

**JTF Board Meeting
July 26, 2004 @ 6:00 p.m.
1765 Sutter St.
Minutes**

Attendees: Doug Dawkins, Sseiko Fujimoto, Michael Gowe, Caryl Ito, Tak Matsuba, Sandy Mori, Mark Moriguchi, Benh Nakajo, Rosalyn Tonai, Tetsuya Yoshida

Guests: Brett Wheeler, Sam Zutler

Excused Absences: Scott Belser, David Ishida, Bob Otsuka

Absent: Pat Shiono

- A. Recognition of a Quorum**
- B. Approval of Minutes: Meeting of June 28, 2004**
- C. Chair's Report:**

- 1. New Slate of Officers Confirmed**

- a. Sandy Mori – President
- b. Caryl Ito – Vice President
- c. Doug Dawkins – Secretary
- d. Mark Moriguchi - Treasurer

- 2. Budget Approved – FY 2004-2005**

- D. Director's Report**

- 1. Signage Update**

Unveiling of 132 bilingual Katakana/English street signs will take place on Thursday, Aug. 5. Mayor Gavin Newsom will be there to say a few words from around 12:30 to 1:00 PM. June-Ko Nakagawa of Radio Mainichi and Benh Nakajo of the Japan Airlines will be the two emcees for the event.

- 2. Safety Issues at Buchanan Mall**

Another shooting occurred recently at Buchanan Mall, where a man was shot in the leg. The assailant then hopped into a white SUV and fled the scene. The shooting involved automatic Weapons, 10 pistol shots that went out in succession. JTF will try to plan a more inclusive Health and Safety Meeting to incorporate the Korean bar-owners in the area. According to Seiko Fujimoto, the corner of Laguna and Sutter has also attracted some suspicious-looking youth recently.

- 3. SB 307 Update**

- a. Three Japantowns Meeting

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Sandy and Linda attended SB 307 meeting in San Jose of three Japantowns to go over the report and its schedule. At the meeting, JTF submitted its tentative methodology for the project, along with several completed data sheets.

b. SB 307 Timing Conflicts

Due to the internal struggle in San Francisco's J-town to decide who would compile the SB 307 report, our funding and work got delayed significantly. The original intent of three J-towns was to time the completion of all three reports for submission to the State of California and Senator Vasconcellos (who spearheaded the SB 307 legislation) by October or November, which is when the State accepts proposals for Prop. 40 funds. Gerry Takano from Los Angeles wanted to have all completed drafts submitted to him by the end of July, but due to the delays in our schedule, the material we present will not include our final draft and any of the community's input.

Most likely, there will be another October conference in San Jose to have all three completed reports review and approved by leaders in all three communities. However, our contract with the Redevelopment Agency does not stipulate that the report be finished until December 30th. As a compromise, we will be continually updating whatever we have with Gerry Takano, but our schedule is comparably delayed.

c. SB 307 Committee Meeting

We will be organizing our first SB 307 meeting for July 28, 2004, and 50% of the 16 proposed members for the committee will be from the JTF board, while the other 50% are property/business-owners and residents in the community. The SB 307 meeting will help us devise a strategy to decide on what should or shouldn't be included in the report. The meeting was postponed to 6 PM on Wednesday to accommodate several people.

4. Peace Plaza Update – Possible Lawsuit Against City of San Francisco

Peace Plaza is the roof of the Japan Center Garage, and over the last week, it leaked so much that all the electrical circuits in the garage shorted out. The entire First Floor had to be shut down, which meant no revenue until the electrician could come in and fix the problem. The renovation has created a tremendous financial burden for Rich Hashimoto's operations at the Japan Center Garage Corporation, and they've been considering filing a lawsuit against the city. The intent is to settle the suit and at least acquire some funds to partially reimburse the Garage Corporation's losses.

The Garage Corporation has also donated \$500,000 or more to the renovation of the peace plaza, which has only caused them problems. According to recent estimates, fixing the leaks would require tearing up the tiles, putting down a membrane (which, according to Linda, should have been installed in the first

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place), and replacing all the tiles, which could cost more than four million dollars.

JTF will organize a meeting with Ed Lee and other city engineers to talk about the City's bond money that's available for renovating public parks. The original contractors of the renovation are long gone, so we can't hold them accountable for the damages they've caused.

5. Street Lights at Post and Buchanan Streets

Street lights at corners of Post and Buchanan will be changed to hang out in the middle of the road instead of the sides. This should increase safety and reduce speeding by making the signs more visible to drivers.

6. Grant Proposals

JTF has submitted proposals to the San Francisco Foundation and the Evelyn and Walter Haas, Jr. Foundation to secure funding for the SB 307 project. Linda will be working with Cathy Cha from the Haas, Jr. Foundation. Linda has also put in another proposal with SF Bank of America Foundation, which allocates 2 million dollars to non-profit organizations. We have also received \$5000 from Union Bank.

7. SF Convention and Visitor's Bureau – Three Japantown Ambassadors

a. Increasing Traffic to Japantown

Linda received visit from Geraldine O' Brien and Debbie Reinow, who is the vice president of the SF Convention and Visitors Bureau. She and Caryl Ito have discussed issues revolving the geisha exhibit run by the Asian Arts Museum. Currently, there is an ongoing tour called the "Gateway to the Pacific" through which visitors stop at Japantown, increasing traffic for the area. Convention and Visitors Bureau has been working hard to find other venues that will work for merchants in this area.

b. Visa Membership Program – Free Advertising

They've also been working hard on a Visa Membership program, which the Merchant's Association is currently a part of. All businesses/restaurants in the Merchant's Association are eligible to receive free advertising on the Convention and Visitors Bureau's website and free airtime on KPIX. We've submitted applications to Rich Hashimoto to distribute to his members.

c. Three Japantown Ambassadors

They also wanted three Japantown ambassadors who would speak on the website to talk about the community of Japantown and its advantages. We've recommended Tak Matsuba, Steve Nakajo, and maybe Rosalyn Tonai – these "ambassadors" will work with the bureau to educate and inform people about

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Japantown. We will be the second neighborhood commercial district to be featured on the website.

d. Tourism Representative from Tokyo

Akitoshi Futasugi – hired by Convention Visitors Bureau in Tokyo to go to trade shows and bring Japanese tourists to San Francisco. JTF would like to meet with him to see how much he knows about Japantown and whether or not he can increase traffic for the businesses in Japantown.

E. Committee Reports

1. Finance Committee

Budget for Fiscal Year 2004-2005 Approved – No Update

2. Business and Economic Development Committee

Mayor is very interested in BID idea for Japantown – he’s been looking at different neighborhoods for another BID in San Francisco. Sandy wants to schedule meeting between Mayor and business representatives in the community to talk about possible options for a BID in Japantown. Our job at JTF will be to educate the community so they understand exactly what a BID is and how it works.

3. Health and Safety Committee

Due to recent shootings at the Buchanan Plaza, things have escalated considerably. Benh wants to schedule another meeting to sit down and talk with as many folks as possible, including the Korean merchants who haven’t yet been engaged. Our priority is not to target certain groups or individuals, but communicate that everybody has a responsibility to the welfare of the community.

4. Cultural and Historical Preservation Committee

Haven’t met for a while, but has made comments on data sheets. The committee’s role in relation to the SB 307 Project is to review and provide input for the cultural preservation report.

5. Communications and Marketing Committee

No Update

6. Personnel Committee Evaluation

I. Vacation Accrual Policy

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Caryl has distributed survey forms to executive committee – need to meet with Linda to review results of survey and review with committee. There was a delay in implementing the new vacation accrual plan, which would allow us to establish our own policy for Linda apart from JCYC's vacation accrual policy.

2. Retirement Pick-up from JCYC

When Linda was hired, she was promised a 3-6 % retirement pick-up of the JCYC's 403(b) plan, but it has yet to occur, partially because the organization is short on funds. Linda is willing to forgive the debt temporarily, but it has been a very long time and she has yet to receive her money.

F. Other Business and Announcements

Brett Wheeler introduced himself as candidate for Dist. 5 Supervisor and discussed rank choice voting and educating the community about it.

“Jap” Road signs in Texas have officially been removed – petitions from JACL certainly helped. However, there's also a “Jap Lane” in another county that has yet to be taken down.

Annual Obon Festival is scheduled for noon at August 1 – Rich Hashimoto needs help setting up and decorating the Yagura. Distributed sign-up sheet for volunteering with games and other activities.

Next board meeting Monday, August 23, 2004 at 6 PM.