

**Friends of Sausal Creek
Board of Directors Meeting
Wednesday, April 12, 2023, 7:00 p.m.
on 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, Amba Beattie (Student Board Member), Russ Huddleston

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

Staff Present Lisa Giordano, Executive Director

Guests Kiran Nigam, John Brega

Board Involvement

~ **Earth Day** - Saturday, April 22, 8:45 - 12:00, Scout Hut and various sites.

~ **Sod Blitz** - Friday, May 12, pick-up sod samples; Tuesday, May 16, drop-off of results (U.C. Berkeley).

~ **Native Plant Walk** - Saturday, May 13, 2023, 10:00 - 12:00, Russ Huddleston & Ella Matsuda.

~ **Botanical Illustration Workshop**, Saturday, May 20, & Sunday, May 22, Kristi Holohan.

Remarks from the President, Beth Keer

Beth welcomed Kiran Nigam who lives next to Sausal Creek and enjoys creek access. She is interested in learning more about FOSC and possibly getting involved. Kiran shared that she facilitates workshops and strategic planning for Sogorea Te'. She is a social and economic justice facilitator with a specialty in housing and worker cooperatives. She grew up in southern

California and came here to go to school at Berkeley. As an organizer she works with indigenous movements about sovereignty issues. Kiran has worked on international, national, and local issues. Her core specialties include communication and conflict engagement, training other facilitators, and "compass setting" for organizations.

Beth also gave a hearty welcome to Lisa Giordano, FOSC's new Executive Director, and asked her to introduce herself. Lisa said that she comes to FOSC from the advocacy space at the level of federal policy, focusing on the interweave between environmental justice and policy. She has worked for the New York City Recycling Bureau on urban composting. Her history also includes doing community outreach and education for *GrowingNYC*. Lisa was an environmental research specialist in the Bay Area, and did her undergraduate work at U.C. Berkeley. She is very glad to be back on the west coast.

Board Member Briefing & Discussion, Lisa Giordano

- Student Board of Director input

Lisa asked Student Board Member Amba Beattie for input about her experience on the Board. (Hattie Bradshaw had to leave unexpectedly.) Amba enthusiastically responded that her experience so far "has been amazing," volunteering and co-leading a talk at one of the sites. She would like to focus on engaging high school students, and hopes to connect through her teacher to organize a high school focus day, possibly arranging a school trip or bringing several schools together.

Tim said he delighted in their participation in the newsletter, and Beth expressed her wholehearted appreciation for the work she and Hattie are doing.

- Joaquin Miller Park Resolution - Tim and Rob

Tim and Rob reported on the status of the Resolution urging City Council to prepare a master plan for Joaquin Miller Park (JMP) and to prohibit BMX racing. Tim met with Council Member Nikki

Fortunato Bas, who came to a walk & talk. She seemed eager to advocate for support of the Resolution and will see about galvanizing other Council members. Tim pressed her about halting this year's Enduro Race. The promoters have already applied for a permit and have begun to advertise the race, though for now they're being held off, citing all the downed trees in the park. Tim felt strongly that we should stop this race. An Eagle Scout is building a bike repair station to service the bicyclers!

Fortunato Bas appears to understand the multiple tracks and the need to stop the race. Tim will follow up with her.

Also, as per Rob, the Serpentine Slope needs oversight. It could be a botanical preserve.

~ Hiring & Board Recruitment

Beth announced that since our current budget is extremely tight, the decision to hire a paid intern instead of a full time Education and Outreach staff person is close to being made. Staff is currently overloaded by field trip requests -- so much so that Anna Marie and Beth have stepped in to cover for some of them. We are hoping to staff this internship with a bilingual, culturally competent, full time paid intern.

The board gave input on this plan. Ricky and Eleanor felt this position requires more than an intern to do the job well. Barry suggested we charge private schools for their participation, to help fund the position. Tim wondered about seeking out newly retired educators, maybe to do a four-month module. Barry suggested the board itself be given a tutorial so we could pitch in. Rob and Beth reminded the board that we need to be fiscally responsible. Lisa said she will need a couple of months to get things in order before applying for appropriate grants. She said the process by which schools sign up is being standardized, and donations will be requested. She likes the idea of bringing in a paid intern who can transition to full time staff member, someone who has career development ambitions in the field.

The Board then discussed restructuring the curriculum, and enlisting the help of former teachers, and engaging tribal leaders. Kiran said she would be happy to contact Sogorea Te' or native Ohlone folks, but emphasized that their resources are limited. Lisa offered to help make that connection happen.

Lisa extended an invitation for Kiran to consider joining our Board. Kiran made it clear that she needed to check out any organization for at least six months before making any kind of commitment.

On the subject of recruitment, Ricky asked John where he stood as far as his interest in joining our Board was concerned. He mirrored Kiran's feeling and said he would attend some meetings before making a decision. He already does a great deal for FOSC and Friends of Joaquin Miller Park. Beth thanked him for all he does.

John offered to introduce a professional grant writer he knows to Lisa. He said that he has been the CEO of a few companies and would be glad to be of help to us.

~ Board Committees

Lisa urged all Board members to join FOSC committees. Eleanor reminded everyone that some committees include non-Board-member volunteers.

~ Website

Lisa said that she and Kate are in the process of upgrading the website and asked that all Board members revise their bios, if needed, as soon as possible.

~ Plant Sale Planning

Oct. 28 was suggested as the date of the plant sale.

Financial Report, Lisa Giordano

Lisa reviewed the Project Timeline and Cash Flow Chart, as well as grant applications in progress and those on the horizon. She gave a preview of the FYE 2024 budget. She asked for strategies for dealing with the lapse in cash flow.

A conversation began about such strategies. Some suggestions that were put forth included using our operating reserve, using our Endowment, expanding ideas for available grants, contacting John's grant-writing friend, hiring a development coordinator to help with fundraising, and streamlining our mid-year appeal. Lisa will send a master list to the Board so additional ideas can be collected.

Fundraising Updates, Barry Stenger,

The Endowment Committee is recommending we take our regular 4% draw on the Endowment for FY 2023-2024. At 4%, that draw would be \$6809, to be used for operations. However, in light of the discussion that was just had on cash flow issues, Barry suggested we up the percentage draw from 4% to 5%. This is the maximum allowed in the Board-approved Endowment guidelines. A 5% draw would amount to \$8512. Barry moved that given our financial needs this year, we take 5% of the average balance of the last twelve quarters of \$170,243 of the *For the Future Fund* Endowment, which is \$8512, and apply that to operations. This should be transferred from the Endowment in July, 2023. Eleanor seconded that motion, which passed unanimously.

~ Mid-Year Appeal 2023

Ideas for what to include in the mid-year appeal letter were batted around. Innovative suggestions such as including a usable postcard, highlighting the revival of Fern Ravine and the creek headwaters, eye-catching graphics, and a letter less heavy on wordy narratives -- a maximum length of one page only -- were suggestions enthusiastically received by the board. The Rainmaker

Committee will meet soon and decide on an approach. They will get the appeal out in early May.

Minutes

With a few minor amendments, Barry moved to approve the Minutes from February. Tim seconded the motion, which then passed unanimously. The board requested that the final version be amended in PDF format.

Staff Report, Lisa Giordano

Lisa has changed the staff report format from narrative to bullet. Tim asked that she include some elaboration for context. Lisa wondered if a few sentences per heading would work. Tim thought that might be a serviceable middle ground.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 9:05 p.m.

Next board meeting

The next meeting will take place on June 14, 2023, 7:00 p.m., in the Iona Room at Park Boulevard Presbyterian Church.

