

**Friends of Sausal Creek  
Board of Directors Meeting  
Wednesday, December 8, 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, Beth Keer, Aneeshi Sandip Desai (Student Board Member), Carl Kohnert, Steve Ritchie, Sean Welch

**Absent** Harry Schrauth, (Board Member Emeritus), Mark Rauzon (Board Member Emeritus)

**Staff Present** Anna Marie Schmidt, ED

**Guest** Kate Berlin, FOSC Volunteer

**Board Involvement**

**Annual Solstice Planting** - December 18, 9:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.  
(Various locations)

**King Tides and Oakland Estuary Walk & Talk** - January 2, 10:00 a.m.  
2022.

**State of the Watershed** - January or February (date & location TBD)

**Remarks from Outgoing President, Jeff Stephens**

Jeff thanked Kate for joining us, and asked Board members to introduce themselves to her.

**Board Discussion: Planning a Facilitated Retreat (In-Person)**

The board grappled with what the focus of our annual board retreat should be. Here are some of the ideas raised in the discussion:

- ~ Should the retreat be facilitated?
- ~ What should the topic be?
- ~ Should we address long range goals, or the short term tactical?
  - ~ How about discussing staff positions and salaries?
  - ~ Are we too small to be big, or too big to be small?
  - ~ We're at a point where we're going to have to make some decisions about the kind of organization we're going to be. What about focusing on the nursery and its future.? E.g.,

should we engage contractors for the plant sale? Are the right plants being grown?

- ~ What is the future of environmental education at FOSC?
- ~ Should we be conducting mini retreats?
- ~ What are our priorities for the next five years?

### **Fundraising Updates: End-of-Year Appeal 2021, Jeff Stephens**

Jeff thanked everyone for getting their annotated appeal letters out the door. These resulted in 78 donors, raising \$21,000 to date. Four donors contributed \$1000, one \$3000, and one \$5000! Pat and Rob Raburn have once again pledged \$1000 towards a match, as did several board members. We had a specific email from Heather Phillips thanking Ricky for her personable notes and the appeal letter.

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

Anna Marie reviewed the Project Timeline and Cash Flow Chart with the board, and went over grant applications in progress and on the horizon.

She and Jeff decided it would be best to pause the search for an Education and Outreach Coordinator (EOC) until spring, since we lost all three of our preferred applicants to other organizations.

We have completed our fiduciary responsibility to the Urban Streams Restoration Project, which means we will be receiving the contractual \$27,000 holdback, with \$23,000 of it going to the City. Our final monitoring report is due in January, 2022.

The ED's salary has been raised, and there will be an increase in health care contributions for staff as of January. Barry, who had been looking into the practicality of hiring a fundraising staff person, has concluded that such a high level person isn't realistic. He is considering whether it makes sense to write up a position of Development Associate, who would be in charge of donor relations, gift entry, and learning grant writing. He is thinking of this as a 20-hour per week position.

**Endowment Update, Carl Kohnert.** Carl reported that FOSC has \$186,000 in endowment, with \$87,000 in returns and capital gains. He announced that an anonymous donor would like to make a one-time gift to the endowment, assuming certain criteria were met. The potential donor asked several questions which Carl has addressed. If satisfied with his responses, they will give approximately \$40,000, which would bring us to \$230,000 in the Endowment Fund. Carl noted the great success FOSC has had in the last 10 years, and made a point of thanking Sean for drafting the endowment and setting it up with all the details it would need to run itself. "We started out with Vanguard's mid-risk portfolio, then added social, environmental, and

good governance funds. And we've done great!" Carl went on to say that people are looking for places to make legacy gifts, and it's important for us to broadcast that FOSC is available for such gifts.

Jeff said that FOSC's plan is to move to 100% environmentally/socially responsible investments.

With Carl leaving the Board, Jeff made a motion that Barry become the chair of the Endowment Committee. Beth seconded the motion, which was passed unanimously. Barry wondered who would then head up the Rainmakers, given that both Carl and Jeff are leaving. Jeff interposed that this is an ad hoc committee. Anna Marie spelled out that the Endowment Committee is now composed of Barry, Beth, and Steve, whereas the Rainmakers consists only of herself and Barry. We are looking for Board of Directors representation on both committees.

### **Steering Committee Slate**

New officers are voted in every December to begin their tenure in January. The slate is as follows: President, Beth Keer; Vice President, Barry Stenger; Secretary, Ricky Jacobs; Treasurer, Rob Leidy; Steering Committee Member-at-Large, Eleanor Dunn. Anna Marie posted an online form for everyone to cast their votes. Rob suggested we convert the position of Treasurer to something that represents an actual job. Currently the Treasurer reviews the financials but does not necessarily sign off on financial documents. Anna Marie informed the Board that it is the President (not the Treasurer) who actually signs off on the taxes. The financial overview is usually a steering committee responsibility, with the Treasurer taking the lead in identifying and raising issues.

Carl confessed that he had been nervous about leaving the organization without seeing who would be taking over. "But I'll sleep like a baby tonight!"

### **Minutes**

Barry moved to approve the October Minutes. Carl seconded the motion. With one abstention, the motion was unanimously approved.

### **Commitments Review**

Anna Marie announced that we need one or two crew leaders for our annual solstice planting. She reminded everyone of the King Tide Oakland Estuary walk, which is being limited to a group of 25 or 30 participants. Also, our annual State of the Watershed meeting will once again take place on Zoom. Wendy Tokuda will be moderating a panel of four experts who will address locally relevant issues such as Sudden Oak Death and tree die-offs,

insects as indicators of climate change, park access and use, etc. The date is TBA.

### **Staff Report, Anna Marie Schmidt**

We're currently interviewing some great candidates for a Communications and Community Outreach Education Intern. We're hoping to hire in mid-December so that Elizabeth can help train them.

Staff member Satoko Takeda, along with FOSC volunteer and water quality monitoring lead, Kathleen Harris, completed the first draft of the *Field Work Manual for Water Quality Monitoring*. This manual shares FOSC's experience and standard protocols with current and future crew members. It describes the program's purpose and sampling station map, and includes photos. The manual provides instructions on collecting samples and entering data accumulated as of 2021. Through the California Environmental Data Exchange Network (CEDEN), Satoko is working to help FOSC share data with a wider research and monitoring audience.

FOSC taxes have been completed and will be filed soon.

Mark led a group hike from Fern Ravine down the Palos Colorado trail all the way to Bridgeview. The announcement of this hike was picked up by *Bay Nature*, and to Mark's surprise 30+ people showed up!

Jeff expressed his pleasure about this month's staff report. "There is so much we're accomplishing on a monthly basis! At times we lose sight of the great things we're doing."

Rob wondered whether there is a group which will continue to do water quality monitoring. Anna Marie said that Kathleen and Satoko, in addition to a team of volunteers, are doing that monitoring, though Kathleen would like someone else to take over leadership. Currently Kathleen is running monthly monitoring of the water quality sites.

Anna Marie reported that the permit reauthorization for the pallid manzanitas is stalled because Chabot Space and Science Center would need to sign off, and their staff's priorities are elsewhere. We can work the area and still monitor without a permit despite liability issues. Though we aren't required to do a report, FOSC intends nevertheless to do a modified report. Beth offered to help with the permit since she knows the Chabot players.

Tim reported that he called the Fire Department because he saw blatant evidence of illegal dumping on Monterey Blvd -- hazardous waste flowing down the storm drain into the creek. There were eight 5-gallon containers and twenty 1-gallon containers. He sent a message to Jen Stern, who didn't respond. He called 911 and then hurried to the Shepherd Canyon Fire Station and waited for their hazmat team to come down the hill.

Rob wondered about the possibility of getting people from the City to take a tour of such hazardous hotspots. Anna Marie said that Barry Place should be on that list. Rob suggested that FOSC put together a volunteer group to investigate and report these. Tim said the Fire Station was very responsive, that the firefighters were patient with him, took him seriously, and then proceeded to take care of the problem. He confiscated the labels from the containers to see about possibly tracking down the culprits by tracing the job numbers on the containers and finding out who owned them.

The board offered numerous and enthusiastic appreciations for Tim and all he did in face of this disaster.

### **Gratitude for the Service of Carl Kohnert and Jeff Stephens**

Ricky, Rob, and Steve opened up a conversation of enthusiastic appreciation for everything Carl and Jeff have done for FOSC. Carl took the opportunity to express awe at how far we've come, remembering that only a few years back FOSC couldn't meet its monthly payroll and needed to turn to the board to stay afloat! He especially cited Jeff, Anna Marie and Sean for their good works. "The organization has really grown under your care and leadership." Anna Marie made a point of saying that both Carl and Jeff have been confidantes and great advocates.

Barry noted that Anna Marie had gotten him involved in the board by having him attend a Rainmakers meeting. He said that his antennae had been up: are the board members really committed? "That question was answered immediately when I listened to Carl and Jeff, and when I saw how Tim and Rob dealt with the fencing issues."

Carl and Jeff will be missed very much. Each has brought dedicated, multi-faceted, and optimistic service to FOSC.

**Adjournment** The meeting ended at 8:32 p.m., followed by a closed Executive Session.

**Next board meeting:** February 9, 2022, 7:00 p.m. Location TBA.