



**MINUTES**  
**FAIRFAX OPEN SPACE COMMITTEE MEETING**  
**Tuesday, September 22, 2020 at 7 p.m.**  
**By Teleconference and Videoconference Only**

**Fairfax Open Space Members:**

|                              |   |
|------------------------------|---|
| Michael Ardito, Co-Secretary | Jack Judkins, Vice Chair                  |
| Chris Borjian                | Susan Pascal Beran, Chair                 |
| Chance Cutrano, Treasurer    | Jonathan Sicroff                          |
| Brad Handel                  | Sophie Taubman, Youth Member (ex officio) |
| Ruth Horn, Co-Secretary      |   |

**CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19) ADVISORY NOTICE**

Consistent with State of California Executive Order Nos. N-25-20 and N-29-20 and the Marin County Public Health Officer's Orders directing residents to shelter at home, this meeting will be held via teleconference only. There will not be an in-person physical meeting location.

**Members of the public may watch, listen, and participate in the meeting as follows:**

**Watch on Zoom:** Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81108478525>

**Meeting ID: 811 0847 8525**

**Password: 021320**

One tap mobile

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To speak during the public comment period, select the **Raise Hand icon** and you will be added to the speaker queue, and unmuted when it is your turn.

**Listen by telephone: dial\*67 (1-669) 900-9128. At the prompt, enter meeting ID 811 0847 8525 # And Password 021320**

To speak during the public comment period, **press \*9** and you will be added to the speaker queue, and unmuted when it is your turn.

**REGULAR MEETING (Starts at 7 p.m.)**

**1. Call to Order and Roll Call:** Susan Pascal Beran, Chair

*Members Present:* Michael Ardito, Chris Borjian, Chance Cutrano, Brad Handel, Ruth Horn, Jack Judkins, Susan Pascal Beran, Jonathan Sicroff (quorum)

*Member Absent:* Sophie Taubman (youth member, ex officio)

**2. Approval of Agenda and affidavit of posting.** Approved.

**3. Open Time for Public Expressions** *(The public is welcome to address the Committee at this time on matters not on the agenda. Please be advised that pursuant to Government Code 54954.2, the Committee is not permitted to take action on any matter not on the agenda, unless it determines that an emergency exists, or that the need to take action arose following posting of the agenda. Each speaker is limited to three minutes and a spokesperson for an organization is limited to five minutes.)*

None. Zoom guests were: Councilmember / FOSC liaison Barbara Coler; Bruce and Lynn McDermott

4. **FOSC Calendar 2021 and Exhibit Fundraiser** (discussion and possible action): Susan Pascal Beran asked that Camille Esposito be notified regarding calendar sales and other information regarding the 2021 calendar and exhibit fundraiser. It was announced that youth member Sophie Taubman had created a website for the calendar open space gallery at [https://taubmansophiewixsite.com/open space gallery](https://taubmansophiewixsite.com/open-space-gallery). FOSC voted and approved web page development and authorization of \$46 for four months. San Anselmo Open Space would be paying another \$46.
5. **FOSC Outreach, Merchandise and Nature Walks** (discussion and possible action). No news, but the Chair Susan Pascal Beran now has the contact information for nature hike guide Nick Nutu.
6. **Tax Default Open Space Properties in Fairfax** (discussion and possible action). It was reported that Liz Clark of the Marin County Assessor's office would be contacted about an auction that probably would not be held until at least May 2021.
7. **Assignments and Reports from FOSC Committees / Subcommittees** (discussion and possible action). The Acquisition Subcommittee reported that it has held four recent meetings concerning the determination of priority of open space parcels. Using the FOSC adopted and Town Council-approved (2011) "Priority Criteria for Protecting Open Space" ("Criteria") as a guideline, the Acquisitions Subcommittee first created a framework ("Framework") for applying the Criteria to specific properties and for determining relative priority. The Framework utilized four different categories to assess each property under the Criteria: **I. Desirability Based on Attributes**, encompassing as subcategories the natural, cultural and visual, recreational, connectivity and other attributes of the property being assessed; **II. Return on Investment**, encompassing as subcategories the types of uses, the extent of expected uses, and the overall benefit to the community of the property as protected open space; **III. Feasibility** of protecting the property as open space, including any hurdles to protection, encompassing as subcategories the relative cost, the partnership support, the available ownership and management structure, and the availability of funds for protection of the property as open space and the existing threat of development of the property; and **IV. Alternatives to Fee Acquisition that Protect Open Space Resource(s)** on the property, encompassing as subcategories whether any of the following alternatives would be possible to protect some or all of the open space resources on the property: implied dedication, donation or partial donation, acquisition of an open space or public access easement; placement of development conditions on the property or exchange of the property. Under the Framework, the property being assessed would be scored under each of the four categories, with a score of Excellent, Good or Fair. The Subcommittee then evaluated four properties in the Town, each of which has recently been considered by FOSC, utilizing the Framework for purposes of determining relative open space priority. One of the four, the *200 Toyon Road/Ben Ross* property dropped out of the process early for several reasons. Although it has some open space attributes which are desirable (the natural wildlife and plants on the property, the use of the property as a hiking trail, and connectivity of the property to adjacent open space lands), the visual value of the property is limited. Moreover, use of the property for hiking and public access would be expected to benefit only the few immediate neighbors of the property and those benefits are already preserved by development conditions which require public access and parking. Finally, funding for this property might be more difficult, because of the lack of interest in the property as open space by other potential public and nonprofit funders. Of the remaining three properties assessed, the *Wall /Marinda Heights* property, a 100-acre piece of undeveloped land, was determined by the Subcommittee to be the highest priority for acquisition. Because its many open space attributes, FOSC has frequently referred to this property as the "jewel of open space" amongst the remaining undeveloped property in Fairfax. It offers excellent natural, visual, cultural, connectivity and recreational resources. If preserved as open space, the public would be expected to continue to use its existing trails for public access, including hiking and biking, and it would continue to be very valuable as a visual resource, since its undeveloped lands and ridgelines are prominent and seen from many locations in Fairfax. The anticipated future use would likely be high, as the property is already known and used for hiking and biking. Thus, on the categories of Desirability and Return on Investment, the Subcommittee rated the property as "Excellent". While

there are hurdles to acquisition, notably the high price and need for potential funding sources and whether a suitable community group, nonprofit or public entity other than the Town is willing to move the acquisition forward and to hold the property, these issues should be assessed thoroughly before rejecting the possibility of preservation through acquisition. In addition, alternatives to acquisition should be explored. The third property assessed by the Subcommittee, *Victory Village*, comprised of two 9-acre parcels, received an overall “Good” rating, under the Framework, as it has some degree of biodiversity in its tree cover, potential as a trail and public park resource, encompasses a watershed drainage with an intermittent stream, and connects to other open space areas that are adjacent and have hiking and biking trails. The site has potential for a small public park on the western side of Town, which has few public Town-owned public parks. There are some hurdles to acquisition (funding, in particular) and there are already existing public trail (undeveloped) and open space easements along the eastern and northern boundaries of the property. The last property assessed by the Subcommittee the *Upper Ridgeway properties*, consists of three tax-defaulted properties located on the undeveloped portions of Upper Ridgeway Avenue. One of the parcels is relatively high in cost and located a distance from the other two tax-defaulted properties. The other two tax-defaulted parcels could theoretically be purchased for a relatively small amount of money through the County Tax Collector for preservation as open space. The two parcels adjoin another parcel acquired through the efforts of FOSC and are near the Town-owned Triangle Park and San Anselmo’s Hawthorne Canyon Open Space Preserve. There is one other parcel purchased by Town through FOSC in the immediate vicinity, also connecting to Triangle Park and Hawthorne Canyon. Given their small size and relatively remote location with little in the way of public parking or access, future use of these properties as a park or hiking trail would likely be limited to the immediate neighborhood. Overall, these properties were rated by the Subcommittee as “Fair”. The Subcommittee will return to FOSC at its October meeting with a specific set of recommendations with respect to these four properties.

- 8. Recreation Resources** (discussion and possible action): Jonathan Sicroff was concerned about the lack of information and education regarding how to properly use the local trails for hikers, bikers and horseback riders. Some communities use even or odd numbered days for types of trail use. The consensus was this issue was not in our purview to make any recommendations at this time.
- 9. Reports of activities from partner agencies** such as San Anselmo Open Space Committee (SAOSC); Together Bay Area; One Tam: FOSC representatives (discussion and possible action). Michael Ardito was asked to forward registration information regarding the upcoming local online conferences for (1) One Tam and (2) Together Bay Area.
- 10. Approval of FOSC Meeting Minutes from previous meetings** (discussion and possible action): Michael Ardito. The FOSC minutes for the July 28, 2020 meeting were approved. Comments and revisions for the August 25, 2020 meeting minutes were submitted for the next version.
- 11. FOSC 2020 Calendar** (combined Nov/Dec meeting), Quorum Checks, Agendas and preamble (discussion and possible action):  
The customary combined November / December meeting to avoid the annual holidays was scheduled for Tuesday, December 8, 2020. A regularly scheduled agenda item was to re-add member reports on non-agenda items for future meetings. A new **preamble regarding land acknowledgement** for future FOSC meetings was approved: “The Fairfax Open Space Committee acknowledges that we are located on the un-ceded ancestral lands of the Coast Miwok people of present-day Marin County. We honor with gratitude the land itself and all of its ancestors: past, present and emerging.”
- 12. Adjournment** was at 8:48 p.m.