

**Friends of Sausal Creek  
Board of Directors Meeting  
Wednesday, August 11, 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, Morgan Capilla, Steve Ritchie, Ivan Yan, (incoming Student Board Member), Beth Keer, John Cadiz, (outgoing Student Board Member)

**Absent** Harry Schrauth (Board Member Emeritus), Mark Rauzon (Board Member Emeritus), Sean Welch, Carl Kohnert

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

**Board Involvement**

**Creek to Bay Month**, - September 18, 2021, TBD (Dimond Park, Dimond Canyon, other sites).

**Community Walk & Talk: Expand your Birding Senses** - September 25, 2021, 9:00 a.m., Scout Hut, Dimond Park, RSVP.

**Remarks from the President, Jeff Stephens**

Jeff greeted board and staff with a special welcome for Ivan Yan, our new Student Board Member. Ivan shared that he is a student at UCB with a special interest in water monitoring and clean water technologies. Originally from Sacramento, he is majoring in environmental engineering science.

**Board/Staff Discussion: Team Oakland Debrief**

Anna Marie sought input from participating staff and Board members about this summer's Team Oakland program. She especially wanted to know how it meshed with FOSC's Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion initiatives. Beth suggested that in the future we engage the team leaders ahead of time. She wondered if there is a program in Oakland for kids interested in leadership. She is thinking to have the leaders generate ideas for how we could advance

our agenda and engage that community rather than simply giving Team Oakland youth our pre-determined projects. Tim agreed, and said he found that a good half the kids appeared to be uninterested. Beth observed that the kids working at the nursery were curious and engaged. She felt it is on us to learn what kinds of activities to offer them by pulling in the team leaders.

Elizabeth remarked that any difficulties she had engaging the kids was her problem. She wondered about the possibility of receiving training to interface with different types of youth. As an example, she cited that some kids had a fear of heights she hadn't considered.

Jay was on board with bringing in the leaders in advance. He felt it is important to frame our goal. Satoko suggested that before getting started, we need to engage with the kids, perhaps tell them one topic they'll learn today. Then they could use their phones to post about it at the end of the day, by using Instagram or iNaturalist, for example. That way their phones can become a part of the learning process, not just a distraction. And Rob emphasized that the bigger issue for FOSC is to have board members who reflect their races and ethnicities. He articulated their discomfort hearing only from people who don't look like them. "We need more diversity on the board."

#### **Student Board Member Approval; Brief Fundraising Update on Mid-Year Appeal, Jeff Stephens**

Jeff moved that the Board of Directors officially vote in Ivan Yan as our Student Board member. Steve seconded the motion, which was unanimously approved.

Jeff reported that in 2020, the mid-year appeal raised \$13,000. In 2021 we raised approximately \$10,000, with 95 donors.

#### **Conserving Joaquin Miller Park and Evaluating Creekside Parcels for Potential Acquisition, Tim Vendlinski**

Tim reported on the split-rail fencing plan he prepared with input from Jay and Rob. This plan is for the conservation of topsoil, wetlands, trout habitat, and rare plant communities at three conservation areas within Joaquin Miller Park: Fern Ravine, the Chabot Space & Science Center, and Lookout Point. He presented the plan on July 14, 2021, to the City's Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee (PRAC), from which it secured unanimous approval.

Tim explained that JM Park is being severely degraded by intensive and unregulated recreational activities including mountain biking, day camping, professional dog walking, and off-trail hiking. The headwaters of Sausal

Creek, and therefore the trout population, are imperiled by this intensive land use. The floor of the redwood forest is denuded and compacted, threatening the long-term health of the forest and the Park. Tim has been coordinating with *Friends of Joaquin Miller Park* to fundraise and implement the approved fencing plan.

The degradation of the Park makes it even more important to protect creekside parcels in the Oakland Hills, including those situated immediately west of Joaquin Miller Park, south of Beaconsfield Canyon, and north of Castle Canyon. He recommended to the City that the undeveloped parcels should be acquired to establish a "*Sausal Creek Headwaters Preserve*".

The other key recommendation in the parcel evaluation prepared by Tim is for doubling the size of Wood Park for restoration and recreation. The adjacent Central Reservoir is managed by EBMUD and will be replaced sometime in the next ten years. Past construction triggered a series of landslides which leveled out the ground where Wood Park was established. Sausal Creek is buried in a culvert on the eastern margin of Wood Park, and this culvert is operated by the Alameda County Flood Control and Water Conservation District. Tim explained that that District has a master plan process underway, and this would be an important time to approach the District with the idea of daylighting and stabilizing the creek there.

Barry is advocating that the City buy these available parcels and create a trail system to Barry Place. If the City, County, and EBMUD collaborated with one another and provided stabilization, this area could encompass turf, recreation, picnic areas and environmental protection, including a tribal cultural center to support the local indigenous community. "This is a tale of two watershed segments: the hills, where the Creek has been obliterated, and the flatlands, where we could daylight downstream."

Anna Marie said that Mike Perlmutter (of the Watershed and Stormwater Management Division) will be taken on a tour of the proposed sites tomorrow. He had requested FOSC's recommendations for priority creek parcels for purchase or conservation easement by the City.

Both Barry and Beth volunteered to support this project.

### **Financial Report, Anna Marie Schmidt**

Anna Marie gave details about the Project Timeline and Cash Flow. She reminded the board she is currently the only fulltime staff -- which is why we have more cash than usual.

She went over the Budget vs. Actual FYE21, and updated the board on the grant applications in progress and on the horizon. Jeff reported that there could be another \$100,000 available via the DACTIP grant if we are successfully able to define relevant projects within their scope.

### **Endowment Update, Jeff Stephens**

Jeff reported that our current Endowment Committee members -- himself, Barry, Steve, and Carl -- met via video. At the end of the first quarter, FOSC had \$166,000. Using the previously agreed upon 4% distribution, \$6480 is available for deposit into FOSC's current (2021/2022) budget. Also, since last year's endowment distribution (\$4500) was never transferred, we could access a total of almost \$11,000 coming from the RTF Vanguard account. He explained that although this amount is authorized, we are not required to use it. Barry moved that we accept that authorization, and Jeff seconded the motion, which was passed unanimously.

We currently have \$178,000 in our *For the Future Fund*. With the market doing well, on behalf of the Committee Jeff noted that Carl's recommendation is to explore hiring an outside firm to manage it rather than a board member. It is Carl who currently manages the Fund, but he will be leaving the board in October. He is investigating options and fees for professional management. The board authorized the Endowment Committee to explore this further.

With Carl leaving the board, we will need a new chair of the Endowment Committee.

### **Minutes**

Ricky made a small amendment to the June minutes. Incorporating that amendment, Steve moved to approve those minutes and Barry seconded that motion. It was passed unanimously.

### **Commitments Review/Plant Sale**

Jeff announced that Creek to Bay Day at Dimond is up in the air because of the COVID surge. Anna Marie countered that the City is promoting a Creek to Bay Month, during which we could promote our sites.

Ricky gave an update on the plan for a new line of FOSC tee-shirts and inquired about the possibility of finding a volunteer graphic artist. Barry thought that the tag line printed on the current tee-shirts, *Promoting Watershed Awareness*, might be improved upon.

Anna Marie laid out the options for this year's plant sale, including an in-person sale on October 31. Since Jay isn't available the first two weekends in November, this would work well for him. Another option would be an

online sale from October 17th through the 23rd, with pick-up on the 27th, 30th, and 31st. We will need to make the decision by the end of August. Doing both is not feasible since we don't have sufficient inventory. Beth advocated for an in-person sale on Saturday, October 30, and Steve wondered about the possibility of an online sale in November with our leftover inventory.

Anna Marie informed the board that the City of Oakland is opening up rentals, an indicator that we may host our in-person plant sale.

**Adjournment** The meeting ended at 8:39 p.m., followed by a closed Executive Session.

**Next board meeting:** October 13, 2021, 7:00 p.m. Location TBA.