

**Friends of Sausal Creek
Board of Directors Meeting
Wednesday, August 12, 2019, 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, Eleanor Dunn, Beth Keer, Tim Vendlinski, Jeff Stephens, Carl Kohnert, John Cadiz (Student Board Member), Steve Ritchie, Morgan Capella, Barry Stenger, Shannon Louie (departing Student Board Member), Mark Rauzon (Board Member Emeritus)

Absent Sean Welch, Rob Leidy, Harry Schrauth (Board Member Emeritus)

Staff Present Anna Marie Schmidt (Executive Director)

Guests Jen Stern, City of Oakland; Eddie Dunbar, former FOSC Board Member, and City of Oakland

Board Involvement

Community Talk via Zoom - September 15, 7:00 p.m.
(Michael Thilgen on native plants – TBD)

Creek to Bay Day Alternative - August 28 event to kick off month of September activities

14th Annual Oaktobefest - Proposed October 3 and 4, likely canceled

FOSC 15th Annual Plant Sale and Open House - Proposed date of October 18, modifications under consideration

Remarks from the President, Jeff Stephens

Jeff introduced our new student representative, John Cadiz, to the board. John is a senior at U.C. Berkeley. He will complete his B.S. in Civil & Environmental Engineering in May, 2021. Jeff also welcomed Barry Stenger again to the board, gave kudos and thanks to Shannon Louie, our departing Student Board Member,

and introduced (in absentia) Maribel Garcia, our new education and outreach coordinator. Maribel impressed the interview committee (Ricky, Nicki, and Anna Marie, whom Jeff also thanked) with her experience with youth in the watershed, her expertise in building community partnerships, and her passion for environmental justice. She will be able to shadow Nicki Alexander for a week prior to Nicki's departure for New York, where she will be joining the EPA. Jackie Van Der Hout will continue to assist Maribel in the onboarding process. Jeff also welcomed tonight's guests, Jen Stern and Eddie Dunbar, both from the City of Oakland.

Board Member Briefing/ Discussion about FOSC and COVID-19 and Plant Sale/Nursery Update

Anna Marie reported that the Steering Committee has recommended environmental ed field trips be paused until the new year, though we will consider requests on a case by case basis.

We're encouraging seasoned volunteers to continue their work with us as long as it's done safely. We'll lend them tools, as needed.

Jen Stern from the City is here to help us brainstorm about the plant sale.

Jeff reminded the board last year's plant sale raised \$9200. We've scaled back our expectations in this pandemic year to \$5000. The board and Jen launched into a discussion about different ways we might safely conduct the sale this year, with methods sanctioned by the City. The California Native Plant Society has generously offered us the opportunity to showcase our plants on their website. We could arrange curbside pick-up for those sales.

Various modalities were discussed, including offering small groups and individuals in-person nursery appointments, extending the number of days of the sale, shuttling plants up the hill for pick-up at the Conference Center. Jen said that Karis Griffin from the City must certify that all aspects of the plant sale be Covid safe.

Beth reassured the board that Jay has a robust inventory of plants, and suggested we beef up online photos of what we are selling. She thought volunteers might be able to help with that.

Tim said he would be willing to speak with Kristin Hopper

from the Oaktown Native Nursery to see how they operate their curbside pick-up. He reminded the board that his doc, *Wildscaping*, is on our website and includes many links to CalFlor and to nursery plants in his own garden. His doc offers other garden information as well, including tips about pollinators and bees, and book recommendations.

Beth wondered if volunteers might help with curbside pick-up, and speculated about implementing safety measures for our method of processing payments.

Jen said she would contact Karis to clarify procedures for us to submit a Covid-conscious plant sale proposal to the City for approval. We have a permit through 2023, but Covid has disrupted its viability.

Anna Marie said that a group of volunteers, with Jackie's help, is putting together an updated plant booklet for the sale.

Anna Marie reported on the ongoing outage of both water and power at the nursery. Volunteers and staff are continuing to hand-water, and some are looking into buying a solar panel and portable power station (approximately a \$300 outlay.) Kevin Charles from the City brought in a portable water tank to support hand watering. We'll submit a claim to PGE for three months of no electricity.

Adopt-A-Spot Site Issues, Anna Marie

Barry Place and Fruitvale Bridge continue to be problematic adopt-a-spots because of homeless encampments. Volunteers Barbara and Joyce at those sites have backed off because of safety issues. Jen informed the board that these two spots are not the City's top priorities right now, though the City hopes to put Barry Place in its sites before it gets worse. Fruitvale Bridge is out of control, and it poses a big water quality issue. She will send us the Encampment Management Team email so we can forward reports both to 3-1-1 and to them. Anna Marie shared photos of those sites, and said we've been sending emails to the Water Board.

Barry lives a few blocks from Barry Place (of course!) and goes there regularly to do clean up and talk with those living in the encampments. He said some of them are eager to join us in our efforts to preserve the creek. Anna Marie said we've been overwhelmed with graffiti artists who throw their paint cans into the creek.

She reminded the board of our existing contract with the City for plant storage. Kevin Charles of Park Services has added 50-75 of their

plants. He will build two benches, but compensation has yet to be discussed. He will provide extended irrigation. We will look for his support when there are power or water shortages. Eleanor, Tim and Jeff felt we need to be doing a quarterly check-in on this in case something goes awry.

FOSC SOLIDARITY WITH BLACK LIVES MATTER, Anna Marie

Anna Marie reported we have completed our solidarity statement in which we commit to addressing our own racist structures. Rob and Maribel have stepped forward to be on this committee and Anna Marie extended an invitation for others to join. Morgan and John added their names to the committee list, as did Beth (but hers with a caveat about overcommitting). This committee will get started next month and set strategies for the coming year.

Fundraising Updates: Mid-Year Appeal Activities, Jeff Stephens

Jeff reported that we limited our mailer this year to something like 290 previous donors. Our Rainmakers group (Barry, Carl, Anna Marie, and Jeff) crafted a soft ask letter. We also made a few mentions in the newsletter. In all, we raised about \$11,000 during our Mid-Year Appeal, \$4000 of which came from board members. We had a total of 76 donors, 7 of whom were first timers. By contrast, we raised \$17,000 last year. Jeff gave appreciation to all who participated in the appeal.

Financial Report, Anna Marie Schmidt

Anna Marie went over the Project Timeline and Cash Flow Chart, announcing the great news that we're solvent through the end of the year! She also reviewed the budget-- actual and projected-- for FYE20, and listed the grant applications that are in progress and those on the horizon.

No field trip money is coming in. We are awaiting two grants, and reimbursement from PGE for the electricity outage. She said she will start writing a few grant proposals due in September.

She reported that the Steering Committee approved taking \$40,000 from checking to put into Capital One savings temporarily, to earn a little interest.

Jackie has moved to Sebastopol, but she will continue with us full time online until she finds a job there.

Endowment Committee Annual Report, Carl Kohnert

Carl reported that volatility in the market continues, but for now

our Vanguard account is doing well, with an 8.5% rate of return since inception. The Endowment Committee's strategy is to continue to manage *For the Future* by maintaining a stable set of funds and bonds in a moderate portfolio. He expressed the hope we might still mount a capital campaign in 2021 to coincide with FOSC's 25th anniversary. The committee recommends we take an annual distribution from our earnings, coming up with that figure annually by looking at the balance after the first quarter, then multiplying by 4%. This brings us to \$4925 this year. We hope to grow these distributions year after year. Barry, who talks of the natural endowment we have in our watershed, has joined the committee.

The board voted unanimously to take the annual distribution as described by Carl, with Eleanor making the motion, and Barry seconding it.

Minutes and Commitments Review

Oaktoberfest has been canceled. As for Creek to Bay Day, alternatives are being sought. We will approach Michael Thilgen to see if he is open to presenting his September community talk via Zoom.

Carl moved to approve the June minutes, and Steve seconded the motion, which was unanimously approved.

Executive Director Responds to Questions on the Staff Report

Anna Marie reported that Maribel is 48 hours into the job. She came on immediately, and will work with Jackie after Nicki leaves, taking a week off in-between. Anna Marie encouraged John (and Maribel, in absentia) not to be shy about reaching out to board members for any of a number of reasons – mentoring, general needs, questions, or simply to familiarize themselves with the watershed. She mentioned such possibilities as bird-watching with Mark, hiking with various members, learning more about Fern Ravine. She said she will send out some dates and opportunities.

Guest Eddie Dunbar, a former FOSC board member, is an entomologist who works for the City. He will be scouting around to investigate what bugs are up to in the watershed these days, possibly offering some local hikes.

Shannon reported she's back living in Berkeley, looking for a fulltime job while doing a six-month internship with Central Contra Costa Sanitary District.

John shared that he is an intern for business climate leaders. He has joined our board because of his interest in community focus and

outreach. “An organization can do only so much to limit watershed deterioration. It’s a social problem as well.” Anna Marie said she’d hook him up with our water quality team.

Mark strongly advocated our writing an article and/or making a film about Fruitvale Bridge, looking at the impact of COVID on the watershed. Anna Marie shared that Maribel has a background in film. She reminded the board also that Elizabeth at *Wholly H2O* is filming tours of the creek, starting at the estuary. Barry wondered about our getting a marketing person to help showcase the relevance of our work.

Tim emphasized to everyone that the media landscape has changed, encouraging us to talk to young people about getting our message out. Eleanor said we need both old and new media presence. John made a point of telling us our LinkedIn is lacking – we have to use the dominant virtual platform!

Nicki, who worked with *Team Oakland*, reminded Anna Marie that *Team Oakland* kids have to use public transportation. Hanging out in Dimond Park/Dimond Canyon, one of the kids mentioned he’d be nervous asking directions if he got lost. He felt as a young black man, it would be dangerous.

Adjournment The meeting was adjourned at 8:31 p.m.

Next board meeting October 14, 2020, at 7:00 p.m. via Zoom