

japantown task force, inc.

a planning, preservation, and development organization

JTF Board Meeting August 27, 2007 @ 6:00 p.m. Japantown Better Neighborhood Plan Planning Room Meeting minutes

Attendees: Stephen Engblom, Seiko Fujimoto, Denis Henmi, Caryl Ito (Vice President), Tak Matsuba, Mark Moriguchi, Benh Nakajo, Rosalyn Tonai
Staff: Darryl Abantao, Bob Hamaguchi
Guests: Harry, Bette Landis, Dana Lewis, Yoko Morihiro, Selly Ngakiwan, Kathy Reyes, Kenji Saruta
Excused: Sandy Mori (President)
Absent: Doug Dawkins

**Recognition of Quorum established by 8 members.
Meeting called to order: 6:10 p.m. by Caryl Ito, Vice President**

A. Approval of Minutes: Meeting of July 23, 2007

Benh Nakajo moved and Tak Matsuba seconded a motion to adopt the minutes for the JTF Board Meeting on July 23, 2007.

B. Shogakukan (JPop Center Status) – Seiji Horibuchi

Seiji Horibuchi and Jay Adams presented an update on the JPop Center Project that included revisions to the façade of the building since the last presentation. The changes to the façade of the building in addition to the floor plan and historical element are unable to be finalized due to the fact of the dispute with NPC regarding the issuance of an easement to allow the parking lot to be used for an emergency exit to the JPop Center. If this matter cannot be resolved, the JPop Center will need to add a 7-foot corridor through the building for safety purposes that will have major impacts on the floor plan design including a reduced lobby area that is intended to be open to the community during business hours.

According to the Redevelopment Agency's Master Plan for the Japantown area, the NPC parking lot allows rights for the businesses bordering the parking lot to have access to the parking lot. The Denny's building is the written easement allowing garbage and delivery vehicles access to the parking lot.

Upon approval of the easement, the veiling ceremony can be scheduled and construction can be started. The contract with Redevelopment states that construction must begin one year after the sale of the building, which is November 6, 2007. The demolition process has many stages and is approved at the time of each stage; the first stage needs to begin by November 6, 2007.

The JPop Center is in compliance with all of the historical aspects required by the SF Redevelopment Agency including oral histories completed by Rosalyn Tonai, NJAHS, photographs of the buildings, drawings and a plaque to commemorate Hokubei Mainichi. The location of the historical recognition has not yet been finalized due to the possibility in floor plan changes.

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The JPop Center is scheduled to have hours from 9 a.m. to 12 a.m. with the theatre operating from 5 p.m. to 12 a.m. The lobby and theatre will be available for the use of the public and community. The theatre has 150 seats but can have additional seating for conferences because of the space between the screen and the first row of seating. The theatre also has audio/visual equipment that can be utilized for conference use and Seiji encourages the community to take advantage of the future resources. Unfortunately due to the size of the building, there is not enough space to have a dressing room for live performances.

The building will have a theme throughout the building that will showcase all of the things inside the building. Each store will have an open façade with the perimeter to be lit at night with an l.e.d. focus on what occurs inside the building. This idea is the foundation for the JPop Center because like popular culture evolves and changes, so will the contents of the building. As things change inside the building, the view from the outside will also change.

The content of each floor will remain the same as last presented; the basement will house the theatre, the first floor will be the lobby with bookstore and café, the second floor will be the Tokyo fashion floor and the third floor will have office space for Viz Media and Hokubei Mainichi newspaper. The theatre will show a variety of films with approximately 60% Japanese independent films, 20% animation and 20% Asian films.

The construction time has been estimated at 14 months and Seiji would like to have the JPop Center open before Thanksgiving 2008.

C. Report from Bob Hamaguchi, Executive Director

Funding Sources - 07/31/07 & Financial Statement 07/31/07 – There are no reports for the month of July because JCYC is a little behind on opening the books for the new year. Bob will pass on financial information after he receives them from JCYC.

Staffing/Funding Projection Changes – We are currently going through the budget process with the garage. It has been pre-approved by the MTA so we expect it will go through smoothly.

Better Neighborhood Plan Status – Bob commended Stephen Engblom on a great idea for the Photo Contest and BNP Planning Room. The process has gone smoothly just like anticipated. We began the process with the three photographers and we displayed their pictures on the wall and as the process has progressed, we have replaced the photos with information for the focus groups. The steering committee met on August 7 and the minutes from the meeting are included in the board packets. We have completed 9 focus group meetings with approximately 200 attendees at these focus groups and have received over 150 online surveys. The Japanese speaking and the Korean speaking focus groups had unsatisfactory attendance. We have rescheduled these meetings and are doing a more direct outreach to specific individuals, groups and media. The Japanese newspapers have been very helpful and are currently working on Japanese translations. The Korean

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Chamber of Commerce and the Korean Cultural Center are providing us with assistance on how to outreach to the Korean Community.

The findings from the focus groups have been similar to those of the Japantown Concept Plan including a few such as maintenance/security issues, the contents inside the building are more important than the buildings themselves, more open space and more affordable housing. A reoccurring hesitation that is apparent in the focus groups is best exemplified by a quote Bob remembers from Jon Osaki, "There is a struggle to understand how this process will impact Japantown." There are many topics that are covered in the focus groups and many people find it hard to understand how it will change Japantown. Bob commented that the community distrusts the City and feels the City has a hidden agenda. Bob emphasized that this is the Jtown plan and people have to come together to contribute to our plan that can change the existing law or keep it the same. The community needs to take ownership and participate.

D. President of the Board Report from Sandy Mori

Resignation of Board Member, Michael Gowe – M

E. Other Business and Announcements

1. Press Clippings
- 2.

Meeting was adjourned at 7:41 p.m.