

**Japantown Task Force  
Board of Directors Meeting**  
Wednesday, May 19, 2021  
6:00 pm – VIA zoom Meeting

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

**Absent (excused):** Daryl Higashi

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

**Guests:** Boku Kodama, Elena Nielsen, Emily Nichols, Grace Horikiri, Jaclyn Funasaki, Joyce Nakamura, Michiko Yamada

**I. Call to Order**

The meeting was called to order at 6:02 p.m. by President Sandy Mori. A quorum was acknowledged.

**Approval of Agenda**

It was moved by Richard Hashimoto and seconded by Lori Yamauchi to accept the agenda.

The motion passed unanimously.

**II. Approval of Minutes**

Minutes of the JTF Board meeting of April 21, 2021. (Attachment A)

The minutes were amended to include:

- Richard Hashimoto attended the April 21 board meeting.
- Under Land Use/Transportation's committee updates on page 3, parking meters hours will increase from 6pm-10pm on Monday through Friday, and then from 12pm-6pm on Sundays.

It was moved by Alice Kawahatsu and seconded by Richard Hashimoto.

The motion passed unanimously. No public comments.

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

Steve Nakajo provided more information on the MOHCD Cultural Districts budget. 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. The \$1.1M will be for next fiscal year, FY 21-22. Out of the \$1.1M, each of the 8 Cultural Districts will receive \$137,500 each to cover a portion of the \$230k baseline. Each Cultural District will go into contract with MOHCD for the \$137,500 after July 1, 2021. In addition, the 8 Cultural Districts are projected to receive \$400,000 from Prop E revenue, meaning that would be \$43,000 for each cultural district. However, MOHCD has not provided any updates on the \$400,000 yet. Fortunately, in anticipation of possible cuts, staff has identified a projected savings of \$92,500 from the MOHCD one-time funds. The Mayor will submit her budget to the Board of Supervisors on June 1. Staff has not heard from Diana Ponce de Leon, our monitor for OEWD funding. For FY20-21, JTF's OEWD budget was cut by \$70,000. If staff does not hear from Diana, staff will begin laying off Steve Nakajo, the Executive Director. May have to take reserve from savings.

No public comments.

**Update from the Japantown Cultural District, Nina Bazan-Sakamoto (Attachment C)**

No public comments.

**Update from Strategic Partnership Coordinator, Susie Kagami (Attachment D)**

Susie Kagami gave a presentation and summary on the Future of Jtown focus groups. She gave a brief overview on the participants, outcomes of the focus groups, and how to keep the participants involved in Japantown. Susie will send a full report to the JTF Board within the next couple of weeks.

No public comments.

**Update from Executive Director of Japantown Community Benefit District (Property Owners in Japantown), Grace Horikiri (Attachment E)**

No public comments.

**IV. Committee Reports**

- A. Land Use/Transportation Committee (Co-chairs Glynis Nakahara/Kenta Takamori)
  - 1. Recommendation that JTF send a letter to SFMTA requesting that extension of parking meter hours be postponed until after more data is collected following the opening of the City and businesses at full capacity.

Glynis Nakahara reported that SFMTA is proposing a pilot project in Japantown and the Upper Fillmore to extend the parking meter hours from 6pm-10pm Monday through Saturday and 12pm-6pm on Sunday. The goal is to create more parking availability. The extended hours were selected due to the high occupancy of cars parked at meters during those hours. The Merchants Association noted that 6 restaurants are in support of the extended parking meter hours. SFMTA's data is from 2012 so the Committee believes more research needs to be done due to the impacts of COVID-19.

It was moved by Lori Yamauchi and seconded by Beau Simon to approve of sending a letter to SFMTA requesting that extension of parking meter hours be postponed until after more data is collected following the opening of the City and businesses at full capacity.

The voted passed with 16 in favor and 1 abstention.

Public comments:

- The meters are not enforced and people don't pay the meters all day.

2. Committee Updates

SFMTA Crosswalk

The appeal for the Geary tree removal was withdrawn so that project is moving forward.

1619 Laguna Street

There was a dwelling on the first floor of 1619 Laguna Street. The zoning administrator approved it and is requiring a tree be planted in front of the building.

Japantown Cultural District

The Committee will be collaborating with the Japantown Cultural District staff for the Housing Element update, as well as the Community Investment Plan or Community Master Plan.

California College of the Arts (CCA)

The CCA project collaboration concluded and a debrief with Christopher Roach and Julia Grinkrug. NJAHS is discussing this project with the Project Lead to display all of the students work at NJAHS.

No public comments.

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

1. Updates on Historical Collections: Japanese American National Library, upcoming presentations

At the May 3 meeting, Karl Matsushita and the Japanese American National Library board gave a presentation on their archives and storage collection. The PowerPoint presentation and additional materials are available on the JTF website under the Cultural Heritage and Sustainability Committee Meetings section. On May 17, co-chair Lucy Fisher attended the Japanese American Religious Federation (JARF) board meeting and will invite them to a CHS Committee meeting to give a presentation. On May 27, CHS Committee will be on a tour of the Hokka Nichibei Kai and see their tea house. This committee will also be hearing about the Japanese Benevolent Society which works with the Japanese Colma Cemetery.

No public comments.

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

1. Updates

Jon Osaki reported the SF Rec and Park Department decided to delay the civic design review of the project before the Arts Commission. The issue was some of studies are still in process. The Community Town Hall is projected to occur in August 2021. Michael DeGregorio was hired as a Design Consultant for the Peace Plaza and is funded by the SF Japantown Foundation Grant. His insight is invaluable to move this project along.

No public comments.

D. Finance Committee (Chair Mark Moriguchi)

1. Updates

Mark Moriguchi is developing a simple format for JCYC to provide information for JTF quarterly reports. JCYC, JTF staff and Mark will work together on these quarterly reports. As JTF has JCYC as a fiscal sponsor, they make sure that funds are not over spent. We will work with the JCYC deadlines to coordinate. There was a question if more help is needed on the Financial committee to get this info in a timely manner for quarterly reporting to the JTF Board.

No public comments.

E. Nominations Committee (Chair Benh Nakajo)

Sandy Mori reported.

1. Update Report on Nomination Activities

The Nominations Committee is working on an interview with a potential board member. The goal is to have 21 board members, which is the maximum number for board members according to the JTF Bylaws. Currently, there are 18 people on the JTF board. The Committee is continuing to research more potential board members.

No public comments.

## **VI. Update from the President/Executive Committee**

Glynis Nakahara reported the JTF Executive Committee signed on to the Vision Bureau Coalition Endorsement for AB550. It is a pilot project to put cameras and traffic lights at intersections where there are car accidents and fatalities.

Sandy Mori reminded the JTF Board that each board member is required to serve on at least 1 committee. There are 2 types of committees: Standing Committees and Working Committees. The Standing Committees are the Executive Committee, Finance Committee, and Nominations Committee. The Working Committees are Land Use and Transportation Committee, Peace Plaza Committee, Cultural Heritage Sustainability Committee, and the Ad Hoc Japan Center Malls Technical Committee.

If someone shows interest in joining a committee, they should reach out to the committee co-chairs. Upon discussion with the committee, their name will be taken up for consideration in the committee agenda and be voted on by the committee members at the monthly committee meeting. If the committee approves, then that consideration will be included in the JTF Board meeting agenda and be voted on by the JTF Board. After the JTF Board approves, that person will be an official committee member. For the AD Hoc Technical Committee, members were chosen for their expertise in areas that will benefit the various aspects in which this committee is working on. It was suggested that the By-laws have more clarification regarding how to join committees.

Susie K. mentioned that she is encouraging the Next generation young professionals at meetings however, they don't have to join a committee, just become familiar with the topics being worked on.

### **1. Update on the Ad Hoc Japan Center Malls Technical Committee held on May 10, 2021**

Sandy reported that the Covenants Committee held a meeting on April 15. It was organized by Paul Osaki. Ted Conrad & Anne Taupier from the Mayor's Office of Economic and Workforce Development has been assigned to work on the issues of the Japantown Malls. Joseph Daneshgar from 3-D Investments, D5 Supervisor Dean Preston and Shelley Caltagirone from the Planning Department were also in attendance. Joseph suggested to create a smaller group of 3-4 people to meet with him and Daniel Bryon, the Asset Manager, on an ongoing basis.

L.Y. questioned who would be on the 3 or 4 person group? It's important that they not claim or tell 3D how to renovate or remodel. They should be a small group that would report out to the larger community.

### **2. Consideration of adding new JTF Board Member Richard Jue to the Ad Hoc Japan Center Malls Technical Committee**

New JTF Board member, Richard Jue expressed interest in becoming a committee member of the Ad Hoc Japan Center Malls Technical Committee.

It was moved by Lucy Fisher and Gary Barbaree to approve new JTF Board Member, Richard Jue to the Ad Hoc Japan Center Malls Technical Committee. The motion passed unanimously.

Richard Jue introduced himself and clarified his skills for joining the committee.

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.**

- Alice Kawahatsu announced the Japanese Benevolent Society of California, Jikei Kai, will hold its annual Memorial Day Service virtually on zoom Monday, May 31, 2021, from 11am to 12 noon. The Consul General of Japan in San Francisco, the Japanese American Religious Federation of San Francisco (JARF), and the Japanese American community of Northern California will join in commemorating 120 years of the Japanese Cemetery in Colma, California.
- Lori Yamauchi announced Dr. Meredith Oda will be presenting a lecture series on the Japantown History Series: Japan and San Francisco during the early Cold War on April 22, 2021.
- Richard Hashimoto announced the Merchants Association will be having a Customer Appreciation month in June. Customers who spent \$100 or more will receive an entry ticket for a raffle that will be held on June 6. There are 50 prizes. The grand prizes will include \$5,000, an iPad, a TV etc. However, this is only open for members who are a part of the Merchants Association. A poster will be posted in front of each member's business.
- Richard also mentioned that Neat Asian Things will be closing on June 15.

### **IX. Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 7:36pm.

NEXT BOARD MEETING: Wednesday, June 16, 2021 via zoom meeting.