



## JAPANTOWN PEACE PLAZA COMMITTEE MINUTES

UNION BANK COMMUNITY ROOM  
22 PEACE PLAZA  
TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 7, 2019

### COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:

Jon Osaki, Richard Hashimoto, Sandy Mori, Glynis Nakahara,

### OTHERS PRESENT:

Doug Nelson, Masahiro "Mas" Inoue, Michael DeGregorio, Karen Kai, Alice Kawahatsu, John Dennis (SFPW), Lawrence Cuevas (SFPW), Edward Chin (SFPW) and Danielle Chan (SFPW)

### STAFF PRESENT:

Steve Nakajo

The meeting was called to order at 5:05 p.m.

Since there were new faces at the meeting, the meeting started with a brief self-introduction of attendees.

### • UPDATE ON PEACE PLAZA PLANNING TIMELINE

- As a reference, Jon summarized the timeline prepared by Steve Nakajima (attached to these minutes).
- Jon mentioned that the priority is to obtain a cost estimate by the end of Feb.
- Based on the timeline, the Peace Plaza Project is scheduled to be presented to the Recreation and Park Department (RPD) Commission in late Spring 2019.
- The Board of Supervisors will determine the size of the bond in May.
- October is when the city will start planning process for the park bond.
- Sandy asked Michael if the design has to go to the Arts Commission. Michael will look into it.
- Karen asked for confirmation that the cost estimate will be obtained at end of February and will include materials. Michael confirmed it will be included.
- Doug stated that the materials they are including in their design will be of sound quality unlike the existing materials.
- Michael stated that the project will be a public bid process and will make sure the contractor is experienced and qualified.

### • REVIEW OF CONCEPT DESIGN

- Michael stated from last design charrette and community input, he was incorporated the ideas working with our design consultants, RPD and public works.
- Edward presented a PowerPoint slideshow of the various concepts in the "Wave" design which everyone preferred as the next design of the plaza.
- The slideshow presented a few samples of landscaping, hardscapes and lighting.

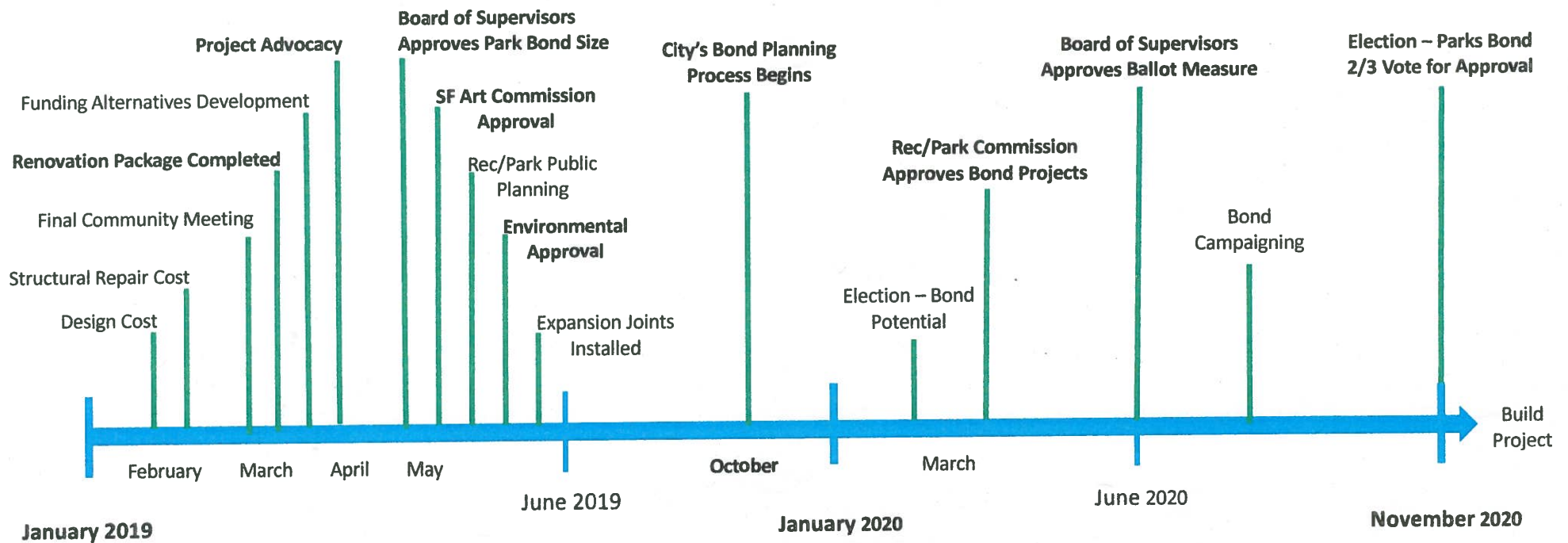
- The new concepts includes elements that attempts to take everyone feedback including festivals.
- The plaza has been broken into six areas Post Street (main entry), two areas adjacent to Post entrance called East and West terraces, pagoda row (behind the pagoda), and Geary St. area.
- Current design for Post Street is open and permeable. The width of the plaza is 160 feet of that, 90 feet is accessible to Buchanan Mall. The original design with the two reflection pools, there was only 20 feet of access. The design team feels that maintaining the three accesses maintaining the current widths is sufficient. In addition, the sidewalks will be widened to allow for additional space.
- At the last community meeting, some people want to see a gateway into the plaza. A torii gate was mentioned but, based on research, a torii gate is generally used as an entrance to a shrine. Also an arch was presented and lanterns on each end of the entry on Post.
- Alice liked the openness of the design but asked about banners which are heavily used during festivals. The design does not seem to include any vertical fixtures that banners can be attached to.
- Edward mentioned that the banners can be placed on the walls of the malls or other areas including Buchanan Mall to further unify the two properties.
- Discussion ensued how banners and vertical elements such as a gateway block the view of the pagoda.
- Glynis stated how certain lighting will enhance the landscaping and that the gateway will take away from the view of the pagoda.
- The East Terrace is a smaller area compared to other areas of the plaza and propose to move the three Japantowns monument to this location. It would also include some seating and correspond with landscape of the surrounding plaza.
- The West Terrace is a larger area that includes moveable seating, tables for festivals and a good location for a water feature. This area would include cherry blossom trees.
- The Pagoda Grove next to the west mall is currently separated by the fountain and is used as a quite space. The original concept design included a lot of landscaping but after examining the use, the design team has reconsidered this design and opened it up.
- The Pagoda permanent stage has been enlarged to 20 feet deep to 40 feet wide based on comments from the community.
- The area also includes a large communal table behind the stage.
- The west mall wall can also include a mural.
- The lower portion of the plaza is being called the Zen Terrace, to include special pavers to simulate a Zen garden feeling for non-event days. This area also serves as a pathway for people using Geary Street that would make it more appealing for those walking to and from the malls.
- The sound wall can also have mural or combined with projection lighting.

- Glynis stated that it would be nice to show how the West Terrace would be used for the upcoming community meeting i.e., stage, terraced seating, walking, etc.
- Jon asked about the back wall against Geary. Edward stated that he had met with a sound engineer and, unfortunately, a back wall is needed as a sound barrier from the traffic noise from Geary during event performances.
- Karen mentioned that the west ramp from Post Street is not ADA compliant but the east ramp is. Also the metal “heiwa” (peace) sculpture on the south wall is important to retain in the new design.
- Steve expressed his concern for the walkways to be ADA compliant and not a tripping hazard like the Buchanan Mall.
- Glynis mentioned that the proposed stage may impede on the total surface area limiting the seating area. Edward moved to slide that shows the seating capacities for each design. In the Wave design, it does not decrease the seating but increases it by moving the seating to face west instead of southwest.
- Jon pointed out that the proposed stage is designed to alleviate event producers from renting a costly portable stage which should be pointed out at the community meeting but can still accommodate a rental stage if they desire.
- Lawrence mentioned that the proposed stage is more accessible from Post side instead of the current stage which you must go down to the lower plaza to access to activate the entire use of the plaza.
- The proposed overall design is to have a circular design that would have more accessible use of the plaza.
- Mas stated that by moving the permanent stage north towards Post St., there will not be a need to keep the existing stage underneath the pagoda so it opens that area up.
- Discussion on the stage ensued and to prepare the design team for the community meeting, it is important that all probable questions from the public are discussed.
- To make Geary St. more appealing, a design team came up with a shoji screen design or to paint a mural on the garage wall to continue up to the sound wall.
- In addition to the wall, the design team will include to install another set of stairs into the plaza similar to the original design since there will be more use from the Geary Bus Rapid Transit project that will include a crosswalk on Buchanan with a bulb-out.
- Steve mentioned that a visual design would help at the community meeting. All agreed including the need for a sound wall from Geary.
- Since there are a series of meetings scheduled in March, John asked if we had a consensus on moving with this plan or are we still requesting design alternatives just he knows where the design process is at.
- Alice commented from a marketing perspective, the design should signify that the plaza is an expression of the community.
- Glynis asked about the eternal flame. John replied that the flame is not in the proposed design but will look at alternatives to retain it if others wanted.

- Steve reminded all that it is important that we keep our momentum going in view of the 2020 bond process.
  - Karen mentioned that the eternal flame has a history and meaning and would like to retain that element in the new design.
  - Jon stated that the outcome of the design is from past community meetings and that the community had input in the design including the numerous surveys that had influence and resulted in the proposed design.
  - Mas expressed the importance to convey the tie between Buchanan Mall and the plaza. He also mentioned that he would like to incorporate and propose a water feature.
  - Jon asked how the next community meeting should be conducted.
  - Alice recommended that since we have established areas of the design and have already conducted community input, we should just put out the designs from the feedback received. Set time limits for each section including discussions “speed dating”.
  - Designate translators for the next community meeting.
- **PREPARING FOR BOND COMMUNITY INPUT PROCESS**
    - Since the plaza design is a community driven process, Jon mentioned that the community has to be involved in the community input process and not just task force board members to include a broader base.
- **THIRD COMMUNITY MEETING**
    - March 19, 2019 at 6:00 p.m. at the JCCCNC Issei Memorial Hall. Michael will prepare and post notices and JTF staff will send to their mailing list when notice is prepared.
- **OTHER BUSINESS**
    - None
- **GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENT**
    - None
- **NEXT MEETING**
    - Next committee meeting will be held on March 26 at 5 p.m. at the Union Bank Community Room and will go back to the regular schedule of the fourth Tuesdays of each month.

**ADJOURN: 6:44 P.M.**

## Japantown Peace Plaza Renovation Project Timeline – 2/7/19



*Japantown Peace Plaza Renovation Project Objective:  
Renovate the San Francisco Japantown Peace Plaza with sufficient funds, community involvement, designed with Japanese and Japanese-American aesthetics, and exceeding structural standards. Target funding 2020 Bond.*