

JTF Board Meeting
March 29, 2004 @ 6:00 p.m.
1765 Sutter St.
Minutes

Attendees: Doug Dawkins, Rosalyn Tonai, David Ishida, Caryl Ito, Tak Matsuba, Jeff Mori, Benh Nakajo, Sandy Mori (advisory)

Guests: Shirley Wysinger

Excused Absences: Scott Belser, Seiko Fujimoto, Mark Moriguchi

Absent: Bob Otsuka, Pat Shiono.

A. Director's Report:

I. Signage Update

Linda presented the new Japantown signs. 132 signs will be placed throughout Japantown in both Japanese and English. It is hoped that these signs will help strengthen Japantown's identity.

Caryl remarked that the Japantown directional signs are very difficult to read. She was concerned about the readability of the new signs.

Linda and DPT are waiting to schedule a quick unveiling and photo opp. with the mayor. Board members suggested holding it around the Cherry Blossom Festival even if all the signs have not yet been installed.

The boundaries of the signage are the same as the existing signs.

2. Buchanan Mall Public Information Meeting

Sandy and Linda met with Paul Osaki last week to discuss the dissemination of information regarding the NBF and Prop. 40 projects. There were concerns at the meeting regarding conflicts of interest, and so individuals have removed themselves from the selection committee. When the full RFP is available, Linda will share the information with the board.

Benh brought up that he received an email from Allen Okamoto to Sakura Matsuri, Inc. indicating that there was an NBF application submitted for additional trees, flowers, and re-varnishing of the torii gate. Tak asked Allen why Sakura Matsuri, Inc. was being asked permission to submit the application. Apparently, Sakura Matsuri is being used as a fiscal agent for NPC. However, what Linda and Sandy discussed with Paul and Allen may not be included in the upcoming discussion at the public information meeting.

Doug remarks that the original NPC paperwork states that NPC is obligated to oversee the maintenance of the Buchanan Mall. Despite this, the rest of the community has been putting their own efforts and funds into the mall, when it could be directed elsewhere if NPC held up its responsibilities. Sandy adds the issue has come up in the past, also particularly in regards to NPC's failure to communicate with its board. Doug also asked

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whether Ruth Asawa was consulted during the process. Linda reports that no one had spoken to her after being that she had already been consulted. Subsequently, individuals did approach her regarding the project and proposed changes, and although she did not object at the time, privately she stated that she did not like the changes.

Shirley reports that it the idea of a bridge (or modified pathway) across the river was suggested, but never went forward. As far as flattening the rock, Shirley met with Allen and Paul, who raised the point that it may be an ADA issue. However, the entire block is a single piece of artwork that needs to go through the art commission and redevelopment agency.

3. SB307 Update

The application has been completed by the redevelopment agency and Linda has been discussing with Shirley whether or not it is necessary for the application to go before the WACAC, or whether Marcia can simply provide administrative approval.

Shirley reports that the fiscal deputy will be responsible for handling the application. The SFRA will proceed with submitting the application, which is calendared for the commission on April 20th. Once the item is put on a commission calendar however, it is unlikely it will be approved administratively and then sent to Sacramento. It will also go before the CAC if all goes well with Shirley and CAC chair Mary Rogers. The next meeting of the CAC will be at 1881 Bush (Kokoro).

Shirley adds that the commission approved the 2004-2005 budget on March 16th, and it was subsequently sent to the Mayor's office. Included in the budget was \$200,000 for the Task Force, which was later taken out before going before the commission. Shirley suggests that Jeff follow up with the Mayor's office.

4. Central Freeway Update

The Task Force submitted petitions with over 300 signatures to the Board of Supervisors supporting reconstruction efforts on the central freeway. The item had gone before the transportation commission who made no recommendation on the issue. When it went before the board of supervisors however, the resolution to postpone reconstruction was voted down. Supervisors Gonzalez, Daly, and Dufty supported the resolution. Sandy adds that the resolution really has no teeth, which should be kept in mind in terms of what issues the Task Force should focus on.

5. Peace Plaza Update

Parts of the Peace Plaza have been closed down to replace the broken tiles. There is also significant leakage into the Japan Center Garage. The San Francisco Chronicle has been watching the situation, which was published in ChronWatch. Plastic gutters have been placed in the garage to divert water that is leaking, the plaza has been steam cleaned, and the fountain is being tested for leaks. In the meantime, Ed Lee asked that the community meet with DPW to discuss a citywide approach to this and other similar problems. The estimated cost of repairs is \$4 million dollars.

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6. Grant Proposals

The Task Force has submitted a letter of intent to the San Francisco Foundation, a grant proposal to Union Bank of California, and an application to NBF for expanded clean up efforts.

B. Committee Reports:

1. Business and Economic Development Committee

Linda reports that Tony Garcia, who runs an executive placement firm with Japanese companies, is looking to purchase a space in or around Japantown. Linda referred him to McInerney. Shirley, however, brings up that the NCDC master plan defines the land use at the 1600 site as community commercial, which may not be Garcia's business.

Tak reports that Rich is coordinating with Allen to remove the koban and have the landmark built on the same spot.

2. Health and Safety Committee

Health and Safety recently held a meeting with the new captain of Northern Station, Kevin Dillon, Officer Kanamori, and Command Security. Community members expressed their concern about crime and safety, and were grateful for Wayne and Kiyoko's services. However, due to an emergency meeting held at the same time for the Cherry Blossom Festival, no merchants were able to attend.

Linda reports that one of the important steps merchants need to take, if they continue to experience harassment, is to obtain restraining orders against individuals. However, many merchants have been reluctant to do so, and only individual citizens may do so.

3. Cultural and Historical Preservation Committee

The preservation committee has come up with names of individuals who qualify for the SB307 committee based on the Board of Supervisors resolution. Ros is working on drafting a letter to request participation. So far, 4 JTF members have been chosen, and merchants and residents have been identified to approach. The committee would like to find more youth or young adults to participate, but it was difficult to find people who fit the SB307 criteria.

4. Communications & Marketing Committee

Sandy reports that Akane Sakurai presented the new website to the communications committee, and it will be up shortly. The communications committee is also looking for volunteers to sit at the JTF booth at the upcoming Cherry Blossom Festival.

C. Other Business and Announcements:

1. Ernie Yoshikawa submitted his letter of resignation and his last day of work will be April 15, 2004.

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2. Jeff and the nominations committee will meet on April 19th at 4:00pm.
3. Friends of Planning Dinner: April 21, 5:30 reception, 7pm dinner, 8:15 dessert, tea; at Gold Mountain Restaurant, 644 Broadway, nonprofit table \$500; community tickets, \$50 each.
4. Newsom Reception: Radisson Miyako Hotel in Japantown on Thursday, April 1 from 5:30-7:30 and is \$25 for individuals and \$100 for organizations that want to sponsor (includes two tickets). The Task Force asks that the \$100 cost be split between the board and/or advisory board.
5. Public Information Meeting For The Renovation Of The Buchanan Mall: Wednesday, March 31, 2004 6:00 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. Conference Room Japanese Cultural and Community Center of Northern California (JCCCNC)