of Sausal Creek
Board of Directors Meeting
Wednesday, October 16, 2019, 7-9 p.m.
Park Blvd. Presbyterian Church
4101 Park Blvd., Room 35 on 3rd Floor
Oakland, CA 94602**

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, Eleanor Dunn, Beth Keer, Tim Vendlinski, Jeff Stephens, Carl Kohnert, Shannon Louie (Student Board Member)

Absent Sean Welch, Rob Leidy, Steve Ritchie, Harry Schrauth (Board Member Emeritus), Paul Frank, Mark Rauzon (Board Member Emeritus)

Staff Present Anna Marie Schmidt, Executive Director; Becca Sanchez, Education and Outreach Coordinator

Guest Jordan John, ecological landscaper and law student

Board Involvement

Plant Sale- October 20, all day

Board Signing Party - November 6, 6:00 p.m.

Community Talk - November 20, 7:00 p.m.

Planting Workdays- 2nd and 4th Saturdays

Introductions and Remarks from President, Jeff Stephens

Jeff welcomed guest Jordan John and new student board member Shannon Louie. He thanked Becca Sanchez, our Education and Outreach Coordinator, in advance for briefing the Board on her environmental education work.

Board Member Discussion: New Student Board Member and BOD Introductions

Shannon Louie, our new student Board member, introduced herself. She is a fourth year undergraduate at U.C. Berkeley finishing her B.S. in Environmental Sciences, and B.S. in Molecular & Cell Biology and Biochemistry. She has volunteered for FOSC primarily in the water quality monitoring program with Kathleen Harris, performing water testing and data analysis. Shannon wrote an article on this topic

for FOSC's October eNewsletter. The Board and Becca in turn introduced themselves to her.

Overview of Environmental Education Program and Accomplishments, Becca Sanchez

In her presentation to the Board, Becca cited some school-related data points -- e.g. FOSC interfaced with 1839 students this past school year -- including both classroom and watershed field trips and restoration experiences. Comparing 2017-2018 to 2018-2019, FOSC increased classroom visits from 4 to 24, and field trips from 64 to 102.

She reported on her classroom teaching, which includes helping kids understand what a watershed is, why it matters, and the kinds of insects, birds, and plants they might encounter in and near the creek. Conducting a classroom visit prior to taking the kids into the field has enriched their field trip experience exponentially. Kids are taught how to read a map, thus orienting themselves to the site of their destination and their own place in the watershed. FOSC tailors lessons as per teacher input; and most field trip requests -- both for schools and youth organizations -- come from returning teachers and staff.

Becca explained that we charge no fees for Title I schools, and minimal fees for other schools and community groups. FOSC receives approximately \$3,000 a year from fee-based programs. A few more statistics: 65% - 75% of the students are from underserved communities, 85% of whom are Latinx. She also educated the Board that the descriptive term "East Oakland" is preferred to that of "Lower Watershed".

Fundraising: Update on the End of Year Appeal, Jeff Stephens

Jeff showed some video footage of brief interviews he shot on *Creek to Bay Day*, and talked about the appeal strategy in place for early November. The appeal letter will be mailed to about 500 donors or potential donors, followed by two or three email blasts to 3,400 newsletter subscribers.

- Anna Marie updated the Board on recent grant decisions, submissions, and submittal schedules.
- Other Fundraising Activities: Anna Marie announced that this year we have eight plant sale sponsors. Tim made suggestions about how we might improve our pitch for sponsorships in the future,

including a boilerplate detailed "ask" sheet. He will write down some of his ideas and forward them to the fundraising committee.

Financial Report

Anna Marie went over the Project Timeline and Cash Flow, and gave an update on the Budget FY20 versus the first quarter. She recommended that we infuse the current cash reserve by \$6,700, if possible.

FTF Endowment Update, Carl Kohnert

Carl reviewed the history of the *For the Future Fund* (FTF): In 2012, two residents of St. Paul Towers donated \$40,000 and the FTF was born! Soon after, 100% of the board made five-year pledges to the fund. This five-year pledge period ends this year (2019). The Endowment Committee, which meets twice a year, oversees the fund. We currently have \$132,000 in Vanguard, with the long term goal to grow the fund so we can financially support FOSC programming and lessen our dependency on grants. Once we reach \$250,000 we will qualify for oversight by a foundation whose particular purpose is to manage endowments for non-profits.

Carl will schedule a fall/winter committee meeting to review the five-year campaign and brainstorm the next steps in growing the fund, including building a cohort of legacy members. Beth Keer volunteered to replace Erin Patch on the committee.

Minutes and Commitments Review

Tim moved and Carl seconded that the Minutes from the August 14th meeting be approved. This motion was passed unanimously.

Commitments:

- Carl and other Board members said they liked the new name for our monthly meetings: Community Talks. The Board had a conversation about what the topic might be next month.

- Plant Sale: Tonight's guest, Jordan John, offered to provide back up at the sale should Beth be unable to participate.

- Leimert Bridge Seismic Retrofit: Since Jay won't be in town for its project update meeting, Bob Roat or Tim might fill in for him.

Executive Director Responds to Questions on the Staff Report

- Anna Marie announced the hiring of our intern, Jackie Van Der Hout, a former AmeriCorps Member. Jackie is bilingual (English and Spanish) and holds a B.A./B.S. in Environmental Science and Environmental Studies from Evergreen State College. She starts the internship next week.

- The irrigation system of the destroyed demonstration garden at the nursery has been replaced by Park Services. Mike Perlmutter (Adopt a Spot) will meet with us to review how to prevent further site damages, including weed-whacking by City workers, dumping, and homeless encampments. Tim offered to talk to Kevin Charles at Public Works to see if he can generate their cooperation, including our receiving advance notice. Beth reported that a staff member to Councilmember Sheng Thao said she would follow up; Jordan offered to check in on her progress.

- Anna Marie reported on her October 14th field meeting with Kristin Hathaway, Ben Livsey, and six others representing Shelterbelt, D-Line Constructors, and the restoration design firm. The City of Oakland pointed out invasive plant issues and asked D-Line and Shelterbelt (City contractor) to revisit the daylighted plant maintenance plan as per their contract, and to remove invasives (ivy, blackberry, acacia) after the first rainfall.

- On a related topic, at that meeting Michael Thilgen suggested creating a native tree corridor above the creek culvert (in the grassy area of Dimond Park) to show the creek alignment visually. The Board discussed the possibility of sourcing oaks from local acorns. Jordan offered to call around to see about oak seed sources. Given the use of that field for camp activities, it is uncertain whether such an idea will gain traction.

Next Meeting Agenda Items

- Board Member at Large (who would attend Steering Committee meetings)
 - State of the Watershed
 - Priority Projects from 2019 Retreat
 - Identifying new Board officers for next year.

Adjournment The meeting was adjourned at 9:03 p.m.

Next board meeting: December 11, 2019, 7:00 p.m.