

Friends of Sausal Creek
Board of Directors Meeting
Wednesday, October 15, 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

Absent Harry Schrauth (Board Member Emeritus), Maria Katticaran, Mark Rauzon (Board Member Emeritus), Renata Robles, Tim Vendlinski, Sean Welch

Staff Present Nicki Alexander (Executive Director), Elena Stenger (Education Manager)

Guests Oliver Hopkins (prospective Student Board Member); Laila Robinson (newly appointed FOSC Ambassador)

Remarks from President, Rob Leidy

At 7:00 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 then asked Oliver Hopkins, prospective Student Board Member, to tell the Board a little about himself. Oliver is a local native who grew up going to Sausal Creek. He is doing his capstone project on the ice plant -- how it got to California, its spread over time, and its impacts on the ecosystems in California.

Committee Updates

- Nursery:
 - Kristy reported that all is on track for the October 25th Plant Sale and that plants are at an all-time high. She said there is still a need for volunteers.
- Restoration
 - Russ reported that Jacob Harrower, the forester, has given us a proposal for a forest management plan for several restoration sites throughout the watershed, which concerns Tim for being too tree-focused. We are still in the process of figuring out funding for a watershed management plan and how to move forward. Russ clarified that we have a need for an overall management plan, particularly for the Resource Conservation Areas. The idea was suggested that we reach out to Lech Namonovich, a plant ecologist with the California Native Plant Society, who has been involved with FOSC from early on. He may be an excellent resource for a watershed management plan.
 - Nicki gave details about complications with the permitting for the Environmental Enhancement Fund Project. As a result of these complications, we will pivot and work with the City Administrator's office in the hopes of getting a City Licensing

Agreement (a Memorandum of Understanding). We will be putting together a list of the most important sites for that agreement -- not all 24 adopt-a-spot sites.

- If the Licensing Agreement doesn't work out, our plan is to reapply in the hopes of being assigned to a planner more favorable to our project.
- On a positive note, we are supported by the City Administration office, who will be looping in the Watershed Department and Real Estate Department to help move the City Licensing Agreement forward.
- Rainmaker Committee
 - Barry reported that the 2025 End-of-Year Appeal letter will use the 30th anniversary as a backdrop. The plan for 2026 is to send four or five focused appeals (for the endowment and planned giving) instead of the usual two, with an emphasis on the significance of our 30th anniversary. There will be coordination with the 30th Anniversary Committee about the details.
- Lower Watershed and Education Committees

Kristy said that this committee is up and running. There is funding from the Rose Foundation to put a sign in at Barry Place. This committee will meet in November to put a proposal together to find an artist for the sign. There will then be a meeting in January to get input from locals on the sign design and to boost engagement. Committee members will be the final decision-makers about the sign.

Finance, Nicki Alexander

- Nicki announced that we are in the market for a new bookkeeper. Board Members came up with some suggestions and salary was discussed.
- Budget vs. Actuals (through August): Nicki reported that we are on track so far, and explained we are already at 100% for contract services, having fulfilled all our planned contracts this year. Additionally, telecommunication and communication costs are going up because Google Voice didn't bring the anticipated savings, and we now have Wi-Fi at the nursery, which raises overhead by about \$40 per month. The Restoration Manager line looks extremely low because Noé started later than expected. The way the pay periods fell in August also was a contributing factor.
- Budget Modifications
 - In June, the Board approved a provisional budget pending the new ED's review after her first four months of tenure.
 - During this meeting, Nicki outlined several proposed changes to the provisional budget. For example, she added income lines for both the 30th Anniversary events and the Plant Sale. Plant Sale sponsorship and 30th Anniversary sponsorship will now have their own sub-lines under a general Sponsor Fee line item. She also explained why we need to spend down our CNRA grant which is done at the end of March.
 - The spring EBMUD sponsor fee will now be added to the following year's plant sale.
 - A line item has been added to cover all of the expenses for the 30th anniversary celebration, including \$10,000 for the Dimond Park summer event and \$3000 for the video project.
 - There is a new line for mandatory staff training and compliance (\$500). Staff is required to have CPR certification and TB testing. Additionally, sexual harassment training is mandatory every two years.

- Other items Nicki touched on were the increase in telecommunication and communication line items (all full-time staff now have Google Voice) and the proposed partial use of the Dale Bowyer Fellowship Fund for a two-month summer internship. One idea is to highlight both Dale Bowyer and the chosen summer intern in the newsletter to encourage "In Memory Of" giving. Holding onto some of the money from this fund would give us the opportunity to have a Bowyer Fund summer internship for several summers in the future.
- Nicki went on to explain why our education budget was unusually low and why she has increased the hospitality budget.
- She summarized the budget differences as follows: There is a \$7500 positive difference in income (mostly due to the Schwemm grant) and a \$6380 difference in expenses. Therefore there is a net positive change in income in the modified budget.
- Barry moved that we approve the Nicki's proposed revised budget, with the proviso that we include the expense line items and an income line item to cover the anniversary expenses not covered by sponsorship. Rob seconded the motion, which then passed unanimously. This modified budget was approved, including the \$13,000 expense and a corresponding income line for the 30th anniversary.
- Budget/Actual Comparison & Project Timeline and Cash Flow
 - Nicki shared data on the Budget/Actuals. The cost of running our organization has increased significantly now that we have a staff of six. She detailed new and additional sources of income.

Fundraising

- Grant Horizon
 - Nicki reviewed the grant horizon. She and Kate have been talking with Renata about updating our Salesforce platform, including an instructive meeting with Hanna Resource Group. Our hope is to integrate into Salesforce a platform similar to the dashboard Kate created for automatic updating. Kate is working to learn Salesforce programming.
 - Nicki updated the Board on promising grant horizons. She and Kate are going through a list of foundations compiled by Lisa to find promising new funders. She said that our biggest priority right now is funding the education program, given the March 1st end of the CNRA grant. We may need to consider grants from smaller foundations as stop-gap funding sources. She and Kate are aiming towards more long-term, high-level grants to fund programs year after year.

Administration

- Nicki is promoting the idea that Board meetings take place less frequently, and perhaps on a different day. There were several roadblocks to her suggestions because changing the day may make it impossible for some Board members to attend, and finding a venue for different dates and cadence would be extremely difficult. There will be future conversations about this to see what might be worked out.

Plant Sale, October 25

- The printing of more hats is under way in the hopes of having them on hand for the plant sale. We still need a few more volunteers.

30th Anniversary Planning Proposal

- Nicki said that staff intends to have monthly events that coincide with our usual programming. Additionally, the committee is planning two major celebratory events: a summer festival in Dimond Park focused on community engagement and public outreach; and a sunset cocktail gathering at the nursery in September, perhaps as a fundraiser.
- The pros and cons of spending \$3000 for some 30-60 second videos and a 3-5 minute video about FOSC, including a series of short clips, were discussed. The plan is to use the short clips for social media, for our website (with a QR code link on signs), and at outreach tabling events. The question arose why we didn't simply hire a skilled high school student to create this video and these clips. Nicki made the case that the videographer has professional experience, particularly with non-profit environmental organizations. Unlike an amateur, he already knows what to do and can collaborate with us rather than our having to take the lead. Eleanor said that money for this is allocated in the budget for our summer event, though we will be asking FOSC to front the funds which, hopefully, will be reimbursed through sponsorships.

2026 Strategic Plan, Nicki Alexander

- Nicki detailed the staff's suggested changes on grant commitments and personal programming goals. The idea is to make this a more usable, living document for tracking progress. The intention is to use this for the fiscal year instead of the calendar year.
- Barry raised concerns that this could entail more work for staff. Nicki responded by saying that because we now have more staff, more "grow" areas are possible for exactly that reason. Other suggestions were made, including adding a column to show if an item is budgeted, requires new funding, or is unfunded; and defining the overarching goals for the organization along the lines of the standard strategic planning format of Goals>Objectives>Actions. The overall format was also discussed, perhaps linking it to a separate, higher-level document outlining the main goals (and perhaps adding a "Goal" column to this spreadsheet. This would link the actions back to the broader goals and the staff member heading up actions taken to achieve that goal.) The use of color coding was also suggested.
- Nicki will revisit this with staff and bring it to the next steering committee meeting. Ultimately we will need to sit down together to look at finalizing these changes.

Commitments and Minutes Review

- Eleanor moved to approve the August minutes, and Russ seconded that motion, which was then passed unanimously.

Adjournment

- The meeting adjourned at 8:52 p.m. It was followed by a brief closed meeting.
- The next Board meeting will be held at 7:00 p.m. on Wednesday, **December 17, 2025**, at St. Paul Lutheran Church, 1658 Excelsior Avenue (at Woodruff), Oakland, CA 94602.

Friends of Sausal Creek
Budget_FY26
July 2025 - June 2026

Budget

Income

Contributed Income

Grants

Business & Organization	2,250.00
Foundation Grants, Unrestricted	50,000.00
Government	361,280.00
Total Grants	\$ 413,530.00
Individual Contributions	150,000.00
Employer Match	6,000.00
Total Individual Contributions	\$ 156,000.00
Total Contributed Income	\$ 569,530.00

Program Service Income

Field Trips	4,800.00
Plant Sales	25,000.00
Program Service Fees	9,000.00
Sponsor Fee	
Plant Sale Sponsor Fee	7,500.00
30th Anniversary Sponsor Fee	10,000.00
Total Sponsor Fee	\$ 17,500.00
Total Program Service Income	\$ 38,800.00
Total Income	\$ 618,330.00
Gross Profit	\$ 618,330.00

Expenses

Contract Services

Subcontracts	16,750.00
Total Contract Services	\$ 16,750.00

Event Expenses

30th Anniversary	13,000.00
Plant Sale	475.00
Total Event Expenses	\$ 13,475.00

Legal & Accounting

Bookkeeping	3,000.00
Payroll Fees	5,928.00
Tax Preparation	1,300.00
Total Legal & Accounting	\$ 10,228.00

Miscellaneous

Friends of Sausal Creek

Budget_FY26

July 2025 - June 2026

Dues, Permits, Fees	2,000.00
Insurance, Tax & Licenses	5,200.00
Transportation	2,000.00
Total Miscellaneous	\$ 9,200.00
 Office Expense	
Equipment < \$500	200.00
Merchant Charges	200.00
Office Supplies	200.00
Postage	1,100.00
Printing and Copies	1,150.00
Software	1,470.00
Subscriptions	100.00
Telecommunication/Communication	5,500.00
Total Office Expense	\$ 9,920.00
 Salaries	
Officers Salary	0.00
Executive Director	83,000.00
Total Officers Salary	\$ 83,000.00
 Staff Salaries	
Communications & Outreach Coordinator	45,427.00
Development & Engagement Manager	74,880.00
Education Manager	62,992.00
Nursery Manager	66,821.00
Paid Intern	3,000.00
Restoration Manager	56,600.00
Total Staff Salaries	\$ 309,720.00
Total Salaries	\$ 392,720.00
 Salaries & Benefits	
401(k) Employer Contribution	3,643.00
Health Reimb Arrangement	25,080.00
 Payroll Taxes	
Communications & Outreach Coordinator	4,088.00
Development & Engagement Manager	6,739.00
Education Manager	5,669.00
Executive Director	7,470.00
Nursery Manager	6,014.00
Paid Intern	300.00
Restoration Manager	4,914.00
Total Payroll Taxes	\$ 35,194.00

Friends of Sausal Creek
Budget_FY26
July 2025 - June 2026

Workers Comp	21,616.00
Total Salaries & Benefits	\$ 85,533.00
Staff Expenses	0.00
Mandatory Staff Training & Compliance	500.00
Meeting Expenses	600.00
Staff and Board Development	1,000.00
Total Staff Expenses	\$ 2,100.00
Supplies	0.00
Education	2,000.00
Field	10,067.00
Nursery	17,275.00
Total Supplies	\$ 29,342.00
Volunteer Appreciation	
Honorariums	1,050.00
Hospitality	1,500.00
Total Volunteer Appreciation	\$ 2,550.00
Total Expenses	\$ 566,618.00
Net Operating Income	\$ 51,712.00
Other Income	
Future Fund Distribution	7,849.00
Gain/Loss Unrealized	
Total Other Income	\$ 7,849.00
Other Expenses	
Cash Reserve Rebuild	18,100.00
Total Other Expenses	\$ 18,100.00
Net Other Income	-\$ 10,251.00
Net Income	\$ 41,461.00