

**Japantown Task Force
Board of Directors Meeting**
Wednesday, February 16, 2022
6:00 pm – VIA Zoom Meeting

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

Absent (excused): Jon Osaki

Staff: Dr. Emily Murase, Lauren Nosaka, Brandon Quan, Susie Kagami, Melissa Bailey Nihei, and Max Nihei

Guests: Tomo Hirai, Nicholas Large, Tara Imamoto, Elena Nieslen, Judy Hamaguchi, Joyce Nakamura, Lauren Roche, Darcy Nishi, Jackie Funasaki, Emily Nichols, Joyce Nakamura, Michiko Yamada, Tara

I. Call to Order

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

II. Approval of Agenda

It was moved by Lucy Fisher and seconded by Glynis Nakahara to accept the agenda.
The motion passed unanimously.

III. Approval of Minutes

Minutes of the JTF Board meeting of January 19, 2022. (Attachment A)

It was moved by Lucy Fisher and seconded by Steven Santa Maria to approve the January 19, 2022, minutes.

The motion passed unanimously. No public comment.

IV. Update from the Executive Director, Emily Murase PhD (Attachment B)

Sandy Mori reported on the FY22-23 OEWD budget. Staff has not heard back yet from the OEWD staff to fully fund the Executive Director and Administrative Manager. These two positions are the core infrastructure for JTF.

No public comment.

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

Susie Kagami clarified that RFP 220 was an API collaborative submission for media festivals with SOMA Pilipinas. SOMA Pilipinas was not awarded the grant. This grant does not impact existing Japantown Cultural District funding.

No public comment.

V. Committee Reports

A. Land Use/Transportation Committee (Co-chair Glynis Nakahara/Jeremy Chan)

1. Motion to Support Proposal that Japantown and the Western Addition/Fillmore Remain Together in D5 for SF Redistricting

Co-chairs Glynis Nakahara and Jeremy Chan have been attending several redistricting meetings as part of a citywide redistricting process. The Redistricting Task Force is charged with redrawing the lines so that each district has roughly the same population (Attachment D).

It was moved by Jeremy Chan and seconded by Lucy Fisher to support the proposal that Japantown and the Western Addition/Fillmore remain together in D5 for redistricting. The motion passed unanimously.

No public comment.

2. Motion to Support the Pride Flag Raising Project (Peace Plaza)

Jeremy reported that the San Francisco JACL is sponsoring the Pride Flag Raising Project on the Peace Plaza organized by the Japantown Rainbow Coalition for May 2022 during Pride Month (Attachment E). The SF Recreation and Parks Department manages the Peace Plaza and has a permitting process for use of the Peace Plaza. The Japantown Rainbow Coalition will be applying for a permit to raise the Progress Flag, a city approved flag, over the Peace Plaza.

It was moved by Glynis Nakahara and seconded by Yuki Nishimura to support the Pride Flag Raising Project. The motion passed unanimously.

No public comment.

3. Housing Element Update, Draft 2

Jeremy reported that the Planning Commission is in the process of developing the latest Housing Element, a long-term housing plan for San Francisco. New to this effort is an emphasis on equity and supporting communities of color. The Planning Department released a second draft and is looking for feedback. Committee members Rosalyn Tonai and Daryl Higashi are reviewing the new draft and identifying key issues. JTF staff will distribute a survey to the JTF listserv to seek community feedback.

Public comment:

A member of the public asked if the second draft is available to the public. The link to the draft was provided.

4. Osaka Way

Glynis Nakahara reported that the Osaka Way Committee proposed to the Planning Department and the Department of Public Works to work with a private landscape architect. Also, she, along with Board members Jon Osaki, Paul Osaki, Grace Horikiri, and Emily Murase, met with the Asawa family on February 15, 2022, for initial input. SF Planning is working on an application to secure the state funds set aside for this purpose. Grace Horikiri, Executive Director of the Japantown Community Benefit District, is collecting historical resources and documents related to work on the Buchanan Mall that have already taken place.

Public comments:

- Will community members be involved with the Buchanan Mall restoration? The response was absolutely yes.

- Years ago, a study was conducted on the infrastructure underlying the Buchanan Mall fountains. A full restoration was estimated to cost \$20 million.

B. Cultural Heritage Sustainability Committee (Co-chairs Lucy Fisher/Gary Barbaree)

1. Recommendation for Board to confirm Yuki Nishimura as a member of the CHS Committee
It was moved by Gary Barbaree and seconded by Richard Hashimoto to approve Yuki Nishimura as a member of the CHS Committee.

The motion passed unanimously. No public comment.

2. Motion to the Board that JTF continue to work with the Japantenna Steering Committee to support future Japantenna proposals
The committee conducted a final evaluation of the Japantenna Project and voted to forward to the board a recommendation to continue sponsoring the project. Lucy Fisher reported that because the grant funds were still in the process of being issued, she would like to postpone the board's consideration of the motion to March.

No public comment.

3. Committee's Discussion of Focus Areas for 2022: Develop a plan for relating to identified cultural assets that are at-risk or most likely to benefit from immediate JTF assistance

The committee discussed a work plan and created a list to engage with high-risk non-profit organizations that are very important cultural assets.

No public comment.

4. Committee Updates

- a. Japanese Tea Garden

Lucy Fisher announced that the Board of Supervisors approved the mergers of three separate organizations in charge of the Japanese Tea Garden, the Arboretum, and the Conservatory of Flowers, respectively. The merger of these gardens, all in Golden Gate Park, means that fundraising, policies, and staffing can be better coordinated. Carol Murata's concession in the Japanese Tea Garden is not affected by the merger. The Budget and Finance Committee has postponed for the third time a decision on flexible pricing. Flexible pricing means that the gardens will be free for SF residents and military veterans, but tourists will have to pay higher prices during popular seasons.

Tak Matsuba, General Manager of the Japanese Tea Garden, informed Richard Hashimoto that disability advocates filed a lawsuit over the lack of disabled parking due to JFK Drive currently being closed to traffic. To make way for new ADA parking, the SF Recreation & Park Department is taking over the small parking lot and tearing down the small kiosk Jack Hirose built.

- b. Kinmon Gakuen

Richard Hashimoto reported that the outdated Kinmon Gakuen website does not allow individuals to make donations. Thanks to an introduction by Lucy Fisher, Steven Santa Maria will be helping Kinmon Gakuen to improve the website.

- c. Wakasa Memorial

Gary Barbaree mentioned that the Wakasa Memorial in Topaz, Arizona is looking for a permanent memorial to the Issei Resisters in the wartime incarceration camps.

No public comment.

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

1. Committee Updates

Richard Hashimoto asked Glynis to provide a report since he was unable to attend the January 25 meeting. Glynis stated that Marien Coss of the Recreation & Park Department provided a progress report. One of the concepts that the community voiced for was to have a thin layer of water

honoring the original design. However, Marien explained that the water feature is too heavy and would trigger a seismic upgrade. The department is revisiting the concept design.

No public comment.

D. Ad Hoc Japan Center Malls Technical Committee

(Chair Lori Yamauchi)

1. Committee Updates

Lori Yamauchi reported on the goals and working assumptions for the future development of the Japan Center Malls, how to involve community and stakeholders in the discussion, options for moving forward, and how to best approach developers interested in the community. The Japantown blocks are bound by Laguna St. on the east and Fillmore St. on the west, Geary Blvd on the south, and Post St. on the north.

She spoke with Robert Sakai, one of the Co-Chairs of the Covenants committee. She will be sending over minutes from the Ad Hoc Committee to the Covenants committee. Sandy requested that the slides presented at the committee be labeled "Draft - For Discussion Only" to avoid any misunderstandings. Sandy also explained the differences between the Covenants Subcommittee and the work of the Technical Committee.

No public comment.

E. Nominations Committee

(Chair Benh Nakajo)

1. Recommendation to approve Benh Nakajo as Chair of the Nominations Committee

Benh Nakajo reported that, in November, the President submitted to the board nominations for members of this committee: Lucy Fisher, Richard Jue, and Benh Nakajo. The board approved these committee members. The board was asked to approve the appointment of Benh as the committee chair.

It was moved by Gary Barbaree and seconded by Lucy Fisher to approve Benh Nakajo as Chair of the Nominations Committee. The motion passed unanimously.

No public comment.

2. Recommendation to approve Emily Nichols as a new JTF Board Member

Benh presented Emily Nichols' strong qualifications to the board (Attachment F). Emily Nichols expressed her excitement at the opportunity to engage with the community in a deeper way. Emily Nichols was placed in a Zoom waiting room while a vote took place with the board members.

Board member David Takashima raised a question on whether the committee considered a potential conflict of interest in appointing the General Manager of the Hotel Buchanan to the board. The committee reviewed the situation thoroughly. Given Emily's engagement as a board member of the Japantown Community Benefits District and her active involvement in many Japantown-serving meetings, the committee decided to move forward with the nomination.

The vote on the motion was held and the motion passed with 17 in favor and 1 objection. No public comment.

3. Recommendation to approve Jaclyn Funasaki as a new JTF Board Member

Benh presented Jaclyn Funasaki's strong qualifications to the Board (Attachment G). Jaclyn thanked the Nominations Committee and expressed her strong commitment to Japantown and her goal of leveraging her relationship with Japanese businesses. Jaclyn Funasaki was placed in Zoom waiting room during voting by Board members.

The vote on the motion was held and the motion passed unanimously. No public comment.

Benh thanked past Nominations Committee members, Sandy Mori and Mark Moriguchi, and present members, Lucy Fisher and Richard Jue. He announced the board is now full, with 21 members.

VI. Update from the President/Executive Committee

1. Update on JTF Board Retreat

Sandy gave an update on the JTF Board Retreat. The Executive Committee is looking into a half-day retreat, a Friday, or Saturday in May 2022. They are also looking into potential facilitators, and a venue space. The agenda items are still in discussion.

No public comment.

VII. 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 comment.

VIII. Announcements.

- Dr. Emily Murase announced that the Board of Supervisors passed the Executive Order 9066 commemoration on February 15, 2022. She thanked Board Member Alice Kawahatsu, Board member Rosalyn Tonai, Paul Osaki and community members who testified at the meeting and everyone who supported the resolution.

- Richard Hashimoto reported that he met with former Executive Director Steve Nakajo who was touched by the board's appreciation gift.

- Richard also reported that the Cherry Blossom Festival will be held on a smaller scale. The parade is canceled, and the arts and crafts fair will not be on the Buchanan Mall, but along Post Street. There will be a limited number of food booths and information booths on Post Street. Yuki Nishimura clarified they will have the Peace Plaza stage. The festival is scheduled for 2 weekends: April 9 & 10, and April 16 & 17. There will be an in-person Queen Program at the Kabuki Theater.

- Alice Kawahatsu and Rosalyn Tonai announced there will be the 80th Anniversary of the Day of Remembrance on Saturday, February 19 at 5 pm. Dr. Emily Murase will be the emcee. Jon Osaki will be the keynote speaker. The Clifford I. Uyeda Humanitarian Award will be awarded to Karen Kai and the late Bob Rusky.

- Alice also announced that the multi-racial, interfaith group "We Are One" will be participating in the Chinese New Year Parade on Saturday, February 19.

- Dr. Emily announced that KQED Forum has been showing a half hour segment on incarceration. On February 16, John Tateishi spoke. A final episode will be on TV from 9:30am-10am on Friday, February 18. She encouraged board and community members to listen to the segment.

IX. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 7:47pm.

NEXT BOARD MEETING: Wednesday, March 16, 2022, via zoom meeting.