

Board of Directors Meeting
Wednesday, December 17, 2025, 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, Renata Robles, Tim Vendlinski

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

Staff Present Nicki Alexander (Executive Director)

Guests Faith Harris, Lower Watershed Neighbor; Justin Tungate, FOSC Volunteer

Remarks from President, Rob Leidy

At 7:02 pm, FOSC President, Rob Leidy, called the meeting to order. Rob acknowledged that this meeting was taking place on unceded Huichin (alternatively spelled Huchiun) Ohlone territory. He invited the guests to introduce themselves. Faith Harris, formerly of Hillside Gardeners, is here in the hopes of being directed towards a consultant for advice about what to do about a degraded stretch of Sausal Creek on her property where there used to be trout and frogs. Rob promised either to get her connected or come have a look ourselves. Justin Tungate has been volunteering with FOSC for approximately two years.

Committee Updates

- Nursery
 - Kristy announced that we had almost 10,000 plants in the inventory this year, with 2200 sold. Also, the City fixed the fence behind the nursery!
- Restoration
 - Russ shared that there was a good solstice turnout for restoration plantings across all sites, totalling about 130 volunteers, half of whom were youth (as per Nicki). Kristy highlighted that the floodplain bench

at Dimond bordering the prime fish habitat and cleared by guest Justin Tungate and team has been mostly planted with willows, dogwood, and an alder. She thanked Tim for his work there over the last year and announced that she and Russ will lead another planting day there in a few weeks.

- Rob expressed appreciation to Tim for the remarkable accomplishment he achieved working with the City on a new conservation easement, along with regret that we don't have time tonight to go into more detail. He hopes to pick this up tomorrow at the Restoration Committee meeting.
- Rainmaker
 - Nicki passed around copies of the annual report, saying we have the \$30,000 matching pool secured. Kristy praised today's appeal email as being the best ever.
- 30th Anniversary
 - Nicki reported that we are moving towards a storytelling format for the FOSC video. She praised FOSC staff members Kate and Eliana for their work crafting the plan. Laila, Eleanor, and Noé will be the storytellers. The committee is focusing right now on the July 25th fair-style event. Once the plans for that are more secure, we will turn our attention to the September cocktail gathering at the Nursery.
 - Mark has been working with architect Bill Mastin to lay out a labyrinth showing the history of FOSC. At the July 25th event we are planning to include live raptors, face painters, watershed information tables, and hopefully a performance by Circus Bella. The current timing under consideration for July 25 is to begin the festivities at noon with the circus performance to start around 1:00 or 1:30.
 - There is an offer of a free mural for us to display in the MacArthur/Fruitvale area -- either at the Dimond Safeway or perhaps the building between CVS and Farmer Joe's.
 - Nicki announced that she will send the Board an updated list of all upcoming board meeting dates, plus other events.
- Lower Watershed
 - Barry said that the committee is focusing mostly on Barry Place right now, with a name change under consideration that incorporates "Sausal Creek".
 - This would be to distinguish the street the site is located on, Barry Place, from the site itself. Nicki will be reaching out to Sogorea Te' for input.

- Barry was pleased with the solstice planting at Wood Park and Barry Place, with the installation of over 200 plants at Barry Place. He said that City staff have seen the new stairwell at Barry Place and shown considerable enthusiasm for it. Benches from the nursery will be installed there.
- The fence, however, is deteriorating and becoming dangerous. We are considering different options, one being to let it deteriorate and perhaps build a new mesh one ourselves, similar to the one along the daylighted section in Dimond Park. The next community meeting about Barry Place will be on January 24, by which time with community input we hope to have chosen a designer for a sign.

Executive Report

- Mark Rauzon and Michael Thilgen will be leading a Bay Nature hike in Dimond Park on January 24. This is a follow-up to a Bay Nature article about the history of Dimond Park and Canyon, and FOOSC's involvement. This article came out in December.
- FOOSC was also featured in a New York Times article about restoration work happening around the country. FOOSC volunteer Wendy Tokuda submitted the story, which was accepted into a sub-segment. The piece is aimed for publication between Christmas and New Years. Members of the Board wondered if this could be leveraged into something for The Chronicle, which has good environmental writers.
- FOOSC job descriptions were updated when Kate was Interim ED.

Minutes

- Barry suggested that instead of attaching a full copy of the approved budget to the October Minutes that it be appended as a single-column document. Russ moved to accept the October, 2025 Minutes with this amendment. Rob seconded the motion, which was then passed unanimously.

Finance

- Nicki announced we have a new bookkeeper! Stacey Huber was recommended to us by Kimra McAfee, former FOOSC E.D. Nicki elaborated that Stacey has considerable experience with non-profits. She is bringing us into the 21st century by integrating our bank accounts and payroll software into Quickbooks.

Long Term Savings Account/CD Proposal

- Nicki suggested we park our three month operating reserve in a Vanguard cash savings account in order to earn interest -- currently at about 3.1%. FOSC Treasurer, Barry Stenger, is very much in favor of this, as Vanguard is where our Endowment Fund is kept. The plan is to move the money currently sitting in Community Bank of the Bay into a Vanguard cash fund. Once finances are consolidated, we will have a better sense of monthly operating expenses and can decide on a more definitive amount to move on a monthly or quarterly basis. The Board was in agreement with this plan. No formal resolution was deemed necessary.

Budget vs. Actuals (through October 3)

- Nicki went over the particulars of income and expenditures, explaining that income is looking a little low because invoices for CNRA, EEF and others have not yet been processed. Our net income is positive.

Administration

Staff Topics

- Nicki gave an update on Nursery Manager Ella Matsuda. Ella will be taking time as needed for personal health matters, and plans to continue working part time, as she is able.
- Noé will be picking up many of Ella's responsibilities. Kristy and Russ have offered to help lead activities like workday events and seed collection hikes. This will be discussed further at the next Restoration Committee meeting.
- Nicki proposed a temporary pay adjustment for an employee taking on additional responsibilities in a colleague's absence. Russ moved to approve the adjustment, Kristy seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.
- Nicki proposed adjusting another employee's schedule and benefits to reflect additional responsibilities, including accrued vacation and holidays. The motion to approve these adjustments was made by Kristy and seconded by Tim. One Board Member opposed the motion, and the matter was tabled for further discussion in closed session.

2026 Strategic Plan

- Nicki reviewed in detail the draft goals of the strategic plan. Tim and Russ felt that the descriptions were too vague and needed fleshing out in simplified terms. Barry suggested the list be organized by program areas with categories such as goals, objectives, and tactics, and using color coded dots or numbers. A protocol for responding to illegal or unauthorized activities (such as the recent rave) was added as something that should be

included. Nicki invited the Board to send her their suggestions. Rob urged Nicki to establish hard deadlines for Board responses so she might then move ahead in a reasonable amount of time. The end of January was proposed for this deadline.

- Renata reminded the Board that there is a change in the Staff's capacity with Ella's illness, and that everything will take more effort and time than planned. She pointed out that a crucial piece of information is missing from the strategic plan: the level of effort it will take to complete each thing. She proposed there be a "level of effort" metric to be realistic about timelines, possibly moving some items to FY27.
 - Nicki reminded the Board that the strategic plan is a living document, with the intention for staff to review it quarterly and provide progress updates to the Board, possibly as a standing agenda item for Board and committee meetings.

Fundraising

Grant Horizon

- Nicki updated the Board about the horizons for various grants in process and submitted. The current End-of-Year appeal is at \$42,000.
- A family referred to FOSC through a local foundation has expressed interest in supporting the organization. The Board discussed the possibility of their support benefiting the Stream Team program, which faces a funding gap as CNRA funding concludes.
- Renata reported that she is working with Kate to get Salesforce set up for grant opportunity tracking.

Adjournment

- The meeting ended at 8:17 p.m., followed by a closed session.
- The next Board meeting will be held at 7:00 p.m. on Wednesday, **February 17, 2026**, at St. Paul Lutheran Church, 1658 Excelsior Avenue, Oakland, CA 94602. (Enter on Woodruff.)

Closed Session

- Officers for 2026 were re-elected as follows: Rob Leidy as President, Kristy Brady as Vice President, Richelle Jacobs as Secretary, Barry Stenger as Treasurer, Eleanor Dunn and Russ Huddleston as At Large Members. Richelle (aka Ricky) moved that this slate be approved and Tim seconded the motion, which was then passed unanimously.

- Former Board Member Dee Rosario was unanimously voted back onto the Board.