

# japantown task force, inc.

a planning, preservation, and development organization

**JTF Board Meeting  
January 23, 2006 @ 6:00 p.m.  
Union Bank of California Hospitality Room  
Meeting minutes - DRAFT**

**Attendees:** Scott Belser, Doug Dawkins, Seiko Fujimoto, Michael Gowe, Caryl Ito, Tak Matsuba, Sandy Mori (Pres.), Rosalyn Tonai, Tetsuya Yoshida  
**Staff:** Linda Jofuku  
**Guests:** Richard Hashimoto – Japan Center Garage; Aksel Olsen, Kate McGee, Ken Rich – SF City Planning Dept; Karen Kai – NDD Creative; Gerry Takano, Joseph Stubbs – Tba West; Chris Hirano – JCCCNC; Lucy Kishiue – meeting recorder  
**Absent:** Mark Moriguchi, Benh Nakajo,

**Call to order at 6:10 p.m. by Sandy Mori, President**  
**The order of the agenda was adjusted to accommodate presentations from guests.**

**A. Japan Center Garage Contract – Richard Hashimoto, Japan Center Garage Manager**

Hashimoto presented the proposed budget for 2006-2007 (Handout provided) which was submitted to the SF Parking and Traffic to meet the December 1, 2005 deadline. Hashimoto reported that he developed the budget with input from Jofuku. Anticipate final approval by the commission in March 2006. 2007 is the final year of providing funds to the Task Force. Hashimoto also provided a *“Request for Reimbursement of Expenses – for December 2005”* (Handout) to the board which details \$38K in reimbursable expenses to the Task Force. Since the '06 - '07 budget had not been brought to the board for approval, prior to December 1, 2005, Mori stated the Task Force Finance Committee to review the proposed 2006-2007 budget and to get back to Hashimoto as soon as possible.

Ito asked if there was a marketing plan submitted. Hashimoto acknowledged receipt of a marketing report in accordance with the Work Plan contained in the lease agreement. The Scope of Services remains the same and the corporation has the assumption that JTF would provide a marketing plan in the future.

**B. Recognition of Quorum**

**C. Approval of Minutes: Meeting of November 28, 2005**

Motion to accept the minutes as provided: Ito, 2<sup>nd</sup> –Belser, motion carried.

**D. Japantown Walk History Project – Karen Kai and Gerry Takano**

A broad overview of the project sponsored by JCCCNC and funded by the Prop 40 funds was presented to the board. (Handouts provided) The Prop 40 funds were allocated to each of the 3 Japantowns in California to preserve its history. The original project was focused on Buchanan Mall, but due to community concerns, the Mall is no longer part of this project and will remain as intended. The project description was discussed involving the three components: visual ICON; interpretive signage; and cultural & historical plaques with a preliminary map of possible scenario (Handout). Timing of this project for the first phase is June 10, 2006 during the centennial with other phases to follow as the project progresses. The project team will be holding community meetings and has begun meeting with city departments for required criteria and permitting processes and to present to the arts commission

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at their hearing next month. This project team will work with NJAHS and others in the community on the specific signage and any maintenance ownership. Belser asked if the signage will be bilingual. Kai responded that it would depend on the format of such signage and/or content. There is a city requirement to provide more information on the historical site by way of a repository available to the public. Kai confirmed the amount of funding available which is close to the original \$300K (less minimal expenses in the competitive bidding process) allocated by Prop 40. Public comment from the community and business owners will be incorporated in the project to the extent possible. Discussion continued on possible materials for the signage, cost studies on materials, historical content ideas, similar approach i.e. Little Tokyo, etc. Jofuku asked if the project budget contains maintenance expenses. Takano responded that there is no maintenance funding and that Chris Hirano is working to find ways to respond to the city's requirements in addition to any liability or replacement insurance.

This project is a permanent fixture for Japantown and is different from another project "*Birth of Japantown*" which is a temporary exhibit through photos by Osaki Designs. The project team invited comments by way of the project team email addresses provided.

## **D. Better Neighborhoods Program – Aksel Olsen, Kate McGee, Ken Rich – City Planning**

The Planning Staff provided a handout to facilitate a discussion of the program, goal and scope. The basic goal is to guide new growth in the city to places where it both furthers citywide objectives and helps address issues in the neighborhoods affected in accordance to 8 elements of a great neighborhood. Olsen confirmed that the program is now fully staffed and ready to go with plans for a formal kick-off meeting in the spring. Olsen displayed a map as to the extent of the program focused on the Geary corridor from Van Ness to Masonic and 1 block width – north and south of the corridor. A wider area can be examined through the "opt-in" program that communities can be involved in the planning. Olsen reaffirmed that this program does not affect any Redevelopment Agency authoritative areas. This program encompasses the impacts and public benefits, i.e. up-zoning, private development, housing, etc. for planning commission review. A series of small community meetings will be planned before the spring kick-off. The staff would like a more in depth overview of Japantown to better understand the community needs and will schedule a walk-through with JTF, along with a development of an outreach list of contacts in Japantown. A possible approach implementing this program is to develop a series of sub-plans with consideration with other plans in the area, i.e. Cathedral Hill site, Geary corridor transit project, Sears/Mervyn's, etc.

Motion: JTF takes the policy position to participate and engage in the Better Neighborhood Planning Process: Dawkins, 2<sup>nd</sup> – Belser, motion carried.

BNP will work through the JTF Business and Economic Development Committee – Tak Matsuba with Linda Jofuku –JTF executive director as the main contact.

## **E. Chair's Report: Sandy Mori**

### **1. Income/Expense Statements**

Directors received in their board packet, financial information provided by JCYC. Jofuku confirmed that she requested the close-out report of Fiscal Year 2004-2005 from JCYC and this is what was provided to her. Jofuku will forward to the directors the current fiscal year/ YTD report. The JCYC report represents one of the accounts

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that JTF has. The Board experienced concern that the detailed finance information needs to be formatted to a standard budget by our Economic and Development committee. Other JTF accounts include: a certificate of deposit, money market, and checking totaling a balance of \$7,344. Moriguchi is the second signature required to these close accounts. Jofuku reaffirmed she was instructed to avoid duplicative work. JCYC submitted a memo defining JCYC/JTF areas of responsibilities.

Motion: Develop a working financial template to produce monthly reports for JTF and such report will be provided for the next board meeting with current financial results: Gowe, 2<sup>nd</sup> – Belser, motion carried.

2. Update Executive Director Personnel Evaluation/Grievance  
Ito and Mori presented the documents to Jofuku and will be meeting to discuss.

3. Mirkarimi Resolution

Regina from Mirkarimi's office provided status in separate contacts from Mori and Jofuku that the resolution is in limbo. Dawkins commented that J-Town be involved in notification, unsure if JTF should be the sole gatekeeper and that wider involvement is a better approach. Jofuku clarified the original intent was a way for earlier community notification of any plans that impacts Japantown. Mori commented that such a board of supervisor resolution will not directly influence city departments and unless directed by the mayor.

Motion: Request Supervisor Mirkarimi to put this resolution on hold: Ito, 2<sup>nd</sup> – Fujimoto, motion carried.

## F. Director's Report: Linda Jofuku

1. Pedestrian Safety Project Update

Several meetings have been held in the community regarding the project. 154 surveys (33 Japanese versions and 121 English versions) were returned at a 30% return rate. The department is in the process of tabulating the results.

2. AMC/Kabuki Theatre Sale

Several community organizations approached JTF regarding their concerns of the sale because the Kabuki was a venue for many community events, i.e. Asian American Film Festival, SF International Film Festival, DOR, Cherry Blossom Festival, etc. There has been a lack of communications from AMC, ex. The Japan Center Garage has an agreement with parking validation and has not received any call backs from their corporate office. Background: As a result of an Anti-Trust lawsuit from the merger of Loew's and AMC, a final decision was to divest certain former AMC theatres. The understanding is that the new potential buyer must keep the site as a film venue. Cheryl Davis, Western Addition CAC and staff member of Sup. Mirkarimi is working to get more information to the community.

3. Tea Garden Update

Background: Park and Recreation Commission put forth an RFP for the garden's concession. Two proposals were submitted: Fred Lo - current concession holder and Carol Murata – Café Hana. Park and Rec staff recommended Murata's proposal but at their meeting this past week, the commissioners rejected both proposals. Although the original RFP was approved by the commission, a unanimous decision was made to restart a new RFP process. Dawkins reaffirmed that the goal of the tea garden was to expose Japanese culture to the public and not a business venture.

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## 4. Book Update

JTF has sold 317 books. The first printing of 2100 was sold out in a month's time and now selling its second printing. Financial report of sales will be provided.

Motion: Consolidate book sales into the monthly financial reports reflecting revenues and expenditures and provide a report at the February Board meeting: Tonai, 2<sup>nd</sup> – Ito, motion carried.

## 5. Directors and Officers Liability Insurance

Jofuku has contacted Bruce Iwafuchi to follow-up on renewing the policy renewal, which expired on December 2005.

## 6. Newsletter

Lisa Watada is working on the newsletter content and layout and will be finalizing within the next few weeks. This layout will be forwarded to the Communications & Marketing Committee for approval.

## G. Committee Reports:

### 1. Finance Committee – No Report

### 2. Business and Economic Development – Tak Matsuba

No report. Questions were asked of Tetsuya Yoshida if he was aware of future plans of either the Miyako Hotel or DOT Restaurant. Yoshida responded that he was not aware of any plans.

### 3. Health and Safety Committee – No Report

### 4. Cultural and Historical Preservation Committee – Rosalyn Tonai

Continue to coordinate with Hokubei to present their findings of the building's history. Tonai would like to invite Hokubei representatives to the next board meeting in February and present the findings.

### 5. Communications and Marketing Committee – Seiko Fujimoto

The committee is waiting for a draft of the newsletter, which will be reviewed for final approval.

## H. Other Business and Announcements

### 1. Japantown Centennial Celebration

Mori updated the board that there will be 40 events scheduled during the year to commemorate the Centennial. Tonai, Fujimoto and Mori are on the steering committee which meets on the last Wednesday of the month.

Key events planned:

- a) Official kick-off for the Japantown Centennial and Cherry Blossom Festival - March 24<sup>th</sup> at 5:30pm City Hall Rotunda. Mayor Newsom and Consul General Yamanaka will be present. Tak Matsuba added that the Japanese Restaurants Association will provide about 250 little bentos.
- b) Gala Dinner will be held on September 2<sup>nd</sup> at the Miyako Hotel. This will be a community-wide event with proceeds for a permanent commemorative "thing" (to-be-determined). Expectation for 500 – 1000 attendees/tickets

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\$150/\$75 seniors. It would be appropriate for the Task Force to organize a table.

- c) Centennial Community Picnic – September 30<sup>th</sup> at Speedway Meadows – Golden Gate Park.
- d) Sweepstakes draw tickets are on sale. Donation is \$50 each with a limit of 500 tickets.
- e) Centennial Website is [www.sfjapantown100.org](http://www.sfjapantown100.org)
- f) Photo exhibit project: Rosalyn Tonai and Theresa Ono are working on this project.

Motion: JTF will provide copies of select number of scanned photos (used in the Book Project) for the Centennial Photo Exhibit once specific photo releases from owners are obtain by Rosalyn Tonai and Teresa Ono: Dawkins, 2<sup>nd</sup> – Tonai, motion carried.

- 2. Status of Transportation Authority Multilingual Funding  
Jofuku updated the board of possible \$10K funding from the TA to provide language services. The TA will provide the scope of the services and budget and will contact Jon Osaki to finalize the contract.
- 3. Day of Remembrance 2006 to be held on Sunday, February 26<sup>th</sup> at 2 p.m. at the Kabuki Theatre.

Meeting adjourned at 8:40 p.m.