

**Friends of Sausal Creek  
Board of Directors Meeting  
Wednesday, December 9, 2020, 7-9 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, Beth Keer, Tim Vendlinski, Jeff Stephens, Carl Kohnert, John Cadiz (Student Board Member), Steve Ritchie, Barry Stenger, Mark Rauzon (Board Member Emeritus), Rob Leidy, Eleanor Dunn with Zephyr

**Absent** Sean Welch, Morgan Capilla, Harry Schrauth (Board Member Emeritus)

**Staff Present** Anna Marie Schmidt (Executive Director)

**Guests** Becca Sanchez, Council Aide to Sheng Thao

**Board Involvement**

**Annual Solstice Planting** - December 19 (cancelled)

**State of the Watershed Tour** - January 20, 2021 or  
TBD (Zoom)

**Remarks from the President, Jeff Stephens**

Jeff expressed his gratitude to everyone for the great job they did for FOSC while facing considerable challenges in 2020.

**Board Member Briefing and Discussion: Anti-racism and FOSC**

Anna Marie explained that she and board members Rob, Beth, John, Morgan and Barry have discussed how to move FOSC forward, viewing FOSC's goals through an anti-racism lens. The intention is to address how we can better our practices and be more intentional in dismantling systemic racism throughout the organization. To further that intention, throughout 2021 this committee will suggest activities and discussion to take place during board meetings (and perhaps in between) that pertain to diversity, equity, and inclusion. At tonight's meeting we viewed a TED Talk by John Biewen, a documentary journalist: *The Lie That Invented Racism*. At our next board/staff retreat, a facilitator will conduct a workshop to help guide us towards

these goals. Jeff and several board members thanked the committee for their work on this.

### **Fundraising Updates: End-of-Year Activities, Jeff Stephens**

Jeff thanked everyone who worked so hard for the End-of-Year Appeal. He reported that, to date, about \$14,000 was raised, including board member donations. We decided not to push *Giving Tuesday*, because of the online saturation from multiple nonprofits and the low success rate from past efforts, but we will do an end of year email blast (December 29 - 31). Pat and Rob Raburn offered a \$1,000 matching gift to energize donors, which led to a total \$7,500 match from board members and anonymous donors! Anna Marie reported four known new Creekside resident donors, thanks to a separate mailing based on addresses gathered by Barry. Becca promised to send out FOSC fundraising information in her e-blast.

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

Anna Marie went over the current Project Timeline and Cash Flow Chart and discussed grant applications in progress and on the horizon.

The City of Oakland has found a new home for plants stored and tended by FOSC. Our contract with them is therefore coming to an end.

We have submitted our final invoice from Prop 1's Disadvantaged Community (DACIP) grant, which ended on October 31. Additionally, we have applied to have the Paycheck Protection Program loan turned into a grant.

We have submitted a claim for reimbursement from PG&E for 74 days of power outage. This outage resulted in our staff needing to spend hours hand watering and doing additional troubleshooting at the nursery.

Jeff announced that it looks like we're eligible to receive funds from the new State program for small businesses/non-profits. The rules for the *Small Business COVID-19 Relief Grant Program*, which includes non-profits, are being finalized and will be released in mid-December.

### **Staff Update and Board Member Discussion: FOSC staff positions**

Jeff outlined the current thinking about the Education and Outreach Coordinator position, which previously had been considered a 35-40/hour per week job. Posting for a new EOC has been delayed both because of the uncertainty with the schools, and because we are giving more thought to the many demands of the position. This is actually

more than a fulltime job. Anna Marie has suggested three separate positions:

1) **Environmental Educator** (35 - 40 hours per week) to begin when schools are back in session;

2) **Community Outreach and Environmental Justice Coordinator** (15 - 20 hours per week), to be posted when the amendment to the DACIP grants (January, 2021) is approved;

3) **Communications and Development Associate** (15 - 20 hours per week) to help the E.D. with the newsletter, donor care, grants, tech, and other communications. Jackie fills in on many of these tasks right now. For this particular position Anna Marie is thinking the likely scenario would be late summer or fall, but for now has no committed timeline. She welcomes our feedback.

Beth thanked Anna Marie for articulating these three positions. Jeff reminded the board that we're not constrained by these three, so if other ideas come up, please say so. For example, do we need an additional restoration person? Anna Marie said there is a need for flexibility, and thinking of the jobs as separate entities is simply a convenient way to do this.

Barry urged we seriously assess our needs and, after that, seek the money for it. Becca suggested Curriculum Development as a job in and of itself. Mark emphasized that education is the most fundamental thing to do, especially with our focus on systemic racism -- to build a relevant curriculum, explicitly fundable, acting to bring diversity into the watershed. He also felt we should fundraise around our 25th anniversary, focusing on this particular position.

### **Wages and Benefits Changes**

Jeff educated the board on the latest minimum wage requirements for California, taking effect in 2021. In order to be compliant, we will be raising Anna Marie's salary to twice the California minimum wage, which will amount to an annual increase of \$3080 (up from \$51,000 to \$54,080). Additionally, as per a stated FOSC intention to recruit and retain staff in a competitive marketplace, FOSC has expanded its paid-time-off program. The new policy reads, "At their third anniversary, a full-time employee will be eligible for an additional 40 hours of PTO, giving them 15 days or 120 hours PTO per year increase." Barry moved that we augment vacation time to three weeks per year for any staff member who has been in our employment for

three years or longer. Eleanor seconded the motion, and it was passed unanimously.

### **State of the Watershed Ideas**

Every January FOSC hosts a community State of the Watershed meeting in which we hone in on some aspect of the watershed. In November only five people showed up for our *Park Prescription* Zoom talk. Was this due to Zoom fatigue? How shall we configure our upcoming State of the Watershed presentation given COVID constraints?

The board brainstormed:

- Support the City of Oakland's 40 days of service from MLK Day through Cesar Chavez Day?
- Highlight the watershed using mini videos?
- Present a miniature film festival with 2-4 minute shorts?
- Present a film festival with films 60-90 minutes long?
- Consider an actual physical venue, perhaps watershed walks with a four-person capacity?
- Using the concept of *Wholly H2O: "The Waterhood"*, emphasize peoples' ownership of the watershed?

Barry offered to edit submissions, since he is adept at iMovie. Becca suggested posting such submissions on YouTube. Jeff asked if anyone would commit to making such a video, but no one responded at the time.

### **Election of Officers**

Every December new officers must be elected. The slate this year is as follows: Jeff Stephens for President; Eleanor Dunn for Vice President; Richelle (Ricky) Jacobs for Secretary; and Barry Stenger for Treasurer. Jeff sincerely thanked Beth Keer for her service as Treasurer. Rob Leidy will continue as an At Large member of the Steering Committee, and Morgan Capilla will join the Steering Committee also as an At Large member. Steve moved that this slate of candidates be elected into office, and Beth seconded the motion. This motion was passed unanimously.

### **Endowment Update, Carl Kohnert.**

Carl reported that the endowment fund was at an all-time high of \$156,000, but wanted us to keep in mind that volatility continues. We contributed only \$2,600 to the fund, so most of the increase comes from capital appreciation. FOSC will take a previously-approved distribution of \$4925 from the endowment fund in April. There has been more

growth in performance this year, especially from the COVID stimulus. We will continue shifting out of the Vanguard 500 fund into the Vanguard Social Index Fund to reflect our values of environmental justice and social good governance.

Carl said that since we are about to celebrate our 25th anniversary, this is the time for a capital campaign. The Endowment Committee will come up with a statement of purpose and goals for this campaign, looking at strategies and marketing materials. He will present the Committee's plan at our April meeting, with the goal of getting the board's approval for the campaign, recognizing that COVID will impact the timing. Maybe August or September? Jeff moved that the board authorize the Endowment Committee to go forward with planning a 25th anniversary fundraiser. Tim seconded the motion, which was passed unanimously.

### **Minutes**

Carl moved to approve the Minutes from October, 2020. Eleanor seconded the motion, which was then passed unanimously.

### **Commitments Review**

Anna Marie pointed out that flexibility will continue to be key in 2021. Group events have been paused because of the lockdown and there is no scheduled solstice planting, though people can do some of that planting individually or with their immediate households.

### **Updates**

Anna Marie reported that the first online 15th Annual Native Plant Sale was amazing! She credited Beth for making it happen in a most stellar way, and expressed gratitude for all who stepped up into new roles and increased work loads. Except for when some plants were pulled out of customers' virtual carts by other customers, folks were incredibly happy with the online sale. Staff worked very hard, and we took in almost \$11,000 -- the most ever from a plant sale. It is true, however, that staff time dedicated to this new platform -- the online sale and contactless pick-up -- cost us \$13,000. But she urged us to remember that we put on the plant sale to promote FOSC and native plant diversity and knowledge, not because it is financially profitable.

### **Staff Report Elaboration**

Anna Marie commended Barry, Tim, Rob, and volunteer Bob Roat for their follow-through with EBMUD about the Barry Place water discharge into the creek (coming from the Central reservoir). EBMUD

acknowledged the leak and indicated it cannot be stopped, but can be treated. Rob explained to the board that the fix has to be part of the overall work plan for the reservoir, currently ten years out from being replaced. He said remediation happened quickly because EBMUD is facing greater enforcement action and they've known about these leaks for quite some time.

**Adjournment** The meeting was adjourned at 8:33 p.m.

**Next board meeting:** February 10, 2021, at 7:00 p.m., via Zoom.