

Friends of Sausal Creek
Board of Directors Meeting
Wednesday, December 14, 2022, 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, Barry Stenger, Rob Leidy, Beth Keer, Eleanor Dunn, Mark Rauzon (Board Member Emeritus), Haddie Bradshaw (Student Board Member), Amba Beattie (Student Board Member)

Absent Harry Schrauth, (Board Member Emeritus), Steve Ritchie, Sean Welch

Staff Present Anna Marie Schmidt, E.D.

Guests Russ Huddleston, John Brega, Mike Craig

Board Involvement

- ~**Annual Solstice Planting** – December 17 & 18, 9:00-12:00 (Dimond Canyon, Fern Ravine, Bienatti)
- ~**State of the Watershed** - (March 18th or 25th)

Remarks from the President, Beth Keer

Beth greeted our guests and had the board members introduce themselves.

Board Member Briefing & Discussion: State of the Watershed and Joaquin Miller Park

Friends of Joaquin Miller Park drafted a letter to the City, dismayed by their reprimand for the unsanctioned cutting of acacias. We recommended they hold off sending it, in favor of having a sit-down with a few City Parks and Recreation people. Anna Marie will draft an email to Bonnie Sherwood with that recommendation. She will talk to the authors of the letter to see about coming up with more constructive suggestions. She said she's loved working with Jackie Salas. FOSC has a standing meeting with her every 4th Wednesday at 11:00 at the nursery. Sheng Thao is planning to sponsor a master plan resolution for Joaquin Miller Park.

Our annual State of the Watershed meeting will be moved to March 18 or 25. It is being planned as an in-person outdoor tabling event -- a FOSC fair highlighting the accomplishments of various Adopt-a-Spot sites, monitoring

activities, and board programs. It will be one opportunity to get community input on the feasibility study. The theme will be *Visions of the Watershed*.

Fundraising Updates: End-of-Year Appeal, Barry Stenger, and Plant Sale Proceeds, Anna Marie Schmidt

759 letters and many emails were sent to past donors and creekside residents. To date, we've received 110 responses and \$35,000. There will be an end-of-year match of \$15,000 which includes contributions from board members, Pat and Robert Raburn, and anonymous donors (Anna Marie's relatives).

The plant sale brought in \$16,402 in addition to \$6000 from plant sale sponsors, one of which included a generous sponsorship from Eleanor's veterinary business. There were 417 in-person attendees and 274 customers. We followed up with an online sale. In the future Ella hopes to increase the number of plants. Tim gave kudos to Ella and the nursery folks, especially praising her idea of selling habitat kits.

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.

And our 2022 EFY taxes have been submitted to the tax preparer!

Endowment, Barry Stenger

Barry reported that, as of Dec. 6, we have \$187,478.90 in our *For the Future* endowment account. This reflects a market loss of \$40,232.99. Income returns came to \$2618.78. As of that same date, we had \$179,631.89 in our *For the Future Fund*. Annually we have the opportunity to take 4% from our endowment account for operations. The 2021-2022 distribution to operating expenses amounted to \$6612.74.

Beth inquired as to the goal of our endowment fund. Eleanor explained that it is to provide for expenses we can't cover with grants and donations.

Barry said that Carl had strongly advocated for an outside portfolio manager. Barry developed an investment policy that was board-approved in August. Concerned about the fees, the Endowment Committee isn't enthusiastic about the decision to seek an outside manager. Barry will revisit this with the committee to determine exactly what they want to do. In general, he said, a balance of \$200,000 or less is too small a figure to constitute hiring an outside professional. And their fees might be such that it's not worth it. In response to a question from Rob, Barry said that the committee is happy with the socially responsible funds in which our money is currently invested.

FOSC Officers Slate and Vote, and Whale Tail Authorization Vote

The 2023 slate of officers was presented to the board for vote: for President, Beth Keer; for Vice President, Barry Stenger; for Secretary, Ricky Jacobs; for Treasurer, Rob Leidy; and for At Large, Eleanor Dunn. Tim moved that the aforementioned officers be accepted. Eleanor seconded that motion, which was then unanimously approved.

The board was then asked to consider authorizing Anna Marie Schmidt as agent to apply for and manage a Whale Tail Grant. The following proposal was put forth:

The Board of Directors of the Friends of Sausal Creek authorizes the following with respect to the California Coastal Commission's Whale Tail Grant Program:

- 1. Authority to submit the grant proposal;*
- 2. Authority to enter into a contract with the California Coastal Commission if the grant is awarded;*
- 3. Designation of Anna Marie Schmidt, Executive Director, as the authorized representative.*

Barry moved to approve the motion, as stated above, and Beth seconded the motion, which was passed unanimously.

Russ Huddleston, potential board member, arrived and introduced himself. Russ has been with USEPA since Rob retired. He has been an Environmental Consultant for 20 years -- a botanist/ecologist by training -- and he is on the board of *Northern California Botanist*. Russ said that Rob reached out to him about the possibility of joining FOSC's board, and that he would like to see how he can be of help.

Commitments Review

Anna Marie reported that 40 people showed up this weekend for the annual solstice planting despite the weather. Mike Craig said it was fun to be with kindred spirits and wondered who organized these events. Anna Marie said this event was organized by Kate Berlin, our Communications and Operations Manager, who oversees such events, including a "Walk and Talk" every other month. Last month's speaker was Dr. Ben Carter, an instructor of Kate's from San Jose State.

Minutes

Tim made corrections to the summary for the Joaquin Miller Park Master Plan as noted in the October 12th, 2022, minutes. Beth moved we approve those minutes once his corrections have been incorporated. Eleanor

seconded the motion. Barry, who had not attended that meeting, abstained. The motion was otherwise unanimously approved.

Staff Report, Anna Marie Schmidt

Clarification about whether we need a permit to work on the pallid manzanita colony near Chabot Space and Science Center was made. The sorry shape of the Big Trees site was also discussed. Ella will talk to the City about the urgent need there. There is a January 25 site visit scheduled with Rob, Ella, and Jackie Salas.

The health and needs of the USRP sites were discussed. Russ said he would be happy to step in and talk to Lech Naumovich about the CSSC's pallid colony.

Anna Marie told the board the sad news of the death of Deirdre Martin from the Environmental Service Division at the City. Anna Martinez stepped into her shoes at the end of 2021. Anna Martinez and her staff were invited to the nursery and other sites to show them what we're doing. Ms. Martinez had previously been critical of us, wrongly believing we had been cutting trees.

Anna Marie brought the board up to date about the give-back of Ohlone land and the celebration that recently took place. Tribes from all over the country showed up. Tim and Rob expressed hopes we can work with Sogorea Te' on stewardship. Ella has reached out to Johnella La Rose about providing native plants to the site--including the white sage, a sacred plant we have reserved for them.

Anna Marie sought and received volunteers to send personal thanks to donors who have given \$250 or more.

John Brega joined at 8:40, apologizing for having missed so much of the meeting. He told the board that he walks and works in JMP every day, and is an Adopt-a-Spot volunteer there. He is currently working with Friends of Joaquin Miller Park on a Cal Fire grant. He has worked with FOSC on many projects, and has donated tools to us.

Announcements

Mark and Tim expressed appreciation to Amba and Haddie for joining the board. They expressed that it takes special effort for high school students to come out, get involved, and sit through meetings like this!

Adjournment The meeting adjourned at 8:49 p.m. followed by a Closed Session.

Next board meeting: February 8, 2023, location TBA.

Closed Session