

Cultural Heritage & Sustainability Committee Agenda
Monday, February 7, 2022
5:30pm – via Zoom

Committee Members: Gary Barbaree, Jeremy Chan, Lucy Fisher, Benh Nakajo, David Takashima, Rosalyn Tonai.

JTF Board Members: Sandy Mori, Glynis Nakahara, Yuki Nishimura, Daryl Higashi, Richard Hashimoto

JTF Staff Members: Melissa Bailey Nihei, Dr. Emily Murase, Max Nihei

Guests: Judy Hamaguchi, Tomo Hirai, Emily Nichols, Karen Kai, Sheridan Tatsuno

I. Call to order

Committee Co-chairs Gary Barbaree and Lucy Fisher explained that they will be sharing the governance role. Gary stated that he would be facilitating tonight's meeting.

II. Approval of Agenda

Lucy moved, Jeremy Lee seconded approval of the agenda.
The agenda was adopted without objection.

III. Approval of Minutes

Lucy moved, Jeremy seconded approval of the December 6, 2022 minutes.
There were no amendments to the minutes.
The minutes were adopted without objection.

IV. Staff reports

A. Update from President Sandy Mori

Sandy stated that she did not have a report this month.

B. Update from Executive Director Emily Murase

Emily reported that Kinmon Gakuen board member Richard Hashimoto invited her and other Japantown leaders to meet with the Kinmon Gakuen board a few weeks ago. Emily noted that Richard had arranged for Lucy to also meet with his board at the end of last year and that Lucy reported on her meeting at last month's meeting. Japantown leaders are exploring opportunities to partner with the Kinmon Gakuen board to provide support and assistance in the face of major renovations required to get the building up to code.

C. Update from Cultural District Project Manager Susie Kagami

Susie had a conflict tonight and asked Melissa Bailey Nihei to provide a report on the Cultural District. Melissa stated that JTF submitted a grant application in response to the Japantown Area Economic Vitality program of the City's Office of Economic and Workforce Development with a maximum award of \$500,000 and up to 2 awardees. The grant would cover additional staffing and programming for the Cultural District. Melissa also reported that Susie and the Cultural District Team are working on the branding of the Japantown Cultural District, one of eight cultural districts funded by the Mayor's Office. The cultural districts together distribute a quarterly newsletter and maintain a website.

David Takashima asked if the JTF board will have an opportunity to review the branding of the Cultural District. Melissa stated that she would check with Susie. Emily Murase responded that this would depend on the committee's level of interest in allocating time for this.

David also asked how much renovation of Kinmon Gakuen is expected to cost in today's dollars. Richard stated that according to a report that was completed around four years ago, the renovation would cost \$7M, not including blueprints, project management, permits, and other expenses. He expressed that today's cost could be as much as \$25M. He shared that he plans to meet with former Planning Commissioner Bill Sugaya to discuss an update to the initial report on what it would cost to bring the building up to code.

V. Unfinished Business

A. Review of Japantenna Project*

Made possible through a grant from the Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Japantenna Holiday Shopping Campaign was conducted over four weekends (Fridays - Sundays) in November - December, 2021 and hosted nearly 6,000 visitors.

The Japantenna Steering Group forwarded the following documents to the committee for the final evaluation:

- 1) Final Report to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs
- 2) Photos of the Japantenna Holiday Shopping Campaign
- 3) Details of Council of District Merchants Association Grant

DISCUSSION

Gary was very happy to see the number of people willing to volunteer for the project. He recognized that, due to the last minute nature of the funding, there was some scrambling to get the project in motion. Emily acknowledged that managing volunteers was a huge part of the process. Emily pointed out that one of the anticipated benefits of the project was the enthusiasm of high school students studying Japanese and the Kagoshima Prefectural Association members who volunteered at the storefront.

Lucy asked if the Japantenna Steering Committee had spoken to Kim Ina who was hired on to manage the project. Emily responded absolutely yes and expressed that Kim was a tremendous asset to the team. She was extremely organized and had excellent rapport with the volunteers, especially the high school students.

There was a question about whether or not the video of Japantenna was completed. Emily Murase (since Emily Nichols was in attendance) replied that the videographer is currently occupied with other projects (including getting married!), so has not yet completed the video.

David Takashima commended the Japantenna Steering Group and others who worked on the project. He, his spouse, and sister-in-law all volunteered for the project and found the experience to be very rewarding. One suggestion he had was for Japantenna to provide print brochures about the prefecture and its crafts, food, and people. He hopes that there will be additional prefectures. He urged the committee to continue the sponsorship.

Daryl Higashi stated that the project came together very quickly. He was interested in lessons learned and what could be improved in future. He noted that Japan has many prefectures and was very happy to see Kagoshima be the first. He asked for details on the budget and expenditures. Glynis Nakahara asked that the final review be shared with the rest of the board. She mentioned that her young adult daughter enjoyed volunteering for the project.

Board members offered the following ideas:

1. Reaching out to San Jose Japantown groups and religious and cultural groups located in the East Bay.
2. Expanding the inclusion of the younger generation.
3. Reinforcing the connections with Japan through, for example, the JET Alumni group.
4. Ensuring proper planning time.
5. Creating a checklist for outreach.

A concern was raised about a board member whose company was involved in the Japantenna project, posing a possible conflict of interest. Discussion focused on the fact that there was no evidence of malicious intent. One response could be to document board actions in a memorandum for file. The matter will be forwarded to the Executive Committee.

Public Comment

Karen Kai expressed that she didn't see a conflict of interest since the Japantenna Steering Group developed and executed the project.

Board President Sandy Mori expressed appreciation to JCYC, the fiscal agent for the project. She noted that JCYC had to cover a substantial number of expenses upfront. Reimbursement from the Japanese government is pending.

Rosalyn Tonai expressed that it is important to identify specific achievements and outcomes from the Japantenna project, including merchants that benefited from the shopping campaign.

Sandy stated that the goal of Japantenna was to bring more foot traffic to Japantown and to create opportunities for shopping local.

The challenge of undertaking a Nara pop-up in a very short turnaround time was discussed. It was mentioned that SF76, a retailer on the Buchanan Mall, has picked up the Nara pop-up which is currently on display.

Lucy moved, David seconded a motion to “consider sponsoring future Japantenna proposals by the JTF. “

Discussion: A board member asked if a dollar amount is attached to the motion. The answer was “no.” Another board member expressed concern about outreach to merchants and the inability to purchase products in the pilot project with Kagoshima.

A member of the public was concerned that it sounds like Japantenna Committee is a separate body, and asked if board members have discussed management issues with the Japantenna Steering Group. She stated that sponsorship should be defined and worked out with the Steering Group before taking formal action. Emily Murase stated that Lucy’s phrasing of the motion was intentional and not meant to open discussion on the process or management of the project, just to express JTF support for Japantenna Steering Committee to continue the work.

Rosalyn asked whether or not the motion is for the CHSC or the full JTF Board. Gary clarified this motion would be brought to the full board.

Judy expressed disappointment that Kenta Takamori was not here tonight and expressed her support for Glynis and Emily, and expressed concern around what information is being withheld.

Glynis asked if the final report will be shared with the rest of the JTF Board. Gary clarified that tonight’s meeting and minutes would serve as the final report and presentation and that he is happy to answer any additional questions offline.

Jeremy proposed an amendment of the motion’s phrasing. Lucy approved the amendment of the motion to state that “CHSC recommends that JTF continue to work with the Japantenna Steering Committee to support future Japantenna proposals.”

The motion was adopted unanimously.

VI. New Business

A. Cultural Heritage Sustainability Committee Ideas for Y2022 Priorities: Identifying Community Assets

Gary expressed that he would like the committee to develop a work plan for the coming year. He suggested that JTF could play a role in building the capacity of non-profits that are cultural assets. The first step would be to identify these cultural assets.

Lucy summarized cultural assets that were reviewed last year.

1. National Japanese American Historical Society (NJHAS)
2. Seizo Oka collection at the JCCNC
3. Japanese American National Library
4. Hokka Nichi Bei Kai
5. Japanese Benevolent Society (Jikkei Kai).

Gary sought feedback from the committee on how best to proceed. He proposed that at the next meeting, the committee brainstorm cultural assets. Then, the committee could make contact with these organizations and offer support. Last year, the committee focused on learning about identified community archives and invited the four community organizations with archives to give presentations. Committee members and the public were invited for a tour of the Japanese Benevolent Society's Japanese Cemetery in Colma.

Discussion focused on the need to define how JTF can support these organizations. Rosalyn recused herself from the discussion.

Gary suggested that this could be the focus of the next few committee meetings. Glynis Nakahara suggested that the committee should look at state designation of cultural districts. Emily Murase expressed support for the proposed approach.

VII. Nomination of Yuki Nishimura to CHS Committee*

Gary reported that Yuki Nishimura was elected to membership to the JTF board at the last board meeting.

Lucy moved, Rosalyn seconded a motion to nominate Yuki Nishimura to the Cultural Heritage Sustainability Committee.

The motion passed without objection.

VIII. Public Comment - none

IX. Announcements

- A. Melissa announced that Nikki Yoshikawa, a former consultant to the JTF, will present on the legacy business process on Wednesday evening.
- B. The Day of Remembrance will be held virtually on February 19 at 5 pm.
- C. The launch of the Asian Pacific American Heritage Celebration is scheduled for May 4.

X. Adjournment

Gary entertained a motion to adjourn. The meeting was adjourned at 7:28 pm

Next CHSC meeting Monday, March 7, 2022

Asterisk (*) indicates an action item.

Zoom invitation Details:

Topic: Cultural Heritage Sustainability Committee Meetings

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