

**Japantown Task Force
Board of Directors Meeting**
Wednesday, April 21, 2021
6:00 pm – VIA zoom Meeting

Attendees: Sandy Mori, Jeremy Chan, Benh Nakajo, Alice Kawahatsu, Beau Simon, Daryl Higashi, David Takashima, Gary Barbaree, Jon Osaki, Kenta Takamori, Lori Yamauchi, Lucy Fisher, Mark Moriguchi, Glynis Nakahara, Richard Jue, Rosalyn Tonai

Absent (excused): Scott Hamaguchi

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

Guests: Grace Horikiri, Jaclyn Funasaki, Karen Kai, Melissa Bailey Nihei, Michiko Yamada, Satoe Haile, Steven Santa Maria, Judy Hamaguchi

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 Benh Nakajo to accept the agenda.

The motion passed unanimously.

II. Approval of Minutes

Minutes of the JTF Board meeting of March 17, 2021. (Attachment A)

The minutes were amended to include:

- Under the Update from the Executive Director, Steve Nakajo, on June 22nd, the Board of Supervisors will approve the budget for the 2021-2022 budget.
- Under the Cultural Heritage & Sustainability Committee, Lucy Fisher reported that Rosalyn Tonai gave a presentation on NJAHS and its archives.

It was moved by Lucy Fisher and seconded by Rosalyn Tonai to accept the minutes from the March meeting.

The motion passed unanimously. No public comments.

III. Update from the JTF Executive Committee: Discussion/Possible Decision on General Public Comment

Glynis Nakahara brought up concerns members had on the General Public Comment that was mentioned at the top of the March Board agenda. The Executive Committee met and is recommending to the Board to proceed with the same General Public Comment statement that is at the end of the agenda. The statement reads **“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.”**

Glynis reminded the board and guests that during all JTF board meetings, the public will be invited to speak for up to 2 minutes after each agenda item and invited to speak for up to 2 minutes during the General Public Comment section of the agenda. As to be respectful for everyone’s time, it was mentioned that it will be up to the President’s discretion how much time will be spent answering or commenting on public comment.

It was moved by Jon Osaki and seconded by Richard Hashimoto to proceed with the same General Public Comment statement that is at the end of the agenda.

The motion passed unanimously.

Public Comments:

- The Board should engage with the public on agenda items. If it is a new item, the board should decide whether to answer now or get back to that person.

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

Steve Nakajo provided more information on the Co-Creative Hub Marketing Academy. Desi Danganan of Plinth Agency gave a presentation on a Marketing Academy. The Marketing Academy would be a training for marketing interns and stipends. Plinth Agency held a very successful Marketing Academy with SOMA Filipinas. ED reported that Kintetsu does not have a relationship with 3-D and the Japan Center Mall tenants. Steve met with Colin Gomez (who is still employed by Kintetsu) when Roy Ikeda researched the 3-D Covenants for the Ad Hoc Japan Center Malls Technical Committee meeting.

MOHCD projected the total funds for next fiscal year 21-22 to be \$400,000 total from Prop E funding to Cultural Districts. This means each of the 8 Cultural Districts will receive \$43,000. The Board of Supervisors approved a supplemental budget of \$1.1M to the MOHCD reserve fund for the 8 Cultural Districts, to "backfill" the depletion of the MOHCD reserve. Out of the \$1.1M, each of the 8 Cultural Districts will receive \$137,500 each to cover a portion of the \$230k baseline. For JTF Cultural District, even if we rollover the \$137,500, there still will be a shortfall of \$92,500. Fortunately, in anticipation of possible cuts, staff has identified a projected savings of \$92,500 from the MOHCD one-time funds. This should support our staff, programs and infrastructure support for next fiscal year 21-22.

No public comments.

Update from Strategic Partnership Coordinator, Susie Kagami

Susie Kagami reported on the Future of Jtown focus groups in collaboration with the Consul General of Japan. Jaclyn Funasaki, the Japanese American liaison for Consul General Maeda attended the board meeting. Conversations with Consul General Maeda began in November 2020. The Japanese Consul General wanted to receive input and communication from all generations regarding the future of SF Japantown. Susie gave a preview of the 3 next generation young professionals focus groups that were held in March and April. The participants requested that they would like to keep in contact with JTF by attending JTF Committee meetings, receive weekly emails, and be a part of a private facebook group. As of 4/29/21, 25 out of 29 participants want to stay on and are interested in working with JTF. Suzie will get a list of contact info. Suzie will direct them to the community calendar and link to committee pages/agendas/and zoom links. Committee chairs will try to submit their agendas 3 days before the meetings, so the participants will be aware of what will be discussed. Suzie will provide a more comprehensive report at the May board meeting.

No public comments.

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

The Committee held 3 community meetings, which were the 2nd Climate Action Plan Community Meeting, the 2nd Congestion Pricing meeting, and collaborated with JCD staff on the Housing Element meeting. The Committee is continuing to collaborate with JCD staff and the Planning Department to host a focus group in the future.

SFMTA Crosswalk

Glynis Nakahara reported the tree removal appeal was pulled at the last minute. SFMTA has the green light to proceed with median improvements of the crosswalk.

Geary Repaving

The Geary Repaving between Laguna and Webster started April 21. The entrance to the Japan Center Garage will be closed during that time.

Climate Action Plan Community Meeting

The Climate Action Plan will be publishing a report

Community Meeting on Congestion Pricing

The Congestion Pricing meeting was held on March 26. SFMTA listened to the community's needs. The boundary was on Laguna Street, which cut into Japantown so the San Francisco County Transportation Authority moved the boundary to Van Ness instead.

Pedestrian Safety

The Committee attended a training workshop in March learning how to gather more data on traffic and pedestrian safety. Committee members Alice Kawahatsu and Linda Walsh are looking into the feasibility of an audit.

California College of the Arts (CCA)

A second workshop was held in early April. CCA will finalize and sign the MOU (Memorandum of Understanding).

Parking Meter Hours

Kenta Takamori reported on a plan across the city to extend the hours of parking meters. The proposal does not involve installing new parking meters. It's only about increasing the usage time. Most meters stop at 6pm. The proposal would be to increase the hours from 6pm to 10pm. SFMTA mentioned that they would issue warnings notices first before giving parking tickets. SFMTA is planning to begin the new plan starting this summer.

City Wide Meetings

The city is in the early stages of developing a Transportation Element of its broader outreach plan. Anybody can attend these meetings.

Coalition for Vision Zero

Alice Kawahatsu reported that JTF was asked to be listed on the coalition for Vision Zero in support of Assembly Member David Chiu's new bill AB550. This bill would legalize Automated Speed Enforcement on San Francisco's busiest streets with the highest crash rates. The Executive Committee discussed this topic and decided that it falls within JTF's policy to help San Francisco stay safe.

No public comments.

B. Cultural Heritage Sustainability Committee (Co-chair David Takashima/Lucy Fisher)

1. Recommendation to approve Gary Barbaree as a CHSC member

It was moved by Jon Osaki and seconded by Richard Hashimoto to approve Gary Barbaree as a CHSC member.

The vote passed unanimously. No public comments.

2. Updates on historical collections: The Seizo Oka Collection; upcoming presentations Paul osaki's collection

At the April meeting, Paul Osaki gave a presentation on the Seizo Oka Collection at The Center (JCCNC). The Oka collection consists of many decades of collecting books and articles. Currently it is in deep freeze. It will be in deep freeze until the Fall. Stanford is helping to document. Donna Graves attended the meeting and informed the committee about the Mellon Foundation, a special initiative for community-based archives and offered to help interested groups review this proposal. Rosalyn Tonai volunteered to connect with Donna Graves' on the Mellon Foundation.

The Committee invited the Japanese American National Library to the next meeting in May. Religious groups will be invited for the upcoming meetings.

No public comments.

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

1. Updates

Richard Hashimoto reported that he met with Marien Coss, the new Project Manager for SF Recreation and Parks Department and showed her the conditions around the Peace Plaza. On April 15, Richard met with 5 architects from the Department of Public Works to confirm the Plaza and garage leakage problems. A Peace Plaza Project video is being filmed.

The Committee selected Michael DeGregorio as the Design Consultant between JTF and SF Rec and Park. He will be reviewing the contract. RHAA is still involved in the Peace Plaza as the Community Design Consultants. Masa and Doug are advocates for Japantown.

No public comments.

D. Nominations Committee (Chair Benh Nakajo)

1. Report on Committee Activities

Benh Nakajo reported the Committee met and decided to have a full 21-member board. The Committee is looking into filling the remaining Board member seats as quickly as possible.

The Committee would like to recommend to the Bylaws Committee to clarify the issue of self-nomination.

The Committee has received potential candidates for board members from the JTF board members. As a policy, the Committee requests for JTF board members to approach their potential candidate and ask if they are interested in serving the JTF board before they nominate them to the Committee.

2. Matrix Update

The Committee is working on creating a matrix that is easier to understand and fill out.

No public comments.

VI. Update from the President

Sandy mentioned that Mark Moriguchi, JTF Treasurer and Chair of the Finance Committee, will be working with his committee and with Steve on Quarterly Fiscal Reports.

1. Update on the Ad Hoc Japan Center Malls Technical Committee held on April 12, 2021

Sandy Mori reported that Daryl Higashi gave a presentation on affordable housing and a memo with good resources. Sandy suggested to have a separate Housing Committee as there will be a big push to learn more about this. Question: How does J-town fall into this? Visions of what we want to see. Every 8 years the Housing Element and Community input is updated. Lori Y.: I think a separate conversation is needed on this. Discussion could include tactics and study of need. Jeremy C: This topic is the pillars of JCHESS. However, concerned about the capacity for committee members at this point.

No public comments.

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 comments.

VIII. Announcements.

- Sandy announced that the APA Heritage Kick Off Celebration will be held at the Peace Plaza on May 1st at noon or 1pm. It is by invitation only due to COVID-19.

- Jon Osaki reported that Jtown groups have been meeting to discuss anti-Asian violence and put in preventive measures before anything happens in Japantown. The groups in Japantown are starting to form a coalition. JTF should join the coalition. JCBD is organizing a meeting with the Northern Station Captain Yep to discuss anti-Asian hate.

IX. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 8:06pm.

NEXT BOARD MEETING: Wednesday, May 19, 2021 via zoom meeting.