

**Japantown Task Force Board of Directors Meeting
Minutes**

**Wednesday, August 17, 2022
6:00 pm – via Zoom Meeting**

(Zoom Invitation is in the board packet email and at the bottom of this agenda)

Board Members: Interim President Glynis Nakahara, Interim Vice President Lori Yamauchi, Gary Barbaree, Jeremy Chan, Lucy Fisher, Scott Hamaguchi, Richard Hashimoto, Daryl Higashi, Richard Jue, Alice Kawahatsu, Steven Santa Maria, Mark Moriguchi, Benh Nakajo, Emily Nichols, Jon Osaki, Beau Simon & David Takashima.

Absent (Excused): Jaclyn Funasaki, Yuki Nishimura & Rosalyn Tonai

Staff: Emily Murase PhD, Lauren Nosaka, Melissa Bailey Nihei, Susie Kagami & Max Nihei.

Guests: Karen Kai, Momoka Kojima, Hidehiro Takai, Michiko Yamada & Ayae Yoshimoto.

I. Call to Order - Interim President Glynis Nakahara

Recognition of a Quorum and Agenda Approval*

Interim President Glynis Nakahara called the meeting to order at 6:02 pm.

Beau Simon moved, Gary Barbaree seconded a motion to approve the [agenda](#) with an amendment to Item E to include a formal report by Nominations Committee Chair Benh Nakajo on the process for officer and board member nominations. There was no public comment. The motion passed unanimously.

II. Approval of Minutes - Interim President Glynis Nakahara

[Minutes of the JTF Board meeting of June 15, 2022*](#)

Scott Hamaguchi moved, Alice Kawahatsu moved to approve the June 15, 2022 minutes. There was no public comment. The minutes were approved unanimously.

III. Update from the Executive Director Emily Murase, PhD

A. Report by Director Emily Murase

Emily opened by introducing Hidehiro Takai and Momoka Kojima, interns from Japan volunteering at JTF for 3 weeks. They are both students at Chuo University in Tokyo. Hidehiro is studying law and Momoka is studying psychology. Emily made two corrections to the Executive Director's Report. She corrected the link to the [JTF letter to the Planning Commission](#) and updated the [Japantenna Report](#).

She reviewed updated budget documents. The board will be asked to approve the updated budget at the September 21 board meeting. Per the [updated income document](#), she reported that JTF received one-time funds as follows: an additional \$50K from the Office of Economic and Workforce Development, and another \$50K from Supervisor Dean Preston's office as a result of advocacy by the API Council. The Mayor's Office of Housing and Community Development approved the carryforward of \$69,479.81 in unspent funds from the pandemic

years. JTF was also awarded a \$30K grant from the Consulate of Japan to support the Japantenna project, and \$5K grant from the Japan Center Garage in support of the KOHO Community Obon. The total increase amounts to \$154,479.81.

Per the [updated expense document](#), she reported proposed allocations as follows: \$58,519.18 in staffing and fringe benefits (including backfilling the Administrative Assistant position vacated by Brandon Quan), \$48,512.65 in contractor services (\$15,080 for Small Business Coordinator, January to June 2023), \$25K for the BrownThought Academy Social Media Internship, \$2100 for consultant work on connecting farmers to Japantown, and \$6,332.65 for the Japantenna Coordinator. Additional proposed allocations include \$5,000 for the Community Obon, \$27,000 for Japantenna per the grant, and \$15,447.98 in fiscal agency fees. The total increases matches the increases in income. Board members are asked to review the budget documents closely in preparation for a vote in September.

Emily concluded her verbal report by expressing condolences to Cultural District Manager Susie Kagami and her family for the loss of Susie's grandfather. She has been in Hawaii, with family, making the necessary arrangements.

B. Report by Cultural District Program Coordinator Melissa Bailey Nihei
Melissa reported on both the June 23 KOHO Launch Party and the August 6 Community Obon. The Koho Launch Party featured 14 Japanese American vendors and 8 performers that attracted 1,276 guests. Read the [full report](#) here. The Community Obon was also highly successful. Cultural District Manager Susie Kagami explained that the event was a collaboration with the Nihonmachi Street Fair, the Buddhist Church of San Francisco, and many other groups. Special thanks to Alice Kawahatsu who organized a JTF outreach booth for the Nihonmachi Street Fair.

C. CONSENT CALENDAR

1. Approval of Contracts*

- 1) Japantenna Grant, \$30K
- 2) Japantenna Fukuoka Project, \$17,902
- 3) Small Business Liaison/Virtual Town Hall Planner, \$15,080
- 4) BrownThought Academy, \$25K
- 5) Administrative Assistant Position, \$70,600 (salary + benefits)

2. Approval of Legislative/Ballot Positions*

- 1) API Council support for CA Prop 31 to Protect Kids from Candy-Flavored Tobacco

Emily explained that to comply with Section 10.2. of the JTF By-Laws of November 2021, she is submitting contracts for approval on a Consent Calendar. She is also submitting for approval a support position on CA Prop 31 to Protect Kids from Candy-Flavored Tobacco.

Section 10.2. of JTF By-Laws: Expense and Contract Approvals

All expense items which exceed \$10,000 in value, contracts entered into on behalf of the Corporation which exceed \$10,000 in aggregate value, and contracts that exceed 6 months in length (including employment contracts), must be authorized by the Board of Directors. Board authorization may come in the form of an annual budget and business plan approval process. Contracts with aggregate value at or below \$10,000 may be executed by the Executive Director without prior consent of the Board.

For a consent calendar, the standard procedure is to approve all of the items without discussion. However, if a board member would like to discuss an item, it can be severed. Any board member can ask that an item be severed for discussion. All other items are subject to a vote without discussion. Then the severed item will be discussed and put to a vote.

*ACTION: To approve all items on the consent calendar without discussion.

Glynis asked if any board members would like any items severed from the Consent Calendar. Daryl Higashi asked that the following items be severed.

- 1) Japantenna Grant, \$30K
- 2) Japantenna Fukuoka, \$17,902
- 5) Administrative Assistant Position, \$70,600 (salary + benefits)

Richard Hashimoto moved, Mark Moriguchi seconded a motion to adopt the remaining items on the Consent Calendar. There was no public comment. The motion passed unanimously.

Daryl expressed concerns about budgetary shortfalls in the Japantenna project and asked for more details about the \$30K grant from the Japanese Foreign Ministry. Emily explained that, following the successful pilot project of Japantenna Kagoshima last fall, the Japantenna Steering Group (herself, JTF Board Member Jackie Funasaki, former JTF Board Member Kenta Takamori, Tatsuki Tomita, and Kim Kolbe) received interest from four additional regions to host exhibits in 2022 as follows:

Japantenna Fukuoka: July 22-24, 29-31

Japantenna Craft Valley: October 1-2, October 7-9

Japantenna Oshu: October 21-23

Japantenna Kobe: October 28-30, November 4-6, 11-13

One condition of Japantenna, as a project of JTF, is that Japantenna exhibits be self-funding and not impact JTF's overall finances. A budget was developed for each region. The Japanese government decided to subsidize the Japantenna exhibits with a \$30K grant to JTF to offset rent, staffing, and other exhibit expenses. Daryl asked who is engaging with Japanese prefectures. Emily responded that Tatsuki Tomita leads this effort and works closely with staff from the Japanese Consulate. Emily explained that the grant was originally on the July board meeting for approval but due to lack of quorum that meeting was canceled and she made the decision to proceed with the grant.

Benh Nakajo asked whether the Japanese grant was one-time or ongoing. Emily responded that the grant is one-time. Discussion focused on the Japantenna model where by expenses would be covered by the Japanese Foreign Ministry and the prefectures. Despite some initial concerns, there was no budgetary shortfall in the pilot project last November. Jon Osaki stated that the role of the Executive Director is to make decisions. He recommended using a process other than full board approval when quick decisions have to be made. Alice suggested that next time if there are contracts that need to be approved, the board be informed even if it cannot have a business meeting due to lack of quorum. Daryl stated that the board was aware that there were ineligible expenses in last year's pilot program, including those incurred for a welcome reception. He recognized the efforts of Richard Hashimoto who secured a \$20,000 grant from the San Francisco Council of District Merchants which covered ineligible expenses. Daryl agreed that the board should not micro manage the project. He wanted the board to be fully aware that Japantown Task Force's name is being used as part of Japantenna. Beau Simon noted that the difference between the 2022 Japantenna Project and last fall's Japantenna pilot project was that funding for the pilot project was not assured. Emily explained that unlike City grants that permit month-to-month invoicing and grant funding withdrawals, Japanese grants do not pay until near project completion.

Jeremy echoed Alice's sentiment that the board should meet to exchange information even if business cannot be conducted. Emily explained that a certain threshold of city funding that JTF has surpassed, organizations are required to follow the City's Open Meeting Laws and Sunshine Ordinance and cannot meet as a body without quorum and public notice.

Jeremy Chan moved, Rich Hashimoto seconded the motion to approve the severed items.

- 1) Japantenna Grant, \$30K
- 2) Japantenna Fukuoka, \$17,902.

The motion passed unanimously.

Daryl asked for further details about the Administrative Assistant and whether the Executive Committee reviewed the proposal. Emily explained that the position is not new, but a backfill for the position that Brandon Quan vacated. Originally, she was unsure if the position could be reinstated due to a structural deficit. However, carryforward funds will keep the JTF budget balanced this year and next fiscal year. The additional one-time funding has meant that the proposed position can be a two-year term limited position. Glynis confirmed that this was reported to the Executive Committee. Scott Hamaguchi stated that he would like to move forward with a vote.

David Takashima moved, Steven Santa Maria seconded a motion to approve the Administrative Assistant position. There was no public comment. The motion was approved unanimously.

V. Committee Reports - Committee Chairs

- A. Land Use/Transportation Committee (Co-chairs Glynis Nakahara/Jeremy Chan)
 1. Committee Updates from Thursday, July 14, 2022 & Thursday, August 11, 2022
Next meeting: Thursday, September 8, 2022

Jeremy reported that the committee will be reviewing the proposed ½ cent transportation sales tax measure on the November ballot. A working group of the Land Use/Transportation Committee has been convened to conduct this review. Susie and Jeremy attended a CalCore convening on community land trusts in Fresno. The [full report](#) is in the board packet. The second convening will be held in Oakland and a final convening will be held in Los Angeles. As part of the program, JTF has been assigned a consultant technical assistance. Jeremy reported that the committee drafted a [letter that was sent to the Planning Commission](#) on the Housing Element. Discussion focused on the State of California's continued criticism of San Francisco for missing housing production targets.

- B. Cultural Heritage Sustainability Committee (Co-Chairs Lucy Fisher/Gary Barbaree)
 - Committee Update from Monday, August 1, 2022
Next meeting: Monday, October 3, 2022

1. Pagoda Landscaping at Japanese Tea Garden

Lucy reported that the pagoda renovation is proceeding and that the scaffolding on the Japanese Tea Garden Pagoda will come down in a month. As reported in the committee, the internationally renowned landscape architect Hoichi Kurisu who designed the Portland Japanese Garden and many others across the country and Japan, was selected by competitive RFP to design the Pagoda Plaza surrounding the renovated pagoda. She requested a letter in support of the Pagoda Plaza Project from the JTF to the Recreation and Parks Commission by a September 1 deadline. Lucy will submit a draft letter to the Executive Committee to review the proposed letter.

2. Wakasa Monument outreach and presentation to committee

In June and in August, the committee heard presentations from the Wakasa Memorial Committee and the Topaz Museum about the handling of a newly discovered rock monument that Topaz inmates erected in memory of James Wakasa, a San Francisco resident who was fatally shot while walking his dog by a prison guard. Camp authorities ordered the removal of the monument which lay buried on the prison grounds until fall of 2020 when National Park Service archaeologists discovered it. In a highly controversial move, the Topaz Museum had the monument dug up without professional staff. In an effort to garner public input on the future of the monument, the Topaz Museum conducted [outreach events, in-person and virtual](#). Lucy attended the second in-person event held in San Francisco on August 13. Unfortunately, the meeting broke down due to conflicts among participants. Lucy determined that the issue is extremely divisive and recommended that the Task Force refrain from further action at this time.

ACTION: The Cultural Heritage Sustainability Committee recommends that the JTF board send a letter to the Topaz Museum and the Wakasa Memorial Committee regarding the future of the Wakasa Monument*

Jeremy expressed that he would have preferred to be notified about the committee co-chairs decision to remove the action from board consideration. Gary Barbaree suggested that the committee could continue discussing and monitoring the item.

4. [Hokka Nichi Bei Kai GoFundMe](#) program to raise money for capital improvements
Lucy and Gary announced that the Northern California Japanese American Association/Hokka Nichi Bei Kai has launched a fundraising page to raise money for building improvements.

5. Upcoming Meetings

Lucy stated that due to the Labor Day Holiday on Monday, September 5, the September committee meeting is cancelled. The Co-Chairs have invited Dr. Janet Nagamine of Hikari Farms to give a presentation about her family farm at the October 3 meeting.

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

1. Committee Updates from Tuesday, July 26, 2022

Next meeting: Tuesday, August 23, 2022

Jon reported that the next Peace Plaza Committee meeting will be held on Tuesday, August 23, 2022. He invited everyone to participate in a [virtual community briefing](#) on an updated renovation design and timeline scheduled for Tuesday, September 20, 2022, 6:30-7:30 pm. There will be a press conference at the Peace Plaza held earlier in the day, featuring Assemblymember Phil Ting's announcement of new state funding to cover much of a projected shortfall caused by rising construction costs.

DISCUSSION

Discussion focused on whether federal funds have been allocated to the project. Jon reported that Speaker Pelosi has made a public commitment to secure federal funds but the status is not known at this time. If the federal money does not come through, the Recreation and Parks Department would cover the remaining \$2M shortfall.

The board discussed the possibility of needing to reduce the scope or size of the project given runaway cost overruns. Jon stated that there is an upcoming design stage called "value engineering" where decisions about scope and size will have to be made. It has been the co-chairs position that the Department of Recreation and Park not cut corners or skimp on

materials. Compared to the past renovation of the Peace Plaza that was unsatisfactory by several measures, this time, the community is fully engaged in the process. The Department of Recreation and Parks has stated publicly and repeatedly that staff members are focused on designing as close to the 2019 Peace Plaza Vision Plan as possible that was developed by a broad-based community effort, including three community meetings.

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

1. Committee Updates from Monday, July 11, 2022

Next meeting: Monday, September 12, 2022.

Lori Yamauchi reported that Daryl Higashi chaired the July meeting in her place. Joyce Oishi presented on the California Environmental Quality Act and its relevance to Japantown.

2. Upcoming Meetings

The August meeting was canceled. The next meeting is scheduled for Monday, September 12, 2022

E. Nominations Committee (Chair Benh Nakajo)

1. ACTION ITEM: Motion, second: To approve the appointments of Glynis Nakahara as Interim President and Lori Yamauchi as Interim Vice President.*

Chair Benh Nakajo reported on the work of the committee which is summarized in a [board document](#).

Beau Simon moved, Lucy Fisher seconded the motion to approve the appointments of Glynis Nakahara as Interim President and Lori Yamauchi as Interim Vice President. The motion was approved unanimously.

Benh further explained the process for the election of board members. He reported that board members whose 3-year term will conclude in December 2022 were as follows:

Daryl Higashi
Mark Moriguchi
Benh Nakajo
Beau Simon
Roselyn Tonai

Benh stated that the by-laws require the Executive Committee to set an Annual Meeting to occur no later than November. The Nominations Committee has opened nominations for the board as of August 17 and will close as of September 21, 2022 (the August and September board meetings). Emily confirmed that the Executive Committee has set the Annual Meeting when the vote for officers and board members will be held for November 16, 2022 (the date of the November board meeting).

VI. Update from the Interim President/Executive Committee

A. Results of the Board Retreat Survey

Glynis stated that the Executive Committee received the board retreat survey results staff has contacted expert board retreat facilitator Jan Masaoka for her availability. Board leadership will get back to the board as soon as possible on the exact date, time, and location.

- B. November General Meeting Board Elections (nominations will be announced in October)

Benh Nakajo reported on this in the Nominations Committee report.

- C. Community condolences to Japan for former Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe's untimely death

ACTION: To send a letter to the Consulate of Japan expressing condolences for the death of former Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe.*

Alice Kawahatsu noted several efforts by community members to mark the tragic death of Former Prime Minister Abe, including signing a book of condolences at the Consulate and a memorial display in the Japan Center West Mall created by community members.

David Takashima moved, Emily Thayer seconded a motion to send a letter of condolence to the Consulate of Japan. The motion was approved unanimously.

- D. ED Check-in/Performance Review

Glynis reported that the Executive Committee is discussing a mid-year performance review of the Executive Director with the goal of making a formal process an annual activity.

- E. Ideas for December Board Activity - Discussion was postponed.

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. - None.

VIII. Announcements

1. Jeremy Chan announced the Saturday, August 20 [Western Addition Music Festival](#).
2. Alice Kawahatsu announced the [We Are One event](#) focused on families and a back-to-school theme also this Saturday, August 20.
3. Emily announced that the Japanese Cultural and Community Center of Northern California will hold its annual fundraiser [Tabemasho](#) from 2-5 pm on September 17, 2022.
4. David Takashima announced that he has come out of retirement to serve as Chief of Staff as a member of the California Legislature. He reported that, after a 7-year absence from working in Sacramento, he has observed a significant increase in Asian Pacific Islander staffers.

IX. Adjournment - Adjourned at 7:52pm.

*May require board action.

Meeting materials distributed to the JTF Board members are available for inspection and copying during regular office hours at the Japanese American Citizens League Building, 1765 Sutter Street, 3rd Floor, prior to the meetings.

Zoom Invitation:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81642631023>

Meeting ID: 816 4263 1023

One tap mobile

+16699009128,,81642631023# US (San Jose)

+13462487799,,81642631023# US (Houston)

NEXT MEETINGS:

Wednesday, September 21, 2022

Wednesday, October 19, 2022

Wednesday, November 16, 2022

Wednesday, December 21, 2022