

**Friends of Sausal Creek
Board of Directors Meeting
Wednesday, December 13, 2023, 7:00 p.m.
Park Blvd Presbyterian Church**

Friends of Sausal Creek works to conserve, restore, and enhance the watershed by educating future generations, involving the community in environmental stewardship, and collaborating with agencies and nonprofits to support Oakland's diverse ecosystems and promote a climate-resilient future.

Present Richelle Jacobs, Eleanor Dunn, Russ Huddleston, Barry Stenger, Rob Leidy, Tim Vendlinski, Mark Rauzon (Board Member Emeritus), Kristy Brady, Delaney Welch (Student Board Member), Shaon Bhattacharya (Student Board Member)

Absent Harry Schrauth (Board Member Emeritus), Steve Ritchie, Beth Keer, Maria Katticaran, Sean Welch, Jaden Shochet (Student Board Member)

Staff Present Lisa Giordano, Executive Director

Guests Somen Bhattacharya (father of Shaon), Gary McCormick

Board Involvement

- Solstice planting - Saturday & Sunday, 12/16 & 17
- MLK weekend - 1/13, 14, & 15
- End-of-Year matching campaign

Remarks from Vice President, Barry Stenger

- Barry welcomed our guests and acknowledged that this meeting was taking place on unceded Huichin Ohlone territory.
- Tim initiated a discussion to understand why the Board had decided not to pay the annual Shuumi Land Tax. Ricky was charged to search former Board meeting minutes for the details of that discussion.

Board Member Briefing & Discussion

- Wood Park: Barry said the Wood Park meeting went well, and turned the discussion over to Executive Director, Lisa Giordano. Lisa reported that residents expressed concerns about drawing the public to the vicinity and excess parking on residential roads near park entrances. Daylighting has been ruled out. An environmental consulting company, Environmental Science Associates, is going to assess the site and propose alternative water management ideas.

One complication is that some of the park vegetation is on private property. Rob asked that the schedule be shared with Board members when it is available. Mark wondered what the role of *Friends of Wood Park* is playing in these plans. Lisa responded that FOWP appears to have been dissolved, but some former members and local residents have joined us for restoration and water quality monitoring, and continue to collaborate with us on the project. She is seeking a contact with the Alameda Flood Control District (ACFCD). Tim said they're hoping to do a master plan for that zone, and that the ACFCD should be a part of the discussion.

- Lisa announced that we were awarded both the Rose Foundation and HDR grants for Barry Place. Barry reported on the felling of eucalyptus trees there, but there is a problem cutting those trees short enough to make use of their stumps. Rob suggested our Restoration Committee have a look. Lisa offered a meeting there tomorrow afternoon. December 14, at 4:00 p.m.
- Palo Seco planning is temporarily stalled because we're lacking a second letter of support. Lisa is looking at a February date to submit a grant application, but this submission won't be timely enough for a fall award. It's likely, then, that this will have to be a part of the next capital improvement plan cycle. Rob suggested we use that time to build alliances with the City (and, added Lisa, with the public.)
- Joaquin Miller Park (JMP) biological monitoring: Parks and Trees Division will give us \$5000 for a biological survey of protected and endangered plants. Tim is wondering if this will be an opportunity to advocate for no more rogue trails.
- JMP Resolution/RCA advocacy: Tim informed the Board that Oakland Public Works has \$30,000 committed to FOSC for trail maintenance. However, to date those funds have not been made available to us. He wants to use that money to hire a professional fencing company to fence rare serpentine plant areas in Joaquin Miller Park. Eleanor suggested we reach out to Dee Rosario for a referral to a fencing company. Mark wants to revisit and redo the Cinderella Trail erosion study, using it as a baseline for the entire park. Tim would rather the money be put to immediate use.

- Volunteer appreciation potluck: Lisa reported a great turnout, at the potluck lunch held at the Nursery, including 22 human attendees and a juvenile red-tailed hawk. Barry and Gary said there was much camaraderie and fun. Kate provided a shuttle so people could bring in food. Lisa requested reading recommendations so people can participate in book discussions.
- Lisa is looking to feature our top five or ten donors in upcoming newsletters. A donor appreciation dinner is being planned for fall of 2024.
- We were awarded a large California National Resources Agency Youth Community Access grant of \$298,000 (for 2.5 years) connecting youth with the natural environment. Maria has ideas for youth leadership.
- Manzanita Summit & *Bay Nature* feature: Russ appreciated Kate for putting together an excellent flyer about the February 2 summit, which has room for 45 participants. RSVPs are required.
- Kristy wondered about the trees being brought down around Big Trees. Lisa reported that we can be present for their removal.
- Lisa thanked Mark, Russ, and Rob for leading a hike for *Bay Nature*. The Board discussed the idea of doing an article for an upcoming issue, perhaps about our work with Pallid Manzanitas or one that features FOSC's 25 years of work. Tim said that *Botanical Garden* has a journal called *Manzanita!* which might be a better option, since *Bay Nature* likely doesn't do stories on organizations. Eleanor reframed this, suggesting instead an article about citizens taking care of a creek in an urban setting. The Board then talked about the idea of engaging the Sogorea 'Te Trust members, the Friends of Joaquin Miller Park, and State partners in this endeavor.
- It is vital that we find an Education and Outreach Manager soon, as we have grants and field trips on the horizon. Lisa asked for volunteers to interview our one current candidate, Elena Stenger. This is for a full time position.

Financial Report, Lisa Giordano

- Lisa went over the Project Timeline and Cash Flow Chart with the Board. She also reported on grant applications in progress and on the horizon.
- She thanked everyone for their participation in our successful plant sale.
- Tim reported that the pressure is on for funding staff. He asked for percentage details. Lisa said the CNA grant provides for a 15% overhead, which Tim felt was too small. Rob wondered what other non-profits are doing.
- Lisa reviewed the FYE 2024 final Budget. Eleanor made a motion to approve this budget, Rob seconded that motion, and it was unanimously approved by the Board.

Fundraising Updates, Barry Stenger

- Barry reported that our current endowment balance is \$196,000. He thanked everyone for their participation in providing matching funds for the End-of-Year Appeal and for writing notes on appeal letters. Kristy lauded Kate who did a stellar job in making the hand-note writing so easy.
- The Board discussed our fundraising and our financial future. Questions that arose included whether we should do more fundraising focused on a particular project, versus asking for general donations and whether we should consider offering workshops which participants pay to attend.
- Our annual State of the Watershed meeting is on the horizon. We need to consider its format and choose a date.

Minutes

- The October 11, 2023, minutes mistakenly indicated Jaden Shochet was present via Zoom at the meeting, and this was not the case. Incorporating an amendment to indicate Jaden's absence, Russ moved to approve those minutes, and Eleanor seconded that motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

- Tim suggested the Secretary consider sending the minutes via links rather than in email.

BOD Leadership Vote

- Barry turned the meeting over to Rob Leidy to conduct Board elections. Rob presented the Friends of Sausal Creek officer slate for 2024 as proposed by the Steering Committee: Barry Stenger as President, Rob Leidy as Vice President, Ricky Jacobs as Secretary, Beth Keer as Treasurer, Eleanor Dunn and Russ Huddleston as Members-At-Large. Kristy moved to approve this slate and Tim seconded the motion. This slate was unanimously voted in and will become effective January 1, 2024.

Staff Report Comments & Questions

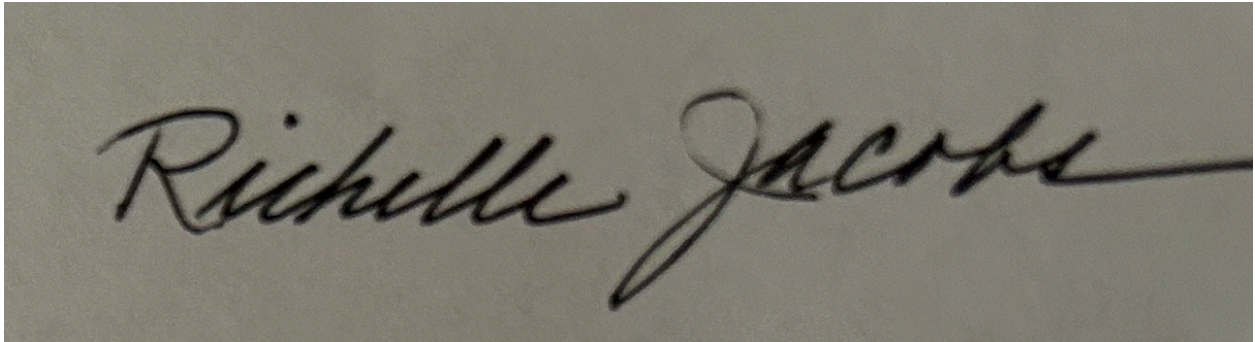
- Tim praised the Staff Report and found the number of partnerships and engagements with schools impressive.
- Lisa reported that Sean will make a future presentation about transitioning to paperless. He is looking at electronic waivers and docuSigns. He has found a donor to contribute \$5000 annually over several years for this transition.
- Since wifi is spotty and our projector doesn't work at the Park Blvd Presbyterian Church, we need to find a new venue for our meetings. Several suggestions were batted around.
- Plant sale: Plant placement, increasing the number of sought-after plants, and decreasing the number of less popular plants were discussed. Ella is keeping track of the details for next year. Tim and Krisy listed certain plants we really need. Ella's habitat kits did really well.
- Mark appreciated that the FOSC listserv has been reinstated and urged that we post more. The Board talked about how to post informally on social media, and Lisa asked Delaney if she could help with that, perhaps in a *Watershed News* publication. In the past, watershed-specific Google groups were inundated by various other group postings, so that format is no longer user friendly. Shaon recommended YouTube, since a younger audience is more likely to go there than to a listserv.

Adjournment

- The meeting was adjourned at 8:44 p.m.

Next Board meeting:

- Wednesday, February 14, 2024, location TBA.

A photograph of a handwritten signature in black ink on a light-colored surface. The signature is written in a cursive style and reads "Richelle Jacobs". The name "Richelle" is written in a fluid, connected script, and "Jacobs" follows with a long, sweeping horizontal line extending to the right.

February 15, 2024