

**Japantown Task Force
Board of Directors Meeting**
Wednesday, September 15, 2021
6:00 pm – VIA zoom Meeting

Attendees: Sandy Mori, Jeremy Chan, Glynis Nakahara, Kenta Takamori, Lori Yamauchi, David Takashima, Alice Kawahatsu, Beau Simon, Benh Nakajo, Daryl Higashi, Gary Barbaree, Lucy Fisher, Mark Moriguchi, Richard Hashimoto, Rosalyn Tonai, Scott Hamaguchi, and Steven Santa Maria

Absent (excused): Jon Osaki and Richard Jue

Staff: Steve Nakajo, Lauren Nosaka, Brandon Quan, Susie Kagami, and Max Nihei

Guests: Emily Nichols, Elena Nielsen, Karen Kai, Judy Hamaguchi, Melissa Bailey Nihei, Michiko Yamada, and Nancy Nagano, Greg Villoria

I. Call to Order

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

Approval of Agenda

It was moved by Lucy Fisher and seconded by David Takashima to accept the agenda.

The motion passed unanimously.

II. Approval of Minutes

Minutes of the JTF Board meeting of August 18, 2021. (Attachment A)

It was moved by Richard Hashimoto and seconded by Glynis Nakahara to approve the August 18, 2021 minutes.

The motion passed with unanimously. No public comments.

Minutes of the JTF Special Board meeting of September 7, 2021 (Attachment B)

Public comments:

- Cathy Inamasu of Nihonmachi Little Friends spoke and her comments should be noted.

It was moved by Lucy Fisher and seconded by Lori Yamauchi to approve the September 7, 2021 minutes.

The motion passed unanimously.

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

Steve Nakajo noted that he will resign from JTF on December 31, 2021. The Executive Committee will discuss the next steps on selecting a new Executive Director. Steve Nakajo mentioned that on September 3rd he announced his resignation to the JTF Executive Committee during their meeting.

No public comments.

Update from the Japantown Cultural District, Susie Kagami (Attachment D)

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. Committee Updates

Buchanan Hotel Sale Proposal

At the August board meeting, the JTF Board of Directors decided to oppose the sale of the hotel. Board and Committee member Lori Yamauchi drafted a statement (Attachment F). The statement and cover letter will be sent to Mayor Breed and Department of Housing and Supportive Housing Director Shireen McSpadden. It will also be posted on the JTF email list server, JTF Facebook and Instagram pages. President Mori and 7 community leaders will meet with Mayor Breed and her staff as well as HSH staff. She will report out next month on the meeting.

Public Comments:

- It is not true that Japantown's physical footprint has been reduced to 4 blocks. These 4 blocks just include the commercial core (stores). Please change the sentence that Japantown physical footprint has been reduced to a tenth of its size from 40 blocks to its 4-block commercial core.

Comments and replies from board: Ok to amend the letter to read with above description of that the 4 blocks are the commercial core. Director GB will hold the JARF meeting and will share this doc. with the organization as well.

1559 Post Street, the Hosoda Building

Satoru and Carolyn Hosoda and their architect gave a presentation to the LandUse Committee meeting on 10/9/21. The plans were shared on adding 1 story to the existing Hosoda building on the Northeast corner of Laguna and Post St. The commercial space will remain the same. It is consistent with the design guidelines. They will add additional lights for safety and plant cherry trees in front. Original back office will be used as parking and they will have a low-profile solar roof. Director AK is neighbors to this property and has given them information about communicating with the manager at Nihonmachi Terrace.

1825 Post Street

Marufuku Ramen is expanding into the Chato storefront in the Kinokuniya building and increasing their dining capacity. Chato is moving into the former Negishi Jewelry storefront also located in the Kinokuniya building.

Osaka Way

Osaka Way funds will be channeled through the Mayor's Office of Economic and Workforce Development (MOEWD) instead of Department of Public Works. Options on how the funds are channeled are being researched.

The next Committee meeting is October 14. Kansai Uchida from SFMTA will be presenting. SFMTA is seeking feedback on proposed bus routes. It will affect the 2 and 3 lines.

No public comments.

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

1. Update from Kenta Takamori regarding the Japantenna Project
Kenta Takamori reported his team is targeting November to December for the pilot Japantenna project. It'll be a 4 week display for 3 days per week on the Kagoshima Prefecture. They are in the process of applying for a grant with the Japan Ministry of Foreign Affairs and hopes to finish the grant application in the next 1 to 2 weeks. The grant has to be signed by Executive Director, Steve Nakajo.

His team has been recruiting more volunteers to help out. Kim Kolbe has joined and has been providing her marketing skills and retail experiences. Thanks to Steve's recommendation, 3-D Investments has provided Suite 320 in the Japan Center West Mall for the venue. Suite 320 is across the street from Mochill Donuts. The Kagoshima governor will send packaged food and sample food products for the project. Kenta's team will check with the Department of Public Health on food safety and permits. Kenta Takamori thanked the many people who have stepped up to help. Please contact him if you would like to be involved. Staff store front needs 3 days a week/2-4 hours at a time. President S.M. request that grant papers go to ED and Executive committee, as JTF is accountable and we need to make sure all basis is covered. If grant is approved, money has to be expended this year. KT will finish the grant proposal and once it goes to ED and Executive Committee, the Cultural Heritage Committee will take it from there. Director SSM mentioned that the Nakayoshi group has many skills sets and will be happy to bring that to Japantenna project. Director MM mentioned that if Kagoshima gives fish, maybe they can partner with Consul General and community organizations and shops in Japantown.

No public comments.

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

1. Committee Updates
There were no updates.

No public comments.

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

1. Committee Updates
Lori Yamauchi reported that at the September 13 meeting, Kenta Takamori has resigned. The committee reviewed an excerpt on the Japantown Better Neighborhoods Plan on Japan Center Malls.

Public comments:

- Will there be a community process on the Japan Center Mall's strategic plan?

E. Nominations Committee (Chair Benh Nakajo)

1. Committee Updates
Benh Nakajo reported that the matrix has been completed and is still a work in progress. The committee is searching for new board members to fill the 21 slots. Please send any potential candidates to Chair Benh Nakajo. The committee will contact the 10 board members who will term out at the end of 2021 and ask them if they intend to continue on the board or take a break by the October board meeting. A slate of names will be provided for the board members who wish to continue on the board and a vote will be taken at the November board meeting. There is a policy that a board member will be asked to resign if he/she has 3 unexcused absences or missed more than 50% of board meetings.

Public:

- Is the Matrix available to the public? Nice to know what factors you are looking at.
- It took me by shock that there is an option that a board member will not be invited back to serve on the board. The board should understand the nomination process.

F. JTF By Laws Working Group (Kenta Takamori, Mark Moriguchi, Sandy Mori & David Takashima)

1. Discussion/review of proposed revisions to the JTF ByLaws and consideration to approve the revisions (Attachment G)

The Working Group decided to delay the vote for the JTF ByLaws in order for the Board to review once last time and send revisions and recommendations to the working group by email. Retired attorney Penny Nakatsu has been reviewing the revised bylaws. Kenta T. will send the JTF board an email requests for more feedback on the nomination process in the bylaws.

No public comments.

VI. Update from the President/Executive Committee

VIII. 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.

IX. Announcements.

- Nihonmachi Little Friends will be having their Annual Sushi Social on November 19. An announcement to JTF will be sent.

X. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 8:10pm.

NEXT BOARD MEETING: Wednesday, October 20, 2021 via zoom meeting.