

japantown task force, inc.

a planning, preservation, and development organization

JTF Board Meeting November 22, 2004 @ 6:00 p.m. 1765 Sutter St.

Minutes

Attendees: Scott Belser, Doug Dawkins, Michael Gowe, Caryl Ito, Karen Kai (Advisory Board), Tak Matsuba, Sandy Mori, Mark Moriguchi, Benh Nakajo, Judi Nihei (Consultant), Rosalyn Tonai, Tetsuya Yoshida

Staff: Darryl Abantao, Linda Jofuku, Misako Mori

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

Excused Absences: Tak Matsuba

Absent: Seiko Fujimoto

A. Recognition of Quorum

B. Introduction of Agnes Briones (Executive Director, Small Business Commission)

1. Currently Executive Director at San Francisco's Small Business Commission. She graduated from SFSU, has worked at Deloitte & Touche. Co. Inc. and within Alameda and San Francisco Counties. Her first job out of college was with JCYC in SOMA as the community organizer.
2. The Small Business Commission is a new stand-alone charter commission focusing on Small Businesses, which are the backbone of San Francisco's economy. The commission's goals are to promote and retain small business within the city. They hold public meetings at 5:30 pm on the 2nd Monday of each month at City Hall.
3. One of the ways they are marketing small businesses is the "Holiday Shop Outside the Box Showcase" in Union Square on December 12. There will be many small businesses from all over San Francisco promoting and selling their stores and goods.

C. Approval of Minutes: Meeting of October 25, 2004

D. Chair's Report:

1. Introduce new Kintetsu President, Mr. Kakutani
Mr. Yoshida brought Mr. Kakutani for a brief exchange of greetings but, unfortunately he could not stay for the meeting.
2. Proposal to place 3-Japantowns Monument on the Peace Plaza
Ruth Asawa sent a letter to various city and Jtown entities in connection to the Buchanan Mall, expressing her concerns regarding her art piece, the rock river and the mall. As a result the new proposed location of the monument is being discussed somewhere in the Japantown Peace Plaza. Jeff Mori met with Paul Osaki, Rob Kawamura of Osaki Design, and the artist of the monument to discuss a new location. Jeff Mori and Chris Hirano (JCCCNC), who serve on the Western Addition Community Advisory Council (WACAC), deferred the issue of new location to a future meeting. The proposed location of the monument is on the sidewalk along Post Street where a rock currently sits. The City (Park and Recreation Department and DWP) still must approve of the location. A motion was made by Scott Belser with a second from Sandy Mori to approve the concept of the art piece being placed someplace on the Japantown Peace Plaza subject to public hearings and approval. One major concern the Board had was that the placement of the landmark not compromise the unresolved pre-existing

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structural and surface concerns associated with the Peace Plaza re-construction. The motion passed with a unanimous vote.

3. Action Item: Approve Preliminary Draft SB 307

Judi Nihei discussed the SB 307 Draft that was previously distributed to everyone. The most current version is the November 22 draft. The matrix and data sheets will be an ongoing project that will continue as long as funding allows. The discussion was opened up to Board members and the public to receive feedback on draft.

Karen Kai expressed many opinions regarding the draft. Her opinions include:

Lack of community support and input,

The Preservation Committee has not had a larger role in the report and has not met in a long time,

Proper acknowledgments,

Intention of the report.

The board responded by emphasizing this is a “living” document and it is still a draft with more work to be done. Rosalyn stated that the Preservation committee has not met due to a scheduling conflicts.

Rosalyn suggested a final SB 307 Committee meeting.

Doug Dawkins made the motion to approve the way the Preliminary Draft was going as well as its structure; Scott Belser then seconded the motion and it was approved by the Board with a unanimous vote.

Karen Kai was concerned about including Japantown Arts and Media due to their recent resurrection. Consultant Judi Nihei and JTF staff stated they would work to include them.

E. Director's Report:

1. SB307 Update

Previously discussed

2. Peace Plaza Update

Previously discussed

3. Meeting with Michael Sim, property owner, regarding tower structure demolition and reconstruction

The yagura found on Buchanan and Post streets is suffering from dry rot and faces the possibility of falling soon. Property owner Michael Sim has asked for help regarding the demolition and reconstruction of the tower. He is interested in the community's input for future design. Recommendations from the board included added lighting and a design structure that encompasses the overall feel of Japantown. In addition suggestions were made for a community bulletin board, directory and a gateway sign.

4. Meeting with Mary McCue & Rich Hashimoto regarding exploration of a Business Improvement District (BID) – Personal Service Contract to be calendared at SF Redevelopment Agency Commission December 7, 4 PM

Exploration of making Japantown a Business Improvement District. Linda will meet with Rich and Mary on December 7 to discuss the idea of creating a BID in Japantown. A lot of work and planning as well as education must go into the process to determine whether or not San Francisco's Japantown should get involved with their own BID or possibly enter into a BID with the Western Addition-Fillmore District.

5. Upcoming meeting with Jessie Blout, MOEWD on Tuesday, November 23 regarding BID and the work of the Task Force.

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Sandy and Linda will meet with Jesse Blout.

F. Committee Reports:

1. Finance Committee
No Report
2. Business and Economic Development Committee – Koban Update, SFCVB Update
No Report
3. Health and Safety Committee
No Report
4. Cultural and Historical Preservation Committee
Will set up meeting in December
5. Communications & Marketing Committee – Book proposal, Arcadia Publishing
John Poultney, editor of Arcadia Publishing, contacted JTF regarding the possibility of creating a community book on Japantown. The books are filled with photographs from the past and present that document the history of the area. They have created books for Oakland's Chinatown as well as San Francisco's Sunset district.
The publishing company will pay for all printing and promotional costs. The community would provide the pictures as well as labor for writing caption under each photo and overall organization of the publication. Arcadia Publishing will return 8% of the cover costs, which is approximately \$1 per book to the organization that is the author. 2,220 books are printed at the first run.
The board decided that more information is needed before a decision can be made on whether or not to go ahead with the project. This item will be considered at the January Board meeting.

G. Other Business and Announcements:

1. Sept. 27 – October 29 – NJAHS “Back in the Day – Japantown Exhibit”
2. Silver Bells – Kimochi Annual Arts & Crafts Festival
Saturday & Sunday, Nov. 27-28, 11-5PM
Japan Center – Kinokuniya Building
3. Upcoming SB 307 Community Discussion –
Japan Merchant's Association Meeting, Tuesday, Nov. 23rd, 3PM
4. John Burton Foundation for Children Without Homes
Dinner saluting John Burton-Proceeds will benefit Foundation
Thursday, December 16, 2004 @ 6pm at the Marriott Hotel
5. Fillmore Jazz Preservation District's Annual Holiday Celebration
Events will take place from December 4 until December 30 2004.
6. Screening of Lane Nishikawa's film “Only the Brave”
Wednesday, December 1, 2004 at the AMC Kabuki Theater
7. December Board meeting Cancelled
SB 307 Meeting in its place on December 14, 2004

H. Meeting was adjourned at 8:30pm.