

Japantown Task Force
Board of Directors Meeting
Wednesday, February 17, 2021
6:00 pm – VIA zoom Meeting

Attendees: Sandy Mori, Glynis Nakahara, Alice Kawahatsu, Mark Moriguchi, Jeremy Chan, Lucy Fisher, Scott Hamaguchi, Daryl Higashi, Richard Jue, Benh Nakajo, Beau Simon, David Takashima, Rosalyn Tonai, and Lori Yamauchi

Absent (excused): Seiko Fujimoto, Jon Osaki and Kenta Takamori

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

Guests: Gary Barbaree, Judy Hamaguchi, Karen Kai, Nancy Nagano, Elena Nielsen, Sheridan Tatsuno, and Michiko Yamada, Rich Hashimoto

I. Call to Order

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

Approval of Agenda

It was moved by Lucy Fisher and seconded by Rosalyn Tonai to accept the agenda.

The motion passed unanimously.

II. Approval of Minutes

Minutes of the JTF Board meeting of January 20, 2021. (Attachment A)

It was moved by Glynis Nakahara and seconded by Benh Nakajo to accept the minutes from the January meeting.

The motion passed unanimously. No public comments.

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

Steve Nakajo provided additional information for his Executive Director Report. He elaborated that he met with Nicole Martinez from Shelterforce on a past JTF proposal that occurred during Bob Hamaguchi's time. Nicole was interested in a community land trust and reached out to get an update on this past proposal for a report she's writing. Regarding the projected budget cuts for FY21-22, a budget presentation can happen after staff has received all budget cut information from Julia Sabory, the Cultural District Program Manager. Staff will be attending an all Cultural District budget meeting with Julia on February 19. The Cultural Districts are funded by the hotel tax occupancy. In the worst-case scenario, the total projected budget for all Cultural Districts is \$350,000, meaning that each of the 8 Cultural Districts would receive \$43,000 for FY21-22. It will cost \$2million dollars a year to fund the Cultural Districts. The February 19 meeting will update staff on the funds and the Mayor's Office of Housing and Community Development (MOHCD)'s internal meeting with their department and among other departments to identify other funding resources. Internally, staff has projected a budget savings amount between \$91,000 to \$100,000. The budget process is constantly changing due to effects of the pandemic.

Consul General "next generation" young professional focus groups, the first group will be held on March 4. Ages 20-40 years old. There will be younger sansei, yonsei, gosei, and biracial individuals at these focus groups. The board members will have access to the overview of each session.

Public Comments:

- On the Consul General focus groups, what will JTF and the Consul General will be doing to take these ideas and taking them into action? Answer: The groups will be having conversation with diverse groups of young people. This group will be open to new ideas. Some of the participants are very involved in Japantown and others chosen to participate are not as involved.

- Short term participants may be only involved in one event, whereas long time participants may have a chance of making change.

Update from the Japantown Cultural District, Nina Bazan-Sakamoto (Attachment C)

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. Committee Updates

Housing Element Update:

Glynis Nakahara reported that Japantown Cultural District (JCD) Project Manager Nina Bazan-Sakamoto helped solidify a first Housing Element listening session on March 10. Details to be forthcoming. JCD and the committee will take the lead on housing issues for the first meeting and the Planning Department will be there to listen. Then there will be a follow up meeting with a smaller focus group led by the Planning Department sometime in April.

Congestion Pricing:

The committee is partnering with Cathedral Hill Neighborhood Group for a community meeting. The proposed meeting date is March 26 at 6pm.

SF Climate Action Plan:

The committee is partnering with Cathedral Hill Neighborhood Group on this meeting as well. They are still working out the details for the date and format of the meeting.

SFMTA:

For the new crosswalk at Buchanan and Geary St., there is a tree in the median that requires removal. A hearing will be scheduled. Glynis encouraged members of the board and community to speak at the hearing. JTF submitted letter of support for the tree removal to Daniel Mackowski of SFMTA. (Attachment E.)

Collaboration with the California College of the Arts:

The committee had an initial meet and greet with the California College of the Arts during the week of February 8. On Saturday February 13, committee members gave site tours of Japantown for a small group of students. On Thursday February 25 5-8pm, there will be a design workshop on "Common Ground: Remaking the Ground Floor." The workshop will be to identify and co-create a project in Japantown.

No public comments.

- B. Cultural Heritage Sustainability Committee (Co-chair David Takashima/Lucy Fisher)
 - 1. Updates on two CHHESS tactics:

- Potential Use of Kinmon Gakuen for Community and Cultural Events

Lucy Fisher reported that Richard Hashimoto gave the committee members a tour of Kinmon Gakuen and sent them a historical paper on the school on Monday February 8. Kinmon Gakuen needs \$10 million dollars for renovations to meet ADA requirements. David Takashima was impressed with the performance auditorium and sees a lot of potential for

the space. Rosalyn Tonai connected with Richard Hashimoto on 3 sources on capital funding for Kinmon Gakuen.

- Feasibility of coordinating Japanese American holdings of multiple community organizations
Lucy reported on coordinating with Japanese American libraries to make their archives more accessible to the public. The four organizations with historical collections are the National Japanese American Historical Society, the National Japanese American Library, the Center and the Nichi Bei Foundation. The organizations are currently closed due to COVID and it was suggested that this collaboration occur after everyone receives vaccinations. Alice Kawahatsu commented that churches have a lot of good resources and could provide information to the community.

Steve Nakajo mentioned that the city is trying to get a broader sense of people and sites and what took place at these cultural districts (i.e. festivals, art groups, and businesses) This is the reason why we need to locate and utilize the resources within the community.

David Takashima mentioned that a lot of the JA community organizations came out of the era during the 60's and 70's when SF State rallied at SF State for Asian American studies. Not sure if this was documented. It was a time in history when Jtown was desimated.

No public comments.

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

1. Committee Updates

Michael Degregorio resigned from the SF Recreation and Parks Department and has been hired by a private firm in the East Bay. Peace Plaza co-chairs, Sandy Mori, and Steve Nakajo will be meeting with the new person replacing Michael on February 22. They will also be meeting with RHAA on the Peace Plaza design. A question was brought up on if Richard Hashimoto can continue as the co-chair since he is no longer a JTF board member. This issue will be referred to the Executive Committee.

No public comments.

D. Nominations Committee (Chair Benh Nakajo)

1. Benh Nakajo was selected by its committee members to be the Chair
2. Recommendation to approve Rev. Gary Barbaree as JTF Board Member

Benh Nakajo reported the Nominations Committee is recommending to the board to approve Rev. Gary Barbaree as a JTF board member. Rev. Gary introduced himself to the board and gave reasons for wanting to join the JTF board (Attachment F). According to the JTF by-laws, the maximum number of board members is 21. Currently with approval of Rev. Gary's recommendation, there will be 18 board members. Rev. Gary will be replacing Elena Nielsen's position and the term will expire on December 2021.

It was moved by David Takashima and seconded by Beau Simon to approve Rev. Gary Barbaree as a JTF board member.

The motion passed unanimously.

Public Comments:

- It would be good to have younger representation on the board.

3. Update on filling Board slots

The Nominations Committee consists of Sandy Mori, Mark Moriguchi and Benh Nakajo. The committee is open to taking any candidates at any time. They follow a matrix when selecting new candidates for the board. There is still an opportunity to bring on younger board members. The committee reviews candidates in numerical order from when they show interest in joining the JTF board. There are several categories including community service, cultural heritage to the arts, business and finance, fundraising, human resources, programs in governance and outreach.

The following board members terms are up at the end of 2021:

Jeremy Chan, Alice Kawahatsu, Scott Hamaguchi, Rev. Gary Barbaree, Sandy Mori, Mark Moriguchi, Benh Nakajo, Kenta Takamori, David Takashima and Lori Yamauchi.

V. Update from the President and Executive Committee

1. Update on the Ad Hoc Japan Center Malls Technical Committee held on February 8, 2021

Sandy Mori reported that Steve Nakajima has resigned from the committee. The committee will be holding a series of informational meetings with different topics at each meeting ranging from affordable housing to the 3-D covenants. At the March 8 meeting, Roy Ikeda will be taking the lead on the 3-D covenants.

No public comments.

VII. Announcements.

- JCBD will be holding free COVID19 testing in the Peace Plaza on February 18 from 9:30am-2:30pm. 10am-11am is blocked off for seniors. Pre-registration is not required. Participants are notified of the results in 2 days.

- Kimochi is having an udon fundraiser. It costs \$16 per meal. The deadline to buy the meals is Friday, February 19.

- The commercial eviction moratorium that passed last November is set to expire at the end of March. There is advocacy to extend the moratorium. JTF may be asked to lend their support.

- NJAHS will be holding a Day of Remembrance on Friday February 19 6-7:30pm via zoom. The event is free.

- Nichi Bei will have Films of Remembrance from Saturday, February 20 to Sunday, February 28.

- The Japantown 4 Justice will begin holding the 1st Filmore Marketplace for 2021 from 12pm-4pm. There will a mural unveiling.

VIII. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 7:44pm.

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