

# japantown task force, inc.

a planning, preservation, and development organization

## **JTF Board Meeting February 26, 2007 @ 6:00 p.m. Union Bank of California Hospitality Room Meeting minutes**

**Attendees:** Stephen Engblom, Seiko Fujimoto, Denis Henmi, Caryl Ito, Tak Matsuba, Sandy Mori (Pres.), Benh Nakajo, Rosalyn Tonai  
**Staff:** Darryl Abantao, Bob Hamaguchi  
**Guests:** Karen Kai, Walter Kaye, Don Langley, Yoko Morihoro, Selly Ngakwan, Kathy Reyes, Fumio Suda, JK Yamamoto  
**Excused:** Doug Dawkins, Michael Gowe, Mark Moriguchi  
**Absent:** (none)

**Recognition of Quorum established by 8 members.  
Meeting called to order: 6:06 p.m. by Sandy Mori, President**

### **A. Approval of Minutes: Meeting of January 22, 2007**

Rosalyn Tonai moved and Seiko Fujimoto seconded a motion to approve the Board Meeting Minutes of January 22, 2007 with the following amendments; remove duplication of Tak Matsuba's name (attendee) and addition of Caryl Ito (attendee), addition of JTF did not take a formal position in whether to support 99 Cents Store entering the Western Addition, and Stephen Engblom's comments about lighting and visual access through the windows of the storefront.

### **B. Report from Bob Hamaguchi, Executive Director**

**Funding Sources - 1/31/07 & Financial Statement 1/31/07** – There have been various revisions and budget changes, but more information will be available at the next meeting.

#### **Better Neighborhood Planning - Ken Rich, San Francisco Planning**

**Department**– On Wednesday, March 28, 2007 from 6 to 8 p.m. there will be a kickoff with Mayor Newsom and unveiling of the photo essay exhibition for the Better Neighborhood Plan (BNP). The meeting will also be a community discussion regarding issues to help determine the size and what area constitutes Japantown. It will be a nine to twelve month process to plan the future of Japantown. 3D Investments supports the process and designated a BNP Planning room in the Miyako Mall. The plan will take a classic look at the land use to examine various factors including housing, retail space, public facilities, and the public realm, which are sidewalks, streets, parks and open areas. Two things that the plan wants to be sensitive to are economic development in the future and historic preservation. The BNP will consist of four phases; identify the issues in Japantown, identify alternative solutions, narrow the alternatives according to priority and necessity, and work on the key issues selected.

Sandy Mori commented that the JTF would lead in organizing with the Planning Department. JTF will operate the BNP room in the mall on a day-to-day basis Hamaguchi felt it would be in the best interest of the community to have a

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representative group of stakeholders who will commit to attending meetings and be active in the process. Mori also commented that there is a Concepts Plan for Japantown and using it to help in the initial stages would very beneficial.

**Community Bulletin Board Status/Budget**– The budget for the Community Bulletin Board has been approved and there are a few locations that have yet to be settled on. The project is funded by the Japan Center Garage, but will be operated by the Japantown Task Force.

**Mayor's Trip to Osaka** – A trip of 40 delegates including Mayor Newsom and Supervisor Mirkarimi. A big thank you to EDAW for the wonderful slideshow presentation. Mayor Newsom was the first to speak regarding the initiatives impacting Japantown and committed to support the revitalization of Japantown. He was followed by Seiji Horibuchi of Viz Media about the J-Pop Center and why he chose to build in San Francisco's Japantown. Josef Daneshgar of 3D Investments closed the luncheon committing to the revitalization effort. The goal of the trip was to spark interest and Osaka's business to possibly come to San Francisco and more particularly Japantown in San Francisco.

JTF presented the PowerPoint presentation that was viewed in Osaka at the luncheon.

Caryl Ito asked who the target audience was. The luncheon includes representatives from the Osaka Chamber of Commerce (approximately 3,000 members) and the Junior Chamber of Commerce (approximately 700 members). Both chambers are planning a trip to San Francisco sometime this year and would like San Francisco's Japantown to be part of their agenda.

## C. Report from the Executive Committee – Sandy Mori

**Redevelopment Area A-2 Exit Plan** – Gaynell Armstrong attended the meeting to provide an update on status of the A-2 Exit Plan. The SF Redevelopment Agency still has a few agency-owned sites with some still under development, and the revolving Jazz Loan Fund. There is a revolving loan fund that will still exist after the transition process. It does not help fund operating costs, but is intended to support renovation costs. The maximum for a small loan is \$50,000 and the maximum for a large loan is \$250,000. When the agency leaves on January 1, 2009 the fund will still be used in the Western Addition, but will be transferred to the Mayor's Office of Community Development.

Sandy Mori commented that any of those who were displaced because of Redevelopment are entitled to a Certificate of Preference, however many do not know this opportunity exists or they have not updated the agency after moving to a new residence.

**California Leadership Council – Land Trusts** – In the past, the land trusts have been used to protect environmentally sensitive areas including farms, forests and open space. In Japantown it would be used to help purchase property in efforts of preservation. The land trusts would be funded through grants that are government

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funded. The three Japantowns (Los Angeles, San Francisco, and San Jose) are working together to hire a lobbyist in Washington.

## **D. Other Business and Announcements**

1. Press Clippings
2. Japanese Tea Garden Letter
3. Elephant Pharmacy Letter

Meeting went into Closed Session at 8:33 p.m.