

# japantown task force, inc.

a planning, preservation, and development organization

## **JTF Board Meeting January 28, 2008 @ 6:00 p.m. Japantown Better Neighborhood Plan Planning Room Meeting minutes**

**Attendees:** Doug Dawkins, Stephen Engblom, Seiko Fujimoto, Caryl Ito, Tak Matsuba, Sandy Mori (President), Mark Moriguchi, and Rosalyn Tonai  
**Staff:** Darryl Abantao, Bob Hamaguchi  
**Guests:** Adrienne Woo, Cathy Inamasu, Gus Hernandez, Walter Kaye  
**Absent:** Denis Henmi, Benh Nakajo

**Recognition of Quorum established by 8 members.  
Meeting called to order: 6:16 p.m. by Sandy Mori, President**

### **A. Approval of Minutes: Meeting of November 26, 2007**

Tak Matsuba moved and Rosalyn Tonai seconded a motion to adopt the minutes for the JTF Board Meeting on November 26, 2007.

### **B. California Pacific Medical Center – Gus Hernandez –**

Gus Hernandez, Marchese Co. gave a brief status update on the California Pacific Medical Center Project. The project site is being planned for the old Cathedral Hill site located at Geary and Van Ness. The project proposed is to demolish the current building and to rebuild a new medical facility. Marchese Co. is beginning outreach for 2008 and will soon be entering the environmental application process. Hernandez asked for contact information from people who were interested in staying informed as the project progressed. Hernandez has agreed to come to future meetings as the project progresses.

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

**Nihonmachi Little Friends / Kinmon –** Cathy Inamasu and Adrienne Woo gave a brief report about the current situation and history of the Nihonmachi Little Friends being a tenant in the Kinmon Gakuen building. The Nihonmachi Little Friends requested a letter of support from the Japantown Task Force to consider renegotiating a lease with Kinmon Gakuen at least until September 2009. Generally the children who participate in the program stay for two years and the minimum extension would allow these children to not to have to find a new program midway through the program. In order for NLF to relocate to a new space, the facility would need to include a full kitchen, indoor and outdoor space as well as children size toilets.

Bob Hamaguchi asked who have has NLF received letters of support from. Inamasu responded that they have received letters of support from Kimochi, Japanese Community Youth Council, Asian Neighborhood design, and are waiting to hear from the Consul General's office and various churches in the neighborhood.

Mark Moriguchi commented that if JTF wanted to act as a mediator between negotiations or arranging a meeting between Kinmon Gakuen and NLF, a letter in

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support of NLF may have a negative impact from the viewpoint of Kinmon Gakuen. If JTF writes a letter of support of NLF, may result in Kinmon Gakuen viewing that JTF is favoring NLF and may not want to be open to any possible requests that JTF may make if asked to help mediate this situation.

Doug Dawkins commented that he has a concern from a business standpoint if Kinmon Gakuen does decide not to renew the lease with NLF, who will supplement the income that is earned from their main tenant NLF and there is no replacement. If the building has water, heating and air conditioning issues, they may want to tear the building down.

Hamaguchi commented that the building has a historical aspect that needs to be taken into consideration as the Better Neighborhood Plan will examine a building's history, zoning and use. If Kinmon Gakuen would like to change the facility into a performing arts space with the vacancy of NLF, they need to be aware of process to change the use. The JTF Board of directors agreed that it would be more productive if a meeting was arranged with Donna Graves; Historical Preservation consultant, Rachel Force; SF Planning Department, Rosemary Dudley; SF Planning Department and Shiz Mihara; Kinmon Gakuen.

**2008 Forward Agenda** – Due to funding restrictions, we can only plan for the next six months. Last year went to a board retreat and the list is entirely different, but includes a lot of the objectives from last year. The Japan promotion tour was originally intended to promote Japantown in the spring to solicit tenants and a video. Bob has decided the 5,000 would be more productive to be used in other projects. Bob attended a meeting with the Merchant's Association with \$5,000 as seed money with the hopes of matching funds from the JMA. Caryl Ito commented that the convention bureau prioritizing money toward promoting community neighborhood activities in SF. Ito will raise this issue at future commission meetings.

**Funding Sources - 12/31/07 / Budget Changes** – For the 2008-2009 fiscal year, we plan on reapplying for additional funding from the MTA. Originally we thought we wouldn't, but the finance director encouraged us to apply again. They would be looking at the marketing and how the revenues have or have not increased. We are trying to work with Richard Hashimoto, Japan Center Garage and if the marketing we are doing shows if the parking revenue has increased.

Rosalyn Tonai commented that she does not like how that evaluation is performance based and that she was under the assumption we would be applying for MOCD funds. Sandy Mori responded that we would be applying for both and are trying to setup a meeting with Adrienne Pon.

Mark Moriguchi asked if the validation program generates a lot of revenue. Hamaguchi responded that indirectly yes it does because it lowers the rate for the first three hours and is the regular rate thereafter. It depends on how long patrons stay in the garage. The validation program is a short term effort, whereas the capital improvements such as the improved signage and promotion efforts are long term. Moriguchi asked if it is possible to be evaluated on the membership of merchant validation rather than the overall parking revenue.

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**Better Neighborhood Plan Status** – Everyone should have received the BNP newsletter announcing the upcoming Tuesday, February 12 Community Meeting at the JCCNC and the second series of focus groups. The upcoming focus groups will have the consultants presenting some of their recommendations for the future. Hamaguchi encourages everyone to spread the word about these upcoming meetings.

**BNP Room Opening** – We will be opening the BNP room starting sometime near March 1 on Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday from 12 to 5 p.m. There have been many people who stop at the window of the room to see what is happening here. Now that we are at a critical time in the project it is necessary to give the community extra opportunities to provide feedback on various issues.

**Community Calendar** – We have started a community calendar for all of 2008. We would appreciate it if everyone could email us with any events to add to the calendar.

**Merchants re: Video & Media Plan** – Hamaguchi will be meeting with the merchants on February 5 to discuss the creating a video for the businesses in Japantown and present the idea of a media plan. Hamaguchi has met with Diane Fukuda and she recommends doing a good PowerPoint presentation if we will only be using the video for small audiences. The cost of doing a full video is beyond our budget.

## D. President of the Board Report from Sandy Mori

**SPUR Lunch Forum** – Rosie Dudley, Stephen Engblom, Bob Hamaguchi, Ken Rich, and Sandy Mori made a presentation at a SPUR Lunch Forum to educate those who attended.

**JTF Newsletter Donations** – Included in the Board packet is a list of donors from the Winter 2007 Newsletter. We would like to thank everyone who has continued to support JTF.

## E. Other Business and Announcements

1. Press Clippings
2. The next BNP Community Meeting #4 is scheduled for Tuesday, February 12, from 6 to 9 p.m.
3. Rosalyn Tonai commented that Tony Kim and Kelly Pepper have not yet attended a JTF Board Meeting and would appreciate it they came and introduced themselves to JTF.
4. Sandy Mori also distributed an article in the SF Examiner that stated the Geary BRT was a waste of money and a terrible idea. Sandy will work with Bob and Zabe Bent on issuing a statement in response to this critical article.