

JAPANTOWN TASK FORCE
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING
WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 10, 2019
6:00 PM – JACL BUILDING 1ST FLOOR CONFERENCE ROOM
1765 SUTTER ST, SAN FRANCISCO, CA 94115

ATTENDEES: Sandy Mori, David Takashima, Glynis Nakahara, Beau Simon, Kenta Takamori, Jacquelyn Chew, Richard Hashimoto, Rosalyn Tonai, Seiko Fujimoto, Jon Osaki, Alice Kawahatsu, Mark Moriguchi

ABSENT: Benh Nakajo, Scott Hamaguchi

STAFF: Steve Nakajo, Lauren Nosaka, Nina Bazan-Sakamoto, Brandon Quan

GUESTS: Jeremy Chan, Elena Nielsen, Derek Tahara, Robert Sakai, Bob Rusky, Michiko Yamada, Adrienne Shiozaki-Woo, Raymond Woo, Daryl Higashi, Masahiro Inoue, Maia Small, Jeff Joslin, Michelle Taylor, Trent Greenan, Luis Barata

I. CALL TO ORDER

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

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Minutes of the JTF Board meeting of November 20, 2019.

It was moved David Takashima and seconded by Mark Moriguchi to accept the minutes from the November meeting (Attachment A.)

The motion passed unanimously. No public comments.

III. UPDATE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, STEVE NAKAJO

Steve Nakajo reviewed the highlights from the December 10, 2019 Executive Director's report (Attachment B). Steve reported that he gave public comment as an individual at Supervisor Brown's last board meeting on December 10.

Cultural District update:

- The Japantown Cultural District team held their Day Time Town Hall meeting conducted in both Japanese and English on December 9. There were over 50 attendees at the meeting. The team is moving into focus group sessions with young adults, youth and seniors. The next Town Hall meeting will be after the Grand Launch event. The team will be having individual meetings with different members of the community. There is a Japantown Cultural District Input and Feedback form on the JTF website where the public can give their opinions on the CHHESS report's 6 key areas.
- The Grand Launch will be on April 11, the first weekend of Cherry Blossom Festival.
- The team was involved with the SEED Project from the Office of Workforce and Economic Development (OEWD) in collaboration with the Japantown Cultural District. The Shared Equity in Economic Development Fellowship (SEED) is a partnership between the National League of Cities and the Democracy at Work Institute that convenes and equips city leaders with tools, resources, and expertise to build equitable economics and tackle commercial displacement.
- The Japantown Cultural District, JTF and JCBD is working with Michael Degregorio on the design panel display windows in the West Mall. The panel will have graphics and information.

2020 Census Update:

- Brandon is focusing on group quarters which are assisted living facilities such as Kokoro and Kimochi Home for the Census. The Census will send enumerators to the facilities to gather information for the senior homes. He met with Naoko Jones from Kokoro and is organizing a group meeting.
- The Census is still recruiting for jobs in San Francisco. They still need to fill 3000 jobs. He has been working with the recruiting assistant, April Elkjers who lives around Japantown and has previously worked at Nichi Bei.
- There will be a recruitment and information table at Silver Bells December 14 and at Santa's workshop December 15 and 21-22.
- He is working on the social media campaign.

JCBD Update:

- The holiday lighting is 99% complete. JCBD thanked Nihonmachi Parking Corporation and Japantown Merchants Association for their help and contribution.
- Phase 4 of the SafeCity Camera program is nearly complete.
- Phase 5 will look at possible expansion outward. The boundaries are still within JCBD but would include entities outside of JCBD such as Kimochi Home.

No public comments.

IV. COMMITTEE REPORTS

A. Cultural Heritage Sustainability Committee (Co-chair David Takashima)

1. To approve the co-chair: Jacquelyn Chew
David Takashima reported that Coco Tando resigned as co-chair due to work and has asked Jacquelyn Chew to replace her as co-chair. The committee members are interested in continuing to have younger people as a point person in the committee. Jacquelyn brings her Facebook management background as a Team Lead, and cultural activities in traditional Japanese dance and former queen of the Cherry Blossom Queen Program to the committee as a co-chair (Attachment C.)

It was moved by David Takashima and seconded by Richard Hashimoto to approve Jacquelyn Chew as co-chair of the Cultural Heritage Sustainability Committee.

The vote passed unanimously. No public comments.

B. Peace Plaza Committee (Co-Chairs, Jon Osaki/Richard Hashimoto)

1. Peace Plaza Updates
Richard Hashimoto reported that Steve Nakajima is a member of the Parks Bond Advisory Committee and met with the Committee and Phil Ginsburg on November 14. The members were informed that the Parks Bond may or may not be on next year's budget. The Mental Health Bond may be pushed from 2023 to 2020 instead.

C. Nominations Committee (Sandy Mori)

Benh Nakajo and Sandy Mori met and are in the process of reviewing the suggested nominations list. The committee will try to bring one or two nominees to the January board meeting. Their target is to fill all four openings on the board. There is a total of 18 slots on the board.

D. Land Use/Transportation Committee (Co-chairs, Glynis Nakahara/Kenta Takamori)

1. Presentation of the accelerated process to develop the Japantown Design Guidelines—report out the contents of the 2 community meetings, discuss the draft Japantown Design Guidelines and possible approval or disapproval of the Japantown Design Guidelines

Glynis Nakahara gave a presentation of the Japantown Special Area Design Guidelines (Attachment D.) Besides Japantown, Calle 24 learned about the Mission Design Guidelines in late September, accelerated the process to develop the Mission Design Guidelines and they received approval for their guidelines in November. Due to the fast acceleration, many were concerned that not enough outreach and education was done for the developers, merchants, property owners, and community members. Maia Small and Jeff Joslin from the SF Planning department passed out the Japantown Design Guidelines version 4 draft (Attachment E). explained the guidelines can be adopted as a framework and can continue to do community work for these guidelines where there can be additional explanations, illustrations and continue to meet with the community. The guideline itself cannot be changed after January 1, 2020. However, the introduction sections can be amended, which includes the history and context of Japantown, values, concepts, the way to use concepts, and examples can be revised. Only the map of applicability cannot be change in the Introduction section. Underneath the individual design guidelines (Site Design, Architecture, and Public Realm sections), the intent, examples, captions and images can be changed. The Urban Design Guidelines provide a good neighborhood design. With the Japantown Design Guidelines in place, it would provide a good neighborhood design with a specific character that fits in the Japantown community. Glynis recommended the board and members of the public to review the updated draft of the guidelines and send comments to Maia Small or her and Kenta.

Public Comments:

- The issue with the design guidelines draft is the timing. There is not enough time to review and give comments to the updated draft that was passed out. The community's voice has to be included.
- Recommends to continue the process next year to create decent design guidelines with the community's input.
- Suggests everyone read the Urban Design Guidelines.
- Is the guideline actually referring to Japanese neighborhood design or is it just a good neighborhood design? Would it really preserve the look and feel of Japantown?
- Property owner's family has been in Japantown since 1906 and owns mixed use and commercial properties. It is not a perfect document but supports it.
- JCCCNC supports the guidelines
- Nihonmachi Parking Corporation believes that a guideline with substance is better than nothing.
- When Nihonmachi Little Friends built their building, there were no guidelines so they researched everything themselves to educate themselves and the architect. If there was a written guideline document to follow, it would have been more streamline and would not have affected any extra expenses. Nihonmachi Little Friends sent a letter of support.
- Whatever draft version is adopted, there should be an opportunity to amend. Some information is incorrect. If the guidelines are approved, what exactly happens in 2020? What do you mean changes can be made?
- Heard that changes before January 1 can be made but changes after January 1 cannot be amended.
- The LU/T committee members spoke to owners at Soko Hardware, Paper Tree and Sakura Sakura and supports the guidelines.
- The design guidelines in concept were a part of JCHESS and has been previously discussed as one of the tools that Japantown should adopt in order to preserve the look and feel of Japantown. The Japantown design guidelines concept started 16 years ago with JCHESS. But the guidelines were put on hold while the city developed the Urban Design Guidelines. The document is not perfect but is good document and should be adopted.
- Better to have the guidelines in writing and grandfathered into it than have nothing.

It was moved by Rosalyn Tonai and Beau Simon to approve the adoption of the Japantown Design Guidelines and in addition to that, in the next year additional outreach to property owners and business owners to develop a community design document that will provide more input, clarity and refinement around the design guideline elements.

The vote passed with 9 in favor, 3 opposed and no abstentions.

V. UPDATE FROM THE PRESIDENT AND EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Brenda Aoki Wong, Mark Izu, Steve Nakajo and Sandy Mori went to the SF Arts Commission (SFAC) meeting and gave public comment raising the issue that indicated that Japanese and Japanese Americans were not included in the SFAC's demographic survey. This issue was brought to JTF's attention by Mark Izu. After listening to Brenda, Mark, Steve and Sandy's comments, the SFAC commissioners made supportive comments. SFAC Director Tom DeCaigny spoke that this issue will be corrected, was not done purposely; and it was an oversight error.

VI. ANNOUNCEMENTS

The following announcements were shared:

JCBD passed about flyers from the Geary Rapid Project to inform the community of what they should expect during construction around Filmore and Japantown (Attachment F.)

Richard Hashimoto announced that SFMTA is proposing for Sutter Street to have two standard-width lanes instead of the current three narrow lanes.

VII. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 8:17pm.

NEXT BOARD MEETING: Wednesday, January 15, 2019 6-8pm at the Union Bank Community Room.