Friends of Sausal Creek
Board of Directors Meeting
Wednesday, February 18, 2026 7:00 p.m
St. Paul Lutheran Church
1658 Excelsior Ave., Oakland, CA 94602

Our mission is to conserve, restore, and enhance the Sausal Creek Watershed by educating future generations, involving the community in environmental stewardship, and collaborating with agencies and nonprofits. We support Oakland's biodiversity and are working toward a climate-resilient future.

Present Richelle Jacobs, Eleanor Dunn, Barry Stenger, Russ Huddleston, Rob Leidy, Kristy Brady, Tim Vendlinski, Dee Rosario, Renata Robles (on phone speaker)

Absent Harry Schrauth (Board Member Emeritus), Mark Rauzon (Board Member Emeritus), Sean Welch, Oliver Hopkins (Student Board Member)

Staff Present Nicki Alexander (Executive Director), Eliana Thompson (Communications and Outreach Coordinator)

Remarks from the President, Rob Leidy

- At 7:01 pm FOSC President, Rob Leidy called the meeting to order.
- Dee Rosario, a former FOSC Board Member, has returned after serving on the East Bay Regional Parks Board. Those who hadn't met Dee introduced themselves, and everyone welcomed him back.
- Rob acknowledged that this meeting was taking place on unceded Huichin (alternatively spelled Huchiun) Ohlone territory.

Committee Updates

Nursery

- Kristy announced that the next meeting will take place tomorrow. The last meeting focused on better management of volunteers, including handling large turnouts and ensuring proper orientation to prevent harm, such as incorrect weeding. The fencing project was also briefly discussed. There has been significant progress on the work being done in Dimond Canyon (work spearheaded by Kristy).
- Ella sent site leaders requests for plant orders for the following month.

Restoration

- Russ reported they are trying to figure out better ways to deal with volunteers. They are having good workdays and the plants are thriving.

30th Anniversary

- The committee has decided not to include Circus Bella in the July 25th gathering because extensive preparation and cleanup would have been required. Additionally, we came to understand that CB was hoping we would

help pay for their performance. The committee is developing other ideas for a celebratory day.
- With the Board's input, the decision was made to order the birthday cake from *Ladyfingers Bakery* in Oakland.

Lower Watershed
- Barry reported that plantings were done at Barry Place and a workday was held at Wood Park. A sign and a new name are in the works for Barry Place. Additionally, Rob said the benches will be brought there once the rain lets up.

December Minutes
- Ricky pointed out a typo that needed correction. With that change, Russ moved that the December 2026 Minutes be accepted. Eleanor seconded that motion. With Dee's abstention, the Minutes were approved.

Finance

Cash Savings Account Update
- Nicki announced we have successfully opened a cash savings account and ended our relationship with Commercial Bank of California. By pooling the balance from Commercial Bank plus the funds from our Chase account into this new cash savings, we should be earning a few thousand dollars per year in interest! Special thanks to Barry for his efforts on this.

Budget vs. Actual Comparison
- Nicki explained the details of each category in the Budget to the Board. The net income is currently inflated because of end-of-year contributions.

Proposed Budget Amendments
- Nicki led a discussion about how to track foundation grants more effectively.
- Barry proposed creating the following new categories:
    - Foundation Grants (Unrestricted): for funds to be used in the current budget year
    - Foundation Grants (Restricted for the Future): for grant funds received this year but saved for a future date
    - Unsolicited Grants: for unexpected awards
    - A discussion ensued about how best to incorporate these new categories. Renata reminded the Board that Salesforce can provide the graphics for these dynamics.
- A significant influx of Foundation funding was discussed. The question was whether it was necessary formally to amend the budget to reflect this increase in income and expenses. After discussion, the Board decided this was not necessary, but acknowledgment of the changes was necessary. The new tracking categories will be adopted for future budgeting. This will reflect multi-year grants and restricted funds.

Administration

Board Assistance on FOSC Committees

- Eliana requested written contributions from the Board for the newsletter and social media, such as Kristy's "Native Plants for your Garden" column. Here are some of the ideas generated by Board members:
    - Barry offered to write an occasional tidbit about moments from our history.
    - Rob wondered about a 30th anniversary article with comments from Mark.
    - Kristy offered to do a feature on what we're removing and what we're planting.
    - Tim suggested a rotating essay written by Boardmembers, "Contemplations from the Board".
    - Tim said he'd like to write an article about the Serpentine Hills and biodiversity.
    - Renata officially became a naturalist last year. She'd like to write something about cultivating curiosity through various activities -- fun suggestions for people to go out and do on their own.
- Eliana received these suggestions enthusiastically. Additionally, she also asked the Board to contribute to the FOSC historical timeline that is being created for the 30th Anniversary gala on July 25. She is seeking historical dates, photos, and event descriptions.

Fern Ravine & General Fence Permitting Process

- Noé has submitted a fencing permit for our Fern Ravine site. The city planner is requiring a letter from City Trees stating that a full forester-signed tree survey is not needed. We have a basic tree survey and a non-specific confirmation from Isaac, but a more declarative statement is necessary. We will draft the required statement and ask Isaac to sign it.

Sogorea Te' Land Acquisition

- Tim announced that the Council passed the transfer of $843,000 to the Sogorea Te' Land Trust to purchase the Palo Seco Creek Headwaters Preserve property. Tim has been working on this with Michael Perlmutter (from the City) for over five years! A newsletter piece will be written to acknowledge the partnership and the importance of this achievement.

New Master Calendar

- The Board was extremely enthusiastic about the new Master Calendar, created by Nicki, Kate, and Eliana, which is now active and linked to the Board Meeting agenda. It includes tables for the main calendar, and staff assignments for events. At Tim's suggestion a Board Support column will be added so Board members can indicate which events each will be supporting. Renata suggested the addition of monthly event graphics for social media (to improve public awareness and shareability). This too was met with approval by the Board.

2026 Strategic Plan

- Nicki announced that she has updated the Strategic Plan document with these added columns:
  - Effort Level
  - Associated Goals
  - Status: Initiated
  - Status: Near Completion
  - Date Completed
- The intention is for Staff to conduct quarterly check-ins to update the plan, ensuring it remains a living document.

Fundraising

Q3 Grant Horizon

- Nicki updated the Board on upcoming grant applications and decisions. In particular, she informed the Board about our intention to apply to the San Francisco Bay Restoration Authority Community Grants Program for a two-year grant for education and outreach, as well as a feasibility study for Fruitvale Bridge Park. We have requested funds from the Prologis Foundation, located on the Old Glass Factory site. It is their intention to extend the Bay Trail from that location. There is a lot of activity on that section of the estuary these days.
- Tim added that we are awaiting the release of Prop 68 and Prop 4 funds, which include the CalFire Wildfire Resilience Block Grant program.

End of Year Appeal Dashboard

- Kate has created a dashboard showing the performance of our End-of-Year appeal, which was our biggest year yet, raising almost $91,000! The number of individual gifts and unique donors also increased. The data sheet allows for filtering donors according to categories: new, retained, and returning. These will be analyzed by the Rainmaker Committee.

Unrestricted & Unexpected Awards

- Nicki announced that the Hobach Family Foundation donated an unexpected $7,500 award, and, additionally, we have received $50,000 from an anonymous donor. The Board responded with delight.

For the Future Fund Endowment

- Barry suggested, and then made the motion, that we restrict $15,000 from the anonymous gift to use as a matching incentive for the 30th anniversary endowment campaign. Kristy seconded the motion, which was then passed unanimously.

Adjournment

- The meeting ended at 8:14 pm, followed by a closed session.
- Our next Board meeting will be held at 7:00 pm on Wednesday, May 20, 2026, at St. Paul Lutheran Church, 1658 Excelsior Avenue, Oakland, CA 94602.

Closed Session

- Topics discussed in the closed session included the following:
  - FOSC Employee Handbook updates
  - FOSC credit card
  - Google Voice update
  - Continuing education clarifications for Staff
  - Bereavement Leave policy clarification
  - Signing of the mandatory Conflict of Interest Policy Statements
- On the horizon will be a Five-Year Budget Projection, as well as Board Participation hourly updates.
- Nicki attended this meeting until 8:45 pm.