



MINUTES
FAIRFAX OPEN SPACE COMMITTEE REGULAR MEETING
Tuesday, May 23, 2023 at 7 p.m. in-person only
Fairfax Women's Club
46 Park Road, Fairfax, CA 94930

Fairfax Open Space Members:

Michael Ardito, Co-Secretary	Jack Judkins, Vice Chair
Geoff Bolt	Christine Kelly, Co-Treasurer
Heather Duplaisir	Susan Pascal Beran, Chair
Joe Franaszek	Josh Weinik, Co-Treasurer
Ruth Horn, Co-Secretary	Teddy Catrini, Youth Member (ex officio)
	Corina Karr, Youth Member (ex officio)

Agenda Preamble / Land Acknowledgement: *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.*

PRE-MEETING ORIENTATION OF CALIFORNIA BROWN ACT

(for new FOSC members and optional refresher for others) at 6:45 p.m. Jack Judkins and Town Clerk Michele Gardner provided some background information about the Brown Act that Michael Ardito will email out to all FOSC members.

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

1. Call to Order and Roll Call: Vice Chair Jack Judkins

Members Present: Michael Ardito, Geoff Bolt, Heather Duplaisir, Joe Franaszek, Ruth Horn, Jack Judkins, Christine Kelly, Josh Weinik, Teddy Catrini (ex-officio youth member), Corina Karr (ex-officio youth member) Member

Member Absent: Susan Pascal Beran

Guests: Fairfax Mayor Chance Cutrano (FOSC liaison from Town Council); Frank Egger (former Fairfax Mayor); Larry Bragman (former Fairfax Town Mayor and FOSC member); Michelle Simonson

2. Approval of Agenda and appointment for timekeeper this meeting. Agenda approved unanimously and Heather Duplaisir appointed timekeeper for this FOSC meeting.

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.

4. Wall / Marinda Heights Property (status of financial default and update) -- (discussion and possible action). There was an extensive discussion about several aspects of this matter. Jack Judkins mentioned that Wall property owner Marshall Rothman and his investors in the Timberstone LLC are in bankruptcy with a potential foreclosure from its loan with an investment company, Sequioa Capital in San Anselmo. Joe Franaszek has done some research about this Chapter 11 bankruptcy from the owner and LLC with efforts to prevent a default sale of the property. MKConsultants have received the potential bankruptcy filing. The property owner(s) have blamed the Town of Fairfax and the CEQA (California Environmental Quality Act) requirements as having “stone-walled” progress on the housing development proposal. At this time, FOSC members speculated about several potential funding sources to save some or all of the 100 acres as open space. For example, there may be state grants connected to the state’s 30x30 goal of 30 percent open space by 2030. One organization with grants may be the Wildlife Conservation Board.

- 5. Status of Town Acceptance of Open Space Land Donation from Cresci Family parcel near Canyon Road and Adjacent to Egger Grove for Potential Access** (discussion and possible action). Mayor Chance Cutrano mentioned that this item will not be on the Town Council agenda for its June 7 meeting for several reasons. One reason is to allow more time for FOSC and others to examine the property with the pros and cons for acceptance of this property donation. The Town's staff report recommended non-acceptance of this land donation indicating it may be too risky geologically with maintenance and liability for a creek-side property. It was also speculative that this property would someday provide a viable easement to the Town-owned Egger Redwood Grove. One financial downside was the past due property taxes of \$6-7,000 from the Cresci Family that the Town and FOSC would need to pay for accepting the property donation. Jack Judkins planned to ask the family contact if they were willing to pay the back taxes as a condition for the land donation acceptance. The eventual cost of the back taxes and interest will only increase going forward. In any case, the FOSC members voted by voice and unanimously wanted to pursue the donation of the property now at a lower cost rather than a higher cost in the future.
- 6. Updates about Bio-Blitz presentation, events and City Nature Challenge** (Heather Duplaisir discussion) Heather reported that the California Academy of Sciences in San Francisco, a co-sponsor for the worldwide City Nature Challenge, sent a nice note to FOSC for our participation in that challenge with our Bio-Blitz at Marinda Heights on Saturday morning, April 29. FOSC had eleven participants (including several students from Archie Williams and Marin Catholic high schools) which helped our Bay Area to garner the largest number of participants in the international challenge. Heather Duplaisir provided a Bio-Blitz presentation at the Fairfax Library on the evening of April 19. Heather asked us to save the dates of April 26-29, 2024 for next year's City Nature Challenge and our participation. Heather mentioned that one feature of the iNaturalist app is to generate a list of endangered species in our area.
- 7. Earth Days 2023 and 2024** (review, preview and discussion Christine Kelly/Heather Duplaisir). Even though Fairfax cancelled its Earth Day 2023 event in Peri Park for Saturday, April 22, Michael Ardito attended the Marin County Earth Day event at the Mill Valley Community Center on Sunday afternoon, April 23. He was favorably impressed with the exhibits and events for this post-pandemic rejuvenation of this Marin observance -- although adequate parking was a problem. Michael advised FOSC to avoid planning a 2024 Earth Day observance that would conflict with a county-wide event because FOSC has a limited amount of bandwidth to serve as a sponsor.
- 8. Treasurers' Report** (updates, discussion). The new co-Treasurers reported that a number of donations may have been received in 2023 and thank you notes will need to be sent out with the Town of Fairfax tax-deduction ID number. Michael Ardito said he will email the new Co-Treasurers with a sample thank you letter with the tax ID number that had been used in previous years. The new co-Treasurers indicated they had not yet received the FOSC cash boxes that are probably in the FOSC storage unit in the Pavilion.
- 9. Stewardship Project on Saturday morning, May 20** (at Archie Williams High School campus). (Teddy Catrini and Corina Karr, FOSC youth members). Teddy and Corina reported about this year's stewardship project that focused on removal of overgrown and nuisance ivy near the high school campus baseball diamond and property perimeter on Saturday morning, May 20. A SEA-DISC instructor, five students in the SEA-DISC program along with Corina, Teddy and youth liaison Michael Ardito (for a total of nine people) participated in this year's event.
- 10. FOSC Outreach, Merchandise, Storage of Materials, Photo Survey Project, and Nature Walks** (discussion and possible actions). Heather Duplaisir indicated she will talk with the Town about getting a better central location for storage of our materials.
- 11. Fairfax Festival and EcoFest Participation on June 10-11; outreach tabling** (discussion and possible action). Michael Ardito submitted the FOSC application to participate in the EcoFest during the Fairfax Festival. We are expected to receive a tent, table and two chairs for our informational booth. The Fairfax Tree Committee will not have any members available to help FOSC this year as previously planned. Heather Duplaisir indicated she will send out a Doodle poll to FOSC members for Eco-fest table duty sign-ups. Meanwhile, we passed around an initial sign-up sheet.

- 12. Reports and Annual Goals from FOSC Committees / Subcommittees** (discussion, possible actions and reassignments): Acquisitions; Governance; Stewardship; Community Outreach & Fundraising; Measure A. FOSC members have not yet received the updated goals for the Governance Subcommittee. There were expressions that the Stewardship Subcommittee needs to do better outreach with the Fairfax Volunteers.
- 13. Reports of activities from partner agencies** such as San Anselmo Open Space Committee (SAOSC); Marin Conservation League's Parks and Open Space Committee; Together Bay Area; One Tam; Friends of Corte Madera Creek: FOSC representatives (updates and discussions). Members were informed about the upcoming San Anselmo Open Space annual fundraiser on Sunday afternoon, June 4 to celebrate the permanent preservation of Bald Hill and benefit to help save the Upper Hawthorne Canyon open space adjacent to Fairfax. Heather Duplaisir represented FOSC at the annual Together Bay Area conference in Richmond, CA on May 10. She cited some excellent presentations and networking with other environmentalists at the conference including others interested in Bio-Blitzes. Michael Ardito represented FOSC for the Together Bay Area field trip locally in Marin on May 11 which was a bicycle ride along the greenbelt / Bay Area trail in Larkspur. He reported this was an excellent and inspiring ride which he wants to do again.
- 14. Approval of FOSC Meeting Minutes from early 2023** (discussion and possible approval action): Michael Ardito. This item was deferred to the next regular FOSC meeting.
- 15. Next FOSC Meeting on Tuesday, June 27, 2023:** Quorum Check, Future Agenda Items (discussion and possible action): It appears that we will have a quorum for our next meeting. Even so, youth member Corina Karr reported she won't be available to attend the next meeting.
- 16. FOSC Member Reports on Non-Agenda Items** (no discussions or actions). There were expressions that FOSC needs to do a better job posting future events on the Town's website. Geoff Bolt is monitoring the release of the updated Recreation Plan for the Marin Municipal Water District as it pertains to the Elliott Nature Preserve. Jack Judkins will forward to Mayor Chance Cutrano some background information about the settlement agreement regarding the 615 Oak Manor Drive property.
- 17. Adjournment** was at 9:08 p.m.

This meeting notice was posted in accordance with Government Code section 54954.2(a)(1) on or before May 19, 2023.