

JTF Board Meeting
October 25, 2004 @ 6:00 p.m.
1765 Sutter St.
Minutes

Attendees: Scott Belser, Doug Dawkins, Michael Gowe, Caryl Ito, Tak Matsuba, Sandy Mori, Benh Nakajo

Staff: Darryl Abantao, Linda Jofuku, Young Kim, Misako Mori

Guests: John Billovits, Julie Kirschbaum, Greg Marutani, Bobby Okamura, Mario Oliveras, J.K. Yamamoto

Excused Absences: Rosalyn Tonai

Absent: Seiko Fujimoto, Mark Moriguchi, Tetsuya Yoshida

A. Recognition of Quorum

B. Approval of Minutes: Meeting of September 27, 2004

C. SB – 307 Data Sheet Presentation “A Taste of Cultural Preservation”

1. Linda presented the definition of cultural preservation and went through the power point presentation.
2. While manju was passed around, Bobby Okamura talked about his manju shop, Benkyodo. He is the co-owner with his brother, Ricky Okamura. Together they make 1,500 pieces of manju that are sold each day. Most of their business comes from over the counter sales, however they do sell some wholesale to Uoki Sakai Grocery Store on Post Street and a grocery in the East Bay. The little counter on the window side of the store sells sandwiches, hot dogs, hamburgers, donuts, other beverages and coffee to many regulars who come in to socialize. They also make manju with a JA flair; manju are filled with peanut butter or strawberries. Sandy added that Hippo (Hirofumi, Bobby's father) was extremely supportive of the community. He was the first businessman to support Kimochi Home during the capital campaign.
3. Scott Belser suggested that “businesses” should be added to the Cultural Preservation definition in honor of Bobby and Benkyodo.
4. Mario Oliveras (SFRDA) inquired as to what would be done next once all the data sheets are completed. Linda said that there are many uses for this information. The main concern is that City Planning and other departments do not forget about this area and integrate this information into their work plans. Also the SB-307 Neighborhood Cultural Preservation Report could be used for school curriculum; inspiring tourism to the area; marketing Japantown; economic development and noting points of interest. Doug Dawkins added that this is a prototype for other ethnic areas such as the Mission, Chinatown, and the Fillmore. These areas were once very homogeneous and are now drawing in other groups of people that need to be incorporated into the community. It is the beginning of what all ethnic areas will go through.
5. All of the items on the data sheet have a connection to the community in one way or another. Even though many of the items are intangible, they are integral

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and important parts of the community. Basketball, for instance, may not seem to have a strong connection to culture in the Japanese American Community. However, it is just as important as a temple. As Misako mentions in an article she wrote for school, it is many JA's only connection to the community. With more and more people moving out into the suburbs, out of the neighborhood, children are displaced and have no close connection to their heritage. The Japanese Leagues are a meeting point for these kids to come together and be a part of a community. Tak pointed out that the Optimist Club has a very similar function. Now with less and less people living in one area, clubs and leagues like these are necessary to keep communities alive.

D. Chair's Report:

1. Changes on the board of directors
Bob Otsuka, Pat Shiono, and David Ishida had to step down from the board of directors because of their busy schedules. Bob Otsuka and David Ishida committed to be on the Advisory Committee.
2. Report on District 5 Supervisor Forum – October 19
Of the twenty-two candidates seventeen showed up for the forum. J.K. Yamamoto and Kenji Taguma sat on the panel and represented Japantown. Only the panel was allowed to ask questions. Most of the candidates were pro-Haight and knew little about the Western Addition.
3. SPUR Luncheon -- November 1, 12 –1:30 pm, Moscone West
There will be over 1400 attendees coming to the luncheon. Caryl has two seats left. The honorees include Richard Goldman, Jennie Chin Hansen, Leo McCarthy, Beverly Mills, and Piero Patri.
4. 2004 Sonkei Campaign (Japanese Benevolent Society of California)
The Japanese Benevolent Society of California is having a raffle to help maintain and preserve the Japanese Cemetery in Colma. It is \$20 per packet of raffle tickets. If you are interested see Sandy.

E. Director's Report:

1. MTA (Municipal Transportation Authority) Partnership Proposal – Letter of Support
Julie Kirschbaum of the SF Country Transportation Authority was a guest at the meeting and she is part of the Geary BRT (Bus Rapid Transit) project working on community outreach and the Geary corridor. Julie was having difficulty with non-English speaking, low income and ethnic outreach. She voiced that the funding for the project is spread too thin already for the inner-Geary project from Market to Van Ness. Translation and outreach funding may be supported with the approval of the Cal Trans Environment Grant.
2. Buchanan Mall – Letter from Ruth Asawa
Included in the packet distributed at the meeting is a copy of Ruth Asawa's letter written to Steve Nakajo. In the letter, Ruth explains her visions for her Origami Fountains and Rai Okamoto's Rock River. In this letter, Ruth voiced many

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concerns; her wish to keep the rock river intact; why were the plum trees removed and replaced with cherry trees; Denny's non-Japanese street scape sign; merchants putting cardboard boxes on the sidewalk to sell wares, lack of Japanese plants in planters and the vandalism and waste in the area. The significance of Ruth's letter is the landmark piece by JCCCNC placed in the Buchanan Mall will block her artwork. Sandy brought up the possibility of discussion for a different location of the artwork instead of in the Buchanan Mall. The approval of the Redevelopment Agency, Art Commission and the support of the community regarding site location needs to occur.

3. SB307 Update

On October 13, we had a community meeting at the Konko Church with the support of Rev. Grange letting us use the facilities. Rev. Grange spoke eloquently. There were presentations by Tak Onishi, Steve Doi, Rosalyn Tonai and Richard Hashimoto. The interns will hold future presentations at various locations such as the Golden Gate Optimists Club, to the Boy Scouts and various churches. Two grants were received; a \$25,000 grant from the Haas Jr. Fund along with a \$10,000 grant from the San Francisco Foundation for JTF's Preservation work.

4. Peace Plaza Update

To assess the damage and possible solutions, Richard Hashimoto, JTF, DPW and PCI Parking Management contractor looked at the leaks and broken tiles in the Peace Plaza. The contractor uses Sure Treat, a liquid based chemical that would soak through the concrete to repel water. The only down side to this quick fix solution is that each individual tile would need to be removed in order for the liquid to soak through the concrete. Daniel Homsey suggests to rebuild the planting beds believed to be the source of the leaks. The Homsey office believes this will cost tens of thousands of dollars versus millions of dollars to redo the whole plaza. The tiles in the plaza are made in India with no replacements available. Meanwhile, the Plaza (roof of the parking garage) continues to leak like a sieve.

5. New Kintetsu President

Mr. Takenori Kakutani is the new Kintetsu president replacing former president Hisao Hiro. One of the recent changes he has implemented is the Dot restaurant is now open for breakfast. He was a former manager at a hotel outside of Osaka and the former manager of Suehiro Restaurant that used to be in the Japantown Mall.

F. Committee Reports:

1. Finance Committee

None

2. Business and Economic Development Committee – Koban Update, SFCVB Update

The Koban located on the Buchanan Mall has been removed and relocated to Chinatown. Seiko, Tak, Caryl and Linda met with the SF Convention and Visitors Bureau to discuss ways to bring more people to SF Japantown. A couple possibilities would be adult home stays or offering packages from Japan where SF would be a base of travel to the U.S.

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A new plasma sign on top of Denny's is being discussed with the Merchants Association. The merchants are willing to support this new sign as long as the Japantown feeling and décor is kept intact. They also suggest putting upcoming community events on the sign.

3. Health and Safety Committee

With the holidays coming soon, the committee would like people to be more aware of crime rising and to practice practical defense e.g. not placing valuables such as purses, laptop computers, cell phones, and packages where they can be seen in your car (unattended).

4. Cultural and Historical Preservation Committee

None

5. Communications & Marketing Committee

None

6. Personnel Committee Evaluation

None

G. Other Business and Announcements:

1. Sept. 27 – October 29 – NJAHS “Back in the Day – Japantown Exhibit”
Opening Reception & Program – Saturday, October 9, 1- 4 pm
2. First Anniversary of Kokoro Assisted Living
Hors d'oeuvres and refreshments
Wednesday, November 10, 2004 from 4:30 - 8:30 p.m.
1881 Bush Street, San Francisco