

**Friends of Sausal Creek
Board of Directors Meeting
Via BlueJeans (video conference)
Wednesday, June 10, 2020, 7:00 p.m.**

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, Carl Kohnert, Shannon Louie (Student Board Member), Rob Leidy, Steve Ritchie, Morgan Capilla, Mark Rauzon (Board Member Emeritus)

Absent Sean Welch, Harry Schrauth (Board Member Emeritus), Eleanor Dunn, Beth Keer, Barry Stenger

Staff Present Anna Marie Schmidt (Executive Director)

Board Involvement

Community Film Screening: *Return of the River*, June 28 at 7:30 pm (RSVP to education@sausalcreek.org)

Recent Board Action

Anna Marie emailed the board on June 8 requesting a vote as to whether to invite Barry Stenger to join the board. The nine voting members gave a unanimous yes, and the invitation was extended. Barry accepted.

Remarks from the President, Jeff Stephens

Jeff thanked everyone in attendance for joining this online meeting, and welcomed Barry Stenger onto the board.

On behalf of himself and the board, Jeff also congratulated Shannon Louie, our Student Representative, on her graduation from UCB. Shannon's degrees are a B.S. in Environmental Science and a B.A. in Molecular and Cell Biology, with an emphasis in Biochemistry and Molecular Biology. Shannon is currently vetting a potential Student Board Member replacement for herself.

Board Member Discussion -- Black Lives Matter; and FOSC during COVID-19: site leader guidance and soft opening of sites

Anna Marie emailed the board the draft of our Statement of Solidarity with the Black Lives Matter movement, which was written by staff. This statement, which will be posted on FaceBook and the listserv by Friday, with Anna Marie looping back with staff, will lay out our first baby steps in this process. Board members will frame what comes next. Anna Marie said she will need a working group to mount a sustained effort for FOSC to put its intentions into actions, including greater diversification on the board. She asked that board members interested in participating in that group send her an email. Jeff especially appreciated that our announcement gives resources as well as making a statement.

All group events (workdays, community events and talks) remain cancelled. With the easing of outdoor construction and with landscaping restrictions, FOSC volunteer Bob Roat created a Health and Safety Plan for the nursery (including social distancing). Jay has invited a few core volunteers to work in the nursery. While groups of up to ten are allowed by the plan, we have chosen to cap them at four.

The board discussed protocol for a soft opening of FOSC project sites. This discussion included having staff draft a COVID-19 instructional document to share with site directors who are considering setting up workdays for solo volunteers or small groups. Use of the word "face coverings" instead of "masks" was suggested. Rather than publishing announcements about workdays and sites on our website or in the newsletter, the board decided to invite site leaders to reach out only to volunteers experienced at specific sites, and capable of self-direction.

Jay has begun keeping consistent nursery hours to allow volunteers who have reached out in advance to drop by and help out. This has worked well, with 1-3 folks volunteering at any one time. Chris Lutz (*June Friend of the Month*) spearheaded a big project in late May -- the replacement of three greenhouse panels (nearly half the greenhouse structure), and cleanup of the remaining structure. It took many solid days of work, and the greenhouse looks amazing!

Fundraising Updates, Mid-Year Appeal Activities: Jeff Stephens

Jeff, Carl and Barry have written a letter, vetted by the Steering Committee, to be mailed only to donors from the last two years --

approximately 300 households. We're scaling back our mid-year fundraising expectations by 25% - 50%. The letter expresses our dismay about the pandemic and details the important work we're doing behind the scenes. We'll include photos of Jay hard at work; of Abby involved with Sudden Oak Death; of volunteers in the field wearing face coverings; of pallids. Harry will print, fold, and mail these. He could use some help. Mark shared that Wendy Tokuda has offered to help us fundraise.

Financial Report: Anna Marie Schmidt

Anna Marie went over the Project Timeline and Cash Flow Chart with the board, and reviewed grant applications in progress and on the horizon. It will be necessary to revisit the budget every board meeting through these times to stay abreast of what may need to be altered. For now, *Team Oakland* is looking to run a five or six-week program this summer, with four to ten youth.

The City of Oakland awarded FOSC the contract (up to \$9,565) to continue to store, transplant, and care for its plants at the nursery. Additionally, we will be providing care at the Wellington planting site through November, 2020. FOSC staff and volunteers have been trying to keep all plants weeded and maintained.

As for staff salaries, she reminded the board that she and Jay are full time, while the total hours for Jackie and Nicki are just over half-time. We have reduced staff hours and will not be able to bill against education grants. We will work with program officers to see about adjusting grant deadlines.

Jeff explained how the Payroll Protection Program, which we have qualified for, carries some uncertainty. The worst-case scenario is that it could be a 1% loan rather than a grant. Not all of the rules have been finalized. There is not 100% certainty the funds will be forgiven, but either way the PPP will be to our advantage. Anna Marie noted that the eight-week spend period has been extended to 24 weeks.

Staff update and Board Member Discussion: Staffing and Future Funding

Anna Marie itemized budget details, with the reminder of how much unpredictability there is right now. She cut a number of budgeted items in half in an effort to soften the hard landing from the pandemic. Rather than a phased increase, the board chose to provide Jay with a full pay raise at the beginning of the new fiscal year. Additionally, she made it clear that one or even two staff laptops should

be replaced, and there are problems with her printer. Our bookkeeper, Pam, has generously donated two months of services to us. Steve moved to approve the budget as amended, and Carl seconded the motion, which was then passed unanimously.

Anna Marie reported that Nicki will be coming to California for 1.5 months to do *Team Oakland* and the *Disadvantaged Communities Project* (Prop 1), sharing time with *Team Oakland Youth Employment*. After that, she will begin working at the EPA in New York. Jay is planning a month-long backpacking trip in the Sierra for most of August. Jackie will cover essential nursery and restoration tasks during his absence.

Conservation and Management Plan for Sausal Creek Wild Rainbow Trout: Rob Leidy

Rob opened his presentation by thanking Tim, Jay, Jackie, and Becca for their input, Jeff for his assistance with layout, and Kimra, Tim, and Matt Cover for their help reviewing and giving feedback on the plan. He asked the board to give their comments directly to him by June 17. Rob explained that this is a high level management plan which will be extremely useful for proposing projects and going after grants, a plan with conceptual type objectives, given that trout are an umbrella species for water quality. He had thought there would be many such plans, but there aren't. This plan, then, will be useful not only to us, but to other groups in the Bay Area as well.

Tim told the board about an article he is writing on the erosion control project on Caltrans' plan, State Route 13. This is a landslide stabilization project which should reduce significantly the sediment going into the creek. He reported that much of the water going down that storm drain does not look good, plus there is a considerable amount of plastic also heading down that drain. He asked if the board had any ideas about how we might help with this issue.

Minutes and Commitments Review

Minutes: Carl pointed out an error in the minutes from the last meeting, in which a citation was attributed to him whereas, in fact, the source had been Mark. With that error clarified, Steve moved to approve the minutes as amended. Carl seconded the motion, and the board then passed it unanimously.

Commitments Review: Anna Marie reminded the Board of our Community Film Screening -- *Return of the River* -- on June 28 at 7:30 p.m. She directed the board to our website for more information.

Executive Director Responds to Questions on the Staff Report

Anna Marie informed the Board that there has been no electricity at the nursery because of PG&E work in the vicinity replacing a conductor. Jay has had to be on site daily or find volunteers to turn the six irrigation zones on and off by hand.

She gave a hats-off to Chris Lutz for spearheading and refurbishing the greenhouse at the nursery.

Ten people showed up to collect SOD blitz data.

Board Member Sean Welch continues in his recovery from his bicycle accident.

An organization called *Wholly H2O* is doing virtual watershed tours and would like our input for its August/ September coverage of the Sausal Creek Watershed. Mark is the key guide for this. They would appreciate assistance with content, and volunteer guides as well. Please send Anna Marie an email to participate.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 8:26 p.m.

Next board meeting

August 12, 2020, 7:00 p.m., via video conference.

