

**Japantown Task Force
Board of Directors Meeting**
Wednesday, October 20, 2021
6:00 pm – VIA Zoom Meeting

Attendees: Sandy Mori, Benh Nakajo, David Takashima, Alice Kawahatsu, Beau Simon, Daryl Higashi, Gary Barbaree, Glynis Nakahara, Jon Osaki, Kenta Takamori, Lori Yamauchi, Lucy Fisher, Mark Moriguchi, Richard Hashimoto, Rosalyn Tonai, Scott Hamaguchi, and Steven Santa Maria

Absent (excused): Jeremy Chan and Richard Jue

Staff: Steve Nakajo, Lauren Nosaka, Brandon Quan, Susie Kagami, and Max Nihei

Guests: Emily Nichols, Grace Horikiri, Judy Hamaguchi, Laura Miyano, Michiko Yamada, Nancy Nagano, Sheridan Tatsuno, Tomo Hirai, Wes Nihei, Yuki Nishimura and Katie Furukawa

I. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 6:01p.m. by President Sandy Mori. A quorum was acknowledged.

Approval of Agenda

It was moved by Richard Hashimoto and seconded by Beau Simon to accept the agenda.

The motion passed unanimously.

II. Approval of Minutes

Minutes of the JTF Board meeting of September 15, 2021. (Attachment A)

It was moved by Gary Barbaree and seconded by Glynis Nakahara to approve the September 15, 2021 minutes.

The motion passed with unanimously. No public comments.

III. Update from the Executive Director, Steve Nakajo (Attachment B)

Board Members Richard Hashimoto and Gary Barbaree expressed their appreciation to JTF Executive Director Steve Nakajo on his resignation on December 31, 2021. JTF board and community members are grateful for his hard work and dedication. Steve mentioned he will still be connected in many ways to the community and its existing projects in the future. Steve reported Diane Matsuda organized a meeting with Supervisor Preston and Japantown. The meeting was an update on the Buchanan Hotel and the Mayor's Economic Impact Report. Paul Osaki, Executive Director of JCCCNC mentioned the Better Neighborhood Plan and discussed with Supervisor Preston. Four business persons, and a neighborhood resident are volunteering their time to write the Economic Impact Report probono. The report will provide data and economic impact if the Buchanan Hotel is closed as a tourist hotel. Peter Hirshberg is the lead person putting the report together. He is a neighbor of Japantown, an urban economist and is sharing his expertise and knowledge to the community on the negative impact Japantown will have if the Buchanan Hotel is no longer a tourist hotel. Greg Lee, Russell Kagehiro, Alex Koch, and Bob Kristoff are the 4 businessmen who are devoting their time compile the report. Grace Horikiri of the JCBD attends these meetings and mentions that Japantown would not be able to afford a professional to write the report for us. She adds that this report could possibly help Japantown receive future funding.

Public comments:

- Will the Economic Impact Report continue to be worked on despite that the Buchanan Hotel is no longer for sale?

- Are those writing the Economic Impact Report part of a buyers meeting?

Update from the Japantown Cultural District, Susie Kagami (Attachment C)

Susie Kagami gave an update on the Battery Powered Grant. The Japantown Cultural District along with the 6 other Cultural Districts is in the running for the larger \$250,000 award all to be split between seven Districts. A presentation was given on October 18, 2021 in person to the Battery Powered Grant Committee. The members will vote on 3-4 finalists and the Cultural Districts will find out the results beginning of November. The CHHESS Report is in review and will realistically be presented to the Board of Supervisors on January 2022.

No public comments.

Update from Executive Director of Japantown Community Benefit District (Property Owners in Japantown), Grace Horikiri (Attachment D)

No public comments.

IV. Committee Reports

- A. Land Use/Transportation Committee (Co-chairs Glynis Nakahara/Kenta Takamori)
1. Recommendation that the JTF Board send a letter signed by Board President, Executive Director and Land Use/Transportation Co-chairs to SFMTA in support of restoring SFMUNI Lines 2 and 3 (Attachment E).

There is a proposal being vetting by the SFMTA to restore various muni lines throughout the city. Some lines are affecting the Western Addition area. The Lines 2 and 3 directly affect Japantown.

It was moved by Beau Simon and seconded by Benh Nakajo to have the JTF Board send a letter signed by Board President, Executive Director and Land Use/Transportation Co-chairs to SFMTA in support of restoring SFMUNI Lines 2 and 3.

The motion passed unanimously. No public comments.

2. Recommendation that Scott Hamaguchi join the Land Use/Transportation Committee

It was moved by Glynis Nakahara and seconded by Richard Hashimoto to approve of Scott Hamaguchi to join the Land Use/Transportation Committee.

The motion passed unanimously. No public comments.

3. Committee Updates

SFMTA Ribbon Cutting Ceremony

On October 20, 2021, an official Ribbon Cutting Ceremony was held for the new crossing on Geary Street and Buchanan Street. This crossing is located near the back steps leading to the Peace Plaza and pedestrians can cross over to the other side where St. Francis Square Co-op is located. As part of the design, a mid street island area is constructed where pedestrians can stand safely. Traffic lights for this new crossing is only activated when you press the traffic crossing button. The traffic lights will turn to red and drivers on Geary have to stop so pedestrians can cross safely. There is also a crossing button mid way on the middle island as well. This crossing was part of the Geary Rapid Project. As part of the new crossing the midway island was designed with 3 round metal cut out panels that honor the 3 communities: SF Japantown, The Fillmore Jazz district and the St. Francis Square Co-op. Board Member Alice Kawahatsu commented that it was great to attend the events where MTA staff and officials, Mayor London Breed, community leaders and members celebrated

together the long awaited project and to pay tribute to the Fillmore, St. Francis Square co-op, and Japantown communities. Special thanks to all those who put in so many hours towards this project. This new crossing will not only be a safer way to cross mid block but will also physically join the communities closer together and honor the legacy and history of these 3 communities.

Osaka Way Improvement

Glynis reported that the funds will be managed by the SF Planning Department. Grace Horikiri, Robert Sakai, Board Member Jon Osaki and Glynis will begin meeting with key stakeholders and discussing with Michael DeGregorio to define the next steps. President Sandy Mori added that the funds received by Phil Ting for Osaka Way has to be spent within 3 years.

SFMTA, Kansai Uchida

Kansai Uchida, a senior planner, at SFMTA gave a presentation on the long-term planning initiatives. SFMTA is looking into a subway or railway along Geary.

Chinatown Development Center

Board Member Jon Osaki mentioned receiving an urgent request from the Chinatown Development Center. They are trying to organize support on concerns they have surrounding the changes made on priority areas for affordable housing in CA. They contacted Jon to see if the JTF Board can sign on to a letter.

No public comments.

B. Cultural Heritage Sustainability Committee (Co-chairs David Takashima/Lucy Fisher)

1. Announcement: David Takashima

David Takashima announced that he will be resigning as the co-chair of the Cultural Heritage Sustainability Committee. Lucy Fisher mentioned that the committee will discuss a replacement for David's spot at the Nov. 1 committee meeting.

2. Japantenna Project: Kenta Takamori

Kenta Takamori reported the popup shop will be open from Nov. 12 to Dec. 5, 4 weeks, 3 days per week 11am-6pm. Kagoshima Prefecture is very supportive and sending many products to Japantown. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs grant has not been awarded yet. The steering committee would like to hire a store manager, however, they are waiting for approval of the grant. There will be a private invitation only reception on Nov. 8 at the JCCCNC.

No public comments.

C. Peace Plaza Committee (Co-Chairs Jon Osaki/ Rich Hashimoto)

1. Committee Updates

Richard Hashimoto reported that he met with Marien Coss from Recreation and Park department and the Department of Public Works on Oct. 19 to discuss the core test drilling that will happen at the Peace Plaza. They will be doing a restructure engineering to make sure the structure is safe and sound to accommodate the load. It will begin during the week of Oct. 25. It will take 1 week to complete. Jon Osaki added that the committee is waiting for structural analysis results by the week of Oct. 25. The October Peace Plaza meeting has been cancelled. A community meeting will be held in the first quarter of 2022.

No public comments.

D. Ad Hoc Japan Center Malls Technical Committee (Chair Lori Yamauchi)

1. Committee Updates

Lori Yamauchi reported that the meeting focused around the 2009 Better Neighborhoods Plan for the Japan Center Malls and to identify relevant contact for the Strategic Plan for Japan Center Malls property. At the Nov. meeting, Assessor-Recorder Joaquin Torres will be attending.

No public comments.

E. Nominations Committee

(Chair Benh Nakajo)

1. New Terms for All Directors

Benh Nakajo reported that the board members were given an updated Board Roster with the year of when their term is up. (Please see Attachment F). After approaching each member about their term and asking if they will continue to serve, 10 board members have agreed to renew. Kenta Takamori will resign from the board at the end of Dec. 2021.

2. List of Names for Officers

The committee is submitting the list of names for board officers for 2022. There are 4 positions: President, Vice President, Secretary and Treasurer. All current officers have agreed to renew. The vote will be taken at the Nov. meeting. Board Member Kenta Takamori added that according to the ByLaws, the Nominating Committee comes up with a list of candidates for officers and a list of candidates for the board. It does not have specific details on self-nominations nor floor nominations. It is up to the Nominating Committee to decide. Board Member Gary Barbaree mentioned that revising the Bylaws may not be necessary since Roberts Rules of Order has a whole section on the Nominating Committee.

Public Comments:

- Is the officer slate final? Are there no self-nominations and floor nominations?

F. JTF By Laws Working Group (Kenta Takamori, Mark Moriguchi, Sandy Mori & David Takashima)

1. Consideration of Approving Proposed Revisions to the JTF ByLaws

Kenta Takamori reviewed revisions in JTF ByLaws Draft (Attachment G). Board Member Gary Barbaree gave an overview on the Roberts Rules of Order. Penny Nakatsu, a retired attorney, reviewed the JTF ByLaws and suggested the ByLaws be written in simple English that everyone can understand. Board members had further questions and clarifications on the Nominations Committee, nominees, Robert Rules of Order, floor nominations, board approval for expenses, and vetting officers. The Board decided to delay the vote for the JTF ByLaws as the Board a few more clarifications on the ByLaws. This item will continue to the November Board meeting.

No public comments.

VI. Update from the President/Executive Committee

1. Update on the Hiring Process/Procedures for the JTF ED Position

The Executive Committee met and is recommending to the board to approve of a Hiring Committee on the hiring process/procedures for the JTF ED position (Attachment H). The committee will be made up of 8 board members - 4 women and 4 men. These 8 representatives are Alice Kawahatsu, Glynis Nakahara, Rosalyn Tonai, Sandy Mori, Jon Osaki, Mark Moriguchi, Jeremy Chan, and Beau Simon. This Hiring Committee will come up with its procedures, review the submitted resumes, develop interview questions, interview the candidates, bring one or two candidates to the full Board to interview, and may recommend one to the Board. Vice President Glynis Nakahara added that this is the same process that happened for the previous hiring of the Executive Director. The job announcement was sent to the JTF list server, and posted on social media on Oct.1. The due date is Nov. 1 but the deadline may be extended. Secretary Alice Kawahatsu reminded the board that the Hiring Committee will be transparent about the

candidates and the board members will have a chance to chime in and vote. If any board members need a copy of the job description, send a request to Lauren to resend it.

It was moved by Lori Yamauchi and seconded by Gary Barbaree to approve of a Hiring Committee on the hiring process/procedures for the JTF ED position. The motion passed unanimously. No public comments.

VIII. General Public Comment

Members of the public may address the Board for up to two minutes with respect to each item on the agenda, and may speak for up to two minutes regarding matters not on the agenda during general public comment.

No public comments.

IX. Announcements.

- Alice Kawahatsu announced that on Nov. 20 at 1:30pm-3:30pm there will be a safety education awareness workshop and fellowship due to the anti-Asian hate issues. Proof of vaccination is required. Community members will be giving tips and suggestions on safety. Let Alice know if you are interested in attending.

- Steve Nakajo announced that KHP (owner of the Hotel Buchanan) has withdrawn its offer to sell the Hotel Buchanan to the City. After KHP's contractual obligation (sometime in 2022) to the City to be an emergency SIP (shelter in place) hotel for homeless, the Hotel Buchanan will revert back to be a tourist hotel.

X. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 8:43pm.

NEXT BOARD MEETING: Wednesday, November 17, 2021 via zoom meeting.