

**Friends of Sausal Creek**  
**Board of Directors Meeting**  
**Wednesday, October 12, 2022, 7:00 p.m.**  
**Park Blvd. Presbyterian Church**

*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, Barry Stenger, Rob Leidy, Beth Keer, Eleanor Dunn, Harry Schrauth (Board Member Emeritus), Mark Rauzon (Board Member Emeritus)

**Absent** Barry Stenger, Steve Ritchie, Sean Welch

**Staff Present** Anna Marie Schmidt, E.D.; Amaya Griego, Education and Outreach Manager; Kate Berlin, Communications and Operations Manager; Ella Matsuda, Restoration and Nursery Manager (present via telephone)

**Guests** Monica Berson, Alan Tong (late arrival)

**Board Involvement**

- ~**FOSC 17th Annual Native Plant Sale and Open House** – Saturday, October 29, 10:00-3:00. Nursery.
- ~**Volunteer Appreciation** - November 4, 4:00. Nursery.
- ~**Board End-of-Year Appeal Writing** - TBD (early November).
- ~**Rainbow Trout Walk and Talk**, Rob Leidy. November (TBD), Scout Hut.

**Remarks from the President, Beth Keer**

Beth welcomed Monica, and asked the board to introduce themselves.

**Feasibility Study for Open Space & Park Expansion in the Lower Sausal Creek Watershed, Part 2, Paul Frank**

**Capital Improvement Program (CIP)**

The City recently gave notice requesting Capital Improvement Program project submissions (deadline October 14). In response to this imminent deadline, the board, staff, and Paul Frank discussed "next steps", focusing on specific projects from the Feasibility Study. Anna Marie explained that each submission must cost a minimum of \$100,000 and not include maintenance.

Disadvantaged areas and projects with community input and support rank higher in the selection process. The group discussed possible projects.

Tim said the El Centro Crossing Rain Garden project is ready to drop in. He offered to make the submission, explaining that these water quality projects are the essence of capital improvements. Additionally, Oakland is under a trash order by the state. Anna Marie said that the Fruitvale is high priority for the City. Tim reminded the board that storm water management contributes to the benefit of all neighborhoods. By examining each site's drainage patterns for basin, bioswales, and the existing storm drain systems, one can draw up a mini plan for each site. Paul interjected that water quality is not a focus of the Feasibility Study. He said that these five sites aren't inherently the place to do this --it's the entire storm system in the watershed that brings water; that all the developable places need to be identified: "Nature-based solutions for storm water."

Anna Marie has already submitted the Wood Park project. She noted that Fruitvale Bridge Park is a high priority for the City as the old glass factory is going through a redesign. Rob suggested a submission to remove the sewer line from under the creek. Paul said Barry Place is a choice spot. Mark thought we should link into education at Achieve Academy. Paul followed by suggesting the "17th Street Rain Garden", which, Mark added, the students could maintain.

Anna Marie made it clear she would not be able to submit all these suggestions on her own, and asked the board for assistance. Tim volunteered to write the one for El Centro Crossing Rain Garden; FOSC staff will assist with other submissions. In addition to Wood Park, proposed projects include the 17th Street Rain Garden\* (by Jose de la Cruz Park), Barry Place, and the El Centro Crossing.

[\\*As this project did not meet the minimum \\$100,000 criteria, Fruitvale Bridge Park was submitted instead.](#)

### **Board Member Briefing & Discussion on the Feasibility Study: *Where do we go from here?* Paul Frank**

Paul invited the board to share their priorities for the Feasibility Study. Here are some of the many points from the ensuing conversation:

- Mark stated that taking the temperature of the community is crucial, that we need partners to share our vision.
- Paul said an eye towards a pilot will be germane, that pathways and signage to a site are less controversial and will help raise awareness.

- Tim spoke of the "green ribbon concept": since signs are subject to vandalism, why not embed information in the sidewalk and get one of the tree organizations to plant native trees?

- Rob felt strongly that we need other people at the table. He wondered why the tree people aren't already planting. He pointed out that no one in the affected communities have seen or commented on the Feasibility Study.

- Paul responded that buy-in from the Cortland Creek community is ongoing. Residents are starting to come out for creek clean ups. Measure DD provided initial seed funding, and funded us as well. DD made the City prioritize parks. Beth wondered how we might get a strong partnership started with the City.

- Paul suggested we get a grant to hire our own outreach firm to do the legwork. He said that the task of the Feasibility Study is now complete.

- Mark suggested that this be our State of the Watershed theme!

- Rob pointed out that we're in a transition right now, so we need to be realistic about the board's bandwidth. The board is down six members.

- Tim felt there is no burning desire from communities for all this. Paul countered with the point that there is a strong community desire for moving forward at Wood Park and Barry Place, where there is both awareness and access.

- Amaya wondered whether we are a recreational organization. Perhaps other organizations might be better suited for this endeavor than we are? Paul said that it is recreation, in fact, that will get people involved.

- Beth expressed the need for us to find Wood Park people for our board. Kate suggested that since Friends of San Antonio Park has considerable community involvement, it might be a place for us to link in. That organization consists of several groups.

Paul listed the take-aways from tonight's meeting:

- a) submit as many CIPs as possible;
- b) decide whether FOSC wants formally to publish this Feasibility Study;
- c) think about seeking grant opportunities for FOSC to fund these types of projects, keeping in mind that FOSC will need professional help;
- d) identify other organizations FOSC can partner with.

(Paul, Kate, Amaya, and Monica leave the meeting at 8:30 p.m.)

### **Fundraising Updates: End-of-Year Appeal, Beth Keer & Anna Marie Schmidt**

Harry will again be doing the printing of our appeal letters. He will need everything in hand by November 2. Beth said that Richard is reviewing

and editing the letter she wrote, with much appreciated assistance from Barry.

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

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

Beth reminded the board that we have money we haven't yet drawn from our Endowment Fund.

### **Endowment Member and Student Board of Directors Vote, Beth Keer**

Eleanor has agreed to join the Endowment Committee. Beth moved that Eleanor be instated onto that committee, and Tim seconded the motion, which was unanimously passed.

Anna Marie announced that two high school students will be joining the board: Hattie Bradshaw and Amba Beattie. Both are juniors at Oakland Tech. They assisted in Creek to Bay Day through their AP Environmental Science class, and Anna Marie encouraged them to apply. Tim made a motion to accept them as student members of the board. Eleanor seconded the motion, which was then approved unanimously.

### **Minutes**

One typo was found in the August minutes. With that correction, Beth moved to accept the minutes, and Rob seconded the motion, which was approved unanimously.

### **Resolution for JMP Master Plan - Update, Tim Vendlinski**

Tim reported that the Resolution he drafted urging the City Council to prepare a master plan for Joaquin Miller Park (JMP) and to prohibit BMX racing was approved by the FOSC Board in mid-September. In 1996, the City Council approved the Open Space, Conservation, and Recreation (OSCAR) Element of the General Plan.

The OSCAR Element explained that JMP was originally set-aside to conserve natural resources, and prioritized the preparation of a master plan for the Park. However, a master plan was never prepared, and the mostly unregulated Park has emerged as a *de facto* regional mountain biking facility. As a result, significant damage has been done to the aquatic and terrestrial habitats of the Park.

Tim, Beth, Rob, and Anna Marie are collecting letters of support. Its trajectory is not known, but we understand that it is currently with the City

Attorney. Anna Marie spoke with several representatives from Friends of Joaquin Miller Park about the resolution, including Johnella La Rose of Sogorea Te' Land Trust and Amelia Marshall, an equestrian spokesperson.

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

Beth praised the Staff Report and appreciated Rob for leading the trout walks. Tim expressed dismay about all the golf balls the driving range discharges into the creek and its surrounds. He would like FOSC to intervene.

### **Announcements**

Rob, explaining why he can't help out at the plant sale, said he will be working with the scouts that day to complete the installation of the foot bridge at Fern Ravine.

Anna Marie announced that we now have 30,000 watershed maps. Additionally, she provided an update on some of the activities that will occur during the plant sale: 8 tablers, music by the Lake Merritt Ramblers, habitat kits, and the original artwork used for the plant sale flyer, to be raffled off by the artist during the sale. Rob praised the plant sale promotion video.

Anna Maria reported that Ella is planning a Volunteer Appreciation Day for November 4, at 4:00. Participants will receive a free plant and light fare. She urged everyone to attend.

The board discussed whether to gather for a writing "party" to complete the End-of-Year appeal letters, as had been done pre-COVID; or would the board prefer to do their packets on their own? The board agreed to do the letter writing on their own.

Anna Marie encouraged board members to brag a bit about their achievements. For example, she said, Rob's trout walk and talk was so popular, it had a waitlist. She also wanted the board to know that Mark participated in Stanford's Education Partnership for Internationalizing Curriculum (EPIC) Fellow Program for 2022-23. Additionally, he is the recipient of the Paul Covell Environmental Education Award from the Golden Gate Audubon Society. This was in honor of his restoration and water quality work on the Laney College estuary with his lab students.

Tim announced that he will be giving a presentation at Cal Poly about oaks, and said he would be happy to make that presentation available to FOSC if desired. Beth offered to share with him her teaching materials about life supported by oak trees.

Lastly, Mark shared that he had had a vivid dream about seeing a sea turtle. Not long after, he was at Half Moon Bay and something unusual caught his eye just below the surface of the water. He spotted an Olive Ridley

sea turtle which is from Mexico -- in fact, a species of turtle rarely (if ever) seen this far north!

**Adjournment** The meeting adjourned at 9:04 p.m.

**Next board meeting:** December 14, 2022, location TBA.