**OHA Annual Meeting, September 18, 2016**

**Minutes of Meeting**

Location of Meeting: Eddie Reiter’s home

The meeting commenced at 4:30pm.

**0.  Glen Schneider on Skyline Gardens**

The annual meeting opened with a presentation by Glen Schneider introducing The STEP (Safe Trails, Environmental Protection) Alliance.  The STEP alliance of environmental organizations and equestrians supports the continued safe and enjoyable use of EBMUD trails for Bay Area residents while protecting water quality and the watershed's diverse plants and wildlife.  STEP is an alliance of the Sierra Club, Audubon Society, California Native Plant Society and equestrians.  Glen invited OHA to join this alliance and to send a representative to a meeting the following Tuesday with the EBMUD General Manager.  He also shared a fascinating 30-page report documenting the Skyline Gardens area as the most botanically diverse area of its size in the entire East Bay. Glen, who grew up in the Lafayette and Martinez area where his family farmed pears and his father founded Orchard Nursery, can be reached at glennyfrank@gmail.com.

**1.  OHA Tasks & Volunteer List & feeding schedule:**

The Tasks & Volunteer List ([https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1VmkXO9JZ4b-0yuDFqMP5rbG1RynxPsl7XleX-OdWNDY/edit - gid=0](https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1VmkXO9JZ4b-0yuDFqMP5rbG1RynxPsl7XleX-OdWNDY/edit%22%20%5Cl%20%22gid%3D0)) on which members could sign up for a variety of OHA tasks was passed around, and the OHA feeding schedule was distributed.

**2.  Feeding Schedule & Eventbrite — how did it work for feeding calendar?**

Concerns included:

* Members being spammed about feedings every day – all feeding dates showed up on all participants’ calendars
* Smart phones being kicked off the sign-up site
* Couldn’t tell which slots were “waiting list”
* Could not determine if there was a truck signed up to feed
* Could not see who else was signed up to feed each day
* No way to pair more experienced feeders with new members

The new Board will evaluate whether to continue using Eventbrite or try alternative electronic tools for feeding sign-up.

**3.  Rotation: (monetary advantage of Tier 3 - Erica)**

The AGP year starts Oct. 2, and we probably won’t have the annual meeting with EBMUD until after the new board is seated. The feeding calendar was passed out, with yellow fill indicating where and when we are feeding. It represents our goal, but Erica keeps track of the actual time on each pasture. If we want to make any changes to the rotation, we get permission from EBMUD.

We can spend no more time in the pond this year, but have some wiggle room in the Sullivan & Forest/Middle Meadows pastures. We want to leave the gate open when the horses are in the meadows for as long as we can to keep the horses spread out. In the Beer Can we will feed on the thistles before going to the Lower pasture. At this point Erica would like to split the herd to have fewer horses in the Lower. We can send half to the Plateau, where we can feed out any extra hay that is left with the ATV. Usually half of the herd is ready to be in the unfed group by Jan 10th. This year we’d like to plan ahead a bit more, so the folks in that group can get organized about whether they can keep feeding.

The credits we receive based on tier are:

* Tier I: no credit
* Tier II:  15% of lease
* Tier III:  30% of lease

**5.  Capital improvements — need ideas**

EBMUD is looking for capital improvement projects that enhance the ecological stability of the pasture. For example, we added cross-fences to accomplish tier 3. In the past, they haven’t been interested in projects that are for the convenience of OHA or expand the infrastructure that we already have. However, some members think EBMUD now thinks new structures are valuable. In the past, we haven’t gotten credit for waterproofing.

Every fall (e.g. in September or October), a subset of the board meets with EBMUD and presents, as possible capital improvements, the ideas the membership has proposed and the board has prioritized. They will discuss and negotiate with them until we’re all on the same page. We provide a list of costs and put that into a proposal to them. They incorporate that into the Annual Grazing Plan (AGP), which also includes a grazing rotation plan and what they would like us to do for weed control. Both parties sign it, and it is totally separate from our lease which is a 5-year agreement going through 2017.

We get credit for the cost of our capital improvements against our lease payment, but we can only get credit for up to 50% of the cost of our lease. Payment for our weeding (e.g. purple star thistle) & mowing has also been allowed as a capital improvement credit. We also get a significant credit for how well we meet their requirements for rotational grazing (e.g. are we in tier 2 or tier 3).

Ideas for capital improvements included:

* Expand the electric power at the Pavilion to the gate at the road so we can run the ring pasture fencing off electricity instead of solar
* Try to renovate the old stalls, red barn, and the barn in the Lower pasture
* Maintenance and repair on the Taj & Lower Pasture corral
* Fixing old dairy up for grazing (but Erica clarified that it’s not our lease so we wouldn’t get capital improvement credit for that)
* A stall down near the PO to put a sick horse
* Pear Orchard access via the old trail from the fire road to the saddle
* Improve the trail to Seaview. Could we add more rock or 1/4 inch to dust?
* Improve the fire road through Upper Sullivan from Longs. Someone talked with Kerry about it last year but we didn’t do it.
* Clear downed brush along El Toyonal

**4.  Emergency Preparedness - Anna**

Anna sent you an email asking you to complete and submit emergency information that will:

1. Provide emergency personnel with potentially life saving information

2. Ensure your wishes are followed if you/your horse is injured

3. Provide a data base of contact information and other important details in the event of an evacuation.

Be sure to at least list a couple emergency contacts and whether you have Kaiser, as that is important information to ensure you are taken to the right hospital. In case of an evacuation, you can use the oil markers in the emergency cabinet in the white shed to write your phone number on the horse. The hoof is also an excellent place to write things. Emergency halters are in the white shed in two big silver containers and two white buckets full of things that can grab & go.

In an evacuation situation, the fire department wants us to shelter in place in the Ring Pasture. They will give us instructions on where to go. They won’t go up the hill to look for us in an emergency. The highest ranking board member on the premises is in control in an evacuation.

**6.  Work party fun! And fall work party announcement - Kirsten**

We need to come up with a date and send all your suggestions to Kirsten on what should be done. We can do it on a Saturday in September or October. If anyone would like to head that up let her know.

**7.  Pasture management teams:  how to improve?**

Pasture Managers were asked for their suggestions.

Elise had a highly-functioning team in place before the pasture teams were made, which worked well in the Lower Sullivan. You want people in place who want to own it. People got assigned and aren’t really owning it. Board members probably don’t need to be on pasture management teams. There was more ownership when she got a team together and they owned it vs. being assigned.

Alison M. thought it was confusing to have two pastures with one team. She thinks it would be better to have specific people in specific pastures.

Kirsten wondered if we should assign people to jobs that the pasture teams have to do? For instance, it would be helpful to have a chairperson for things like hay tarping.

Folks wondered if we have a list of pasture management tasks on the website. (Note: there does not appear to be a list of projects on the “Projects & Pastures” page at http://www.orindahorsemen.org/node/25).

Erica said she was a pasture manager who didn’t have a lot of experience with tarping and she was expected to play a coordinating role. It was difficult, especially because she didn’t have internet. It would be good to have a go-to person to keep track of all the tarps and be on top of it.

Linda wondered if we could we have a team of people who like to do tarping. Cheryl said hopefully our new tent will work out and we’ll never have tarps again.

**8.  Herd moves protocol - Elise**

Elise is now the herd move organizer, and Liz will be her backup. Day-of-move coordinators will be Liz and Doug, with Linda leading the PO move. There have been safety issues raised and people who have been late to moves this year. Elise passed out a draft for herd move guidelines and said she would love everyone’s feedback via email. It was suggested that folks handling a horse they didn’t know should understand where it belongs in the string. It is fine to peel off at the pavilion.

**9.  Treasurer report – Alison M.**

Work hours are due at the end of September. Members provide 25 hours if they have 1 horse, and 40 hours if they have two horses. There was a dues schedule change this year which better aligned the dues payment schedule to OHA’s fiscal year, also considering when it would be easier for members to make payments. Due to this schedule change, there are prorated dues for $180 per horse which are due now and late as of Oct. 1st.

Our major expenses this past year were hay at $10,453, our lease payment which was $8000, and insurance which was around $2000. For comparison to past years:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| *Hay & Salt*2014 - $10,5002013 - $15,0002012 - $11,500  | *Lease (after capital improvement credits)*2014 - $61002013 - $51392012 - $2438  |

Our lease cost is based on the number of AUMs (animal units of measurement) and the price of beef on the Chicago Stock Exchange. This measurement is used because EBMUD’s leases are primarily cattle leases. EBMUD recently lowered the AUM rate for us and the other horse pastures. We get the price of cattle in November, but we won’t know our actual lease cost until later when the AGP and capital improvements are approved.

This year we’ll have approximately $25,000 of income from dues. There is a $2500 loss projected for this year, and we had reserve in our account that covered it. Once we know what our lease payment will be, we should do a cost-benefit analysis to determine whether we should consider raising dues.

We will have about $15k in the bank after all our expenses are paid. This is in line with the $10,000 buffer the board agreed upon a few years ago. The full financial report will be on the website when the year closes.

**10.  Election of 2015-16 Board (Allison B & Eddie ineligible, Heather, Kirsten & Linda continue)**

The following new board members were elected to the board:

* Anna
* Page
* Sally
* Wakean

And the following members will continue on in their 2 year term:

* Heather
* Kirsten
* Linda

**11. Open forum**

This list does not include some projects listed in the capital improvements section above.

**Facilities**

* Rebuild/move hay enclosure in Upper Sullivan
* Old stalls
	+ Re-roof
	+ Gravel + ¼ x dust for surface
* Shelter for Back 40
* Split Back 40 into two paddocks
* Enclosure near Pear Orchard for injured horse
* Replace forest meadow gate at Wildcat Canyon Rd

**Administration**

* Dues amount
* Negotiate new lease with EBMUD
	+ Look at lease cost formula
* Web site
	+ Security/Access for new members
	+ Re-design
* Herd checks in non-feeding season
* Hay tarping
* Pasture teams
* Fence charger management

**Rules**

* Trailer parking rules
* Worming Protocol
* Herd move guidelines
* Number of horses allowed per membership
* Proprietary membership of spouses/domestic partners

**Work Hours**

* Time allowed for projects
* Payment vs. actual work
* Amount charged per hour for owed hours
* Hiring workers to do physically difficult/skilled jobs

**Emergency Preparedness**

* Trailer training
* Fire Safety Grant

**12. Remembering Georgia**

Georgia Williams, a long-time member who passed away this year after a valiant battle with cancer, was remembered.

Adjourned meeting at 7pm.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Allison Bloodworth, Outgoing Recording Secretary.