

**Friends of Sausal Creek  
Board of Directors Meeting  
Wednesday, February 14, 2024, 7:00 p.m.  
Park Blvd Presbyterian Church**

*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, 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), Beth Keer, Maria Katticaran, Jaden Shochet (Student Board Member)

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

**Staff Present** Lisa Giordano, Executive Director, via Zoom; Elena Stenger, Education & Outreach Manager; Tylor Kingsbury, Stewardship Education Intern

**Guests** Somen Bhattacharya (father of Shaon); Gary McCormick

**Board Involvement**

- Barry Place stairway reconstruction - first week in April
- Earth Day - weekend of 4/20 (dates and sites TBD)

**Remarks from President, Barry Stenger**

- Barry welcomed our guests and acknowledged that this meeting was taking place on unceded Huichin Ohlone territory. He invited the two new staffmembers, Elena Stenger and Tylor Kingsbury, to introduce themselves. He inquired whether people were open to changing April's meeting to Monday, April 8, instead of Wednesday, April 10. (Yes). He wants to include a written report from our

Executive Director at the next Board and Steering Committee meetings. Additionally he will be sending out prospective dates for a Board Retreat.

### **Board Member Briefing & Discussion**

- A new venue for our Board meetings has not yet been found, so we will stay at the Park Blvd Presbyterian Church for the time being. Wednesday evenings currently are the only times everyone can attend. The Steering Committee will pick up the task of finding a new location.
- State of the Watershed 2024 will take place on May 4 in Dimond Park. It will include speakers and displays. The focus will be on climate resilience, disadvantaged groups, and ecology. We will invite Youth Employment Partnership (YEP) to join us for this event.
- With input from Board members, our mission statement was reworded to read as follows:

*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.*

Beth moved to approve the revised mission statement, which included several important word changes. Russ seconded the motion, which was then unanimously approved.

- The Bylaws should be reviewed every 2-5 years. Barry inquired as to who might be interested in working with him on this task. Kristy, Beth, and Lisa volunteered.

- Wood Park, Barry Place, Palo Seco, & Jingletown restoration: Lisa reported that the restoration planning project at Wood Park kicked off yesterday under the auspices of the Environmental Protection Agency grant. Consultants are doing research. Elena is collecting contacts of people in the vicinity, conducting 1:1 interviews with community members, and creating flyers with the help of a local resident.
- Barry Place: We are working on the first drafts of the parklet design in this multi-draft project. Lisa praised Ella for the great job she is doing there with restoration. Barry enthusiastically reported that 16 bags of ivy were removed. Given the erosion dangers at the creek, willows and dogwood have been planted. Tim looks forward to more extensive willow planting next fall. Maria reported that with the help of volunteers from CiviCorps, construction of the pathway to the water at Barry Place is being slated for the first week of April. She asked for Board members to help out. This work is being funded by the HDR Foundation grant. Lisa thanked everyone for getting this in motion.
- Palo Seco: We have received two letters of support, one from the City's Watersheds Division, and one from Council Member Ramachandran. We need a resolution from the Board approving the application for funding. Eleanor moved that FOSC file an application for funding from the Wildlife Conservation Board, that we will comply with all federal, state and local environmental, public health, and other appropriate laws and regulations applicable to the project, and that we will obtain or we will ensure that the other project partners obtain all appropriate permits applicable to the project. Furthermore, FOSC will appoint its Executive Director as representative of Friends of

Sausal Creek to conduct negotiations, execute, submit and sign all documents including, but not limited to, applications, agreements, amendments, payment requests, and other documents which may be necessary for the completion of the project to develop 100% design plans to daylight a portion of Palo Seco and a portion of its tributary, Fern Ravine, and to restore approximately one acre of adjoining riparian corridors, resulting in aquatic and riparian habitat restoration and a continuous wildlife habitat corridor. Ricky seconded the motion, which was then unanimously approved.

- **Joaquin Miller Park Masterplan:** An interdepartmental meeting is being planned by Nathan Stainaker (from Council Member Ramachandran's office) with the City of Oakland's Departments of Environmental Services, Public Works, and Tree Services, to discuss next steps. David Moore of Parks and Trees wants FOSC to take on the task of collecting data. Lisa asked for the Board's opinion. An extensive conversation ensued about what it would entail for FOSC to lead such a huge multi-year project. The Board wondered how many additional staff would have to be hired and suggested that FOSC should angle to be the middleman rather than the lead. This would allow us to be sub-contractor to a reputable consulting firm which has the computers and data sets otherwise unavailable to us. Approaching the project in this way would enable us to hire a solo Restoration Manager, which would allow Ella to do the job she most wants -- Nursery Manager only. Eleanor warned the Board that it is never a good outcome when the City is in charge, so we would have to go to them with a named connection. Maria felt this would be an opportunity to offer the City a hybrid approach. Barry pointed out that David Moore is wanting an answer from us in a week, which by no means gives us enough time to

make a well-considered decision. The issue was handed back to Lisa to develop an alternative approach.

- Recent press: *The East Bay Times* wrote an article (journalist Lou Fancher) highlighting some of our upcoming projects at Wood Park and Barry Place; and *Oaklandside* (environmental reporter Callie Rhoades) featured us in an article (first of a series) highlighting Sausal Creek history, its native rainbow trout, and pallid manzanitas. The article also included our volunteers, neighbors, and partners for the last 27 years.
- Pallid Manzanita Summit: Russ recapped the success of this meeting (February 2), which took place at the Tilden Botanical Garden. A mix of academics and fish and wildlife people, East Bay Regional Parks people, and others were there. He thanked Ella and Kate for their outstanding input and help. For example, Kate set up a listserv for email exchange among attendees and those who couldn't make it. Ella gave an excellent talk and spurred interest in the possibility of our having another summit next year. She made good contacts, connecting with Michelle Hammond from East Bay Parks, and with BART as well. Tim and Kristy added their enthusiasm to the conversation. Preserving the dusky wood rat, native to this habitat, became the focus of a spirited exchange.
- Tim let the Board know that he is keeping an eye on the website of the people who organized last year's Enduro bicycle race. They are organizing for 2024. The City of Oakland's Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee (PRAC) never took into account that this is a resource conservation area that should not allow such a race. He pointed out that PRAC has vacancies right now, implying that one of us might consider applying.

### **Financial Report, Lisa Giordano**

- Lisa went over the Project Timeline and Cash Flow Chart with the Board. Barry put on screen a Budget to Year-to-Date comparison and highlighted areas where the organization is either below or above budget projections. Since Anna Marie and Lisa were both on payroll briefly, there was a temporary imbalance in payroll. Lisa reported that the EPA grant has invoicing issues, and although the grant started yesterday (2/13/24), we are not able to bill until the end of March. Funding will come in parts, and we can start work now. Our expenses are all on target. The plant sale came in at 115% for the year, giving us 28% of what we had budgeted despite a deficit of approximately \$16,000. The bookkeeper made an error which will be corrected. Lisa also reported on grant applications in progress and on the horizon.
- Grant delays: The CNRA Youth Community Access grant and the Environmental Protection Agency grant monies have been delayed. Lisa said we will have to readjust our timeline. She thanked Maria for her invaluable input on these grants.

### **Fundraising Updates, Barry Stenger**

- Barry recapped in detail our End-of-Year 2023 Appeal. And, since the last Steering Committee meeting, an additional few more thousand dollars has come in.
- Endowment: As of today, we have \$202,000 in our Endowment Fund.

### **Minutes & Commitments Review**

- Tim moved to approve the Minutes from our December, 2023, meeting. Rob seconded the motion, which was then unanimously approved.

### **Staff Report Comments & Questions**

- Beth highly praised the staff report, and Barry gave kudos to the staff.

### **Adjournment**

- The meeting was adjourned at 8:33 p.m.

### **Next Board meeting:**

- As per Barry's request, the next meeting will take place on Monday, April 8, location TBA.

