

japantown task force, inc.

a planning, preservation, and development organization

JTF Board Meeting
August 4, 2008 @ 6:00 p.m.
Japantown Better Neighborhood Plan Planning Room
Meeting minutes

Attendees: Doug Dawkins, Seiko Fujimoto, Caryl Ito, Sandy Mori (President), Mark Moriguchi, Benh Nakajo, Rosalyn Tonai, Lisa Watada
Staff: Darryl Abantao, Bob Hamaguchi
Guests: Lynne Horiuchi, JK Yamamoto
Absent: Stephen Engblom, Denis Henmi, Tak Matsuba

Recognition of Quorum established by 8 members.
Meeting called to order: 6:10 p.m. by Sandy Mori, President

A. Approval of Minutes: Meeting of June 30, 2008

B. Western Addition A-2 Transition Plan / Certificate of Preference Update (Fred Blackwell & Gaynell Armstrong)

The Redevelopment Agency has been working on a transition plan for the A2 district that will be sunsetting in 2009. Fred Blackwell, SF Redevelopment Executive Director feels the transition process of A2 has required a lot more thoughtfulness for various reasons. The jurisdiction of A2 is unique because traditionally, RDA's jurisdiction is generally broad while the A2 includes expanded investment, has been more involved with more city departments, and has been more active in the revitalization of the Fillmore Corridor. There is also the deep history of redevelopment which requires higher expectations for the level of thoughtfulness of the transition.

Continuing with the July 10 presentation to the commission, Blackwell wants to continue the dialogue with the communities. Various city departments will be taking on the responsibilities normally handled by RDA. For example the Planning Department receiving entitlements and conflicts in zoning in A2 with underlying zoning code and expanded DPW maintenance on Fillmore or Jtown. RDA wants feedback on where the gaps are and where they can focus their efforts for the remaining transition process.

Physical Elements – DPW will be taking over in consultation with the Public Utilities Commission. They will be terminating the encroachment permit that allows RDA to do the maintenance and work. Current light fixtures will be transitioning to the current city standard. Trees have caused cement and pavers to lift. If you look north to south, the street looks like a wave. Trash receptacles also need fixing. At Fillmore and Geary, the Blue Bridge Glass has been damaged or shattered. DPW has fixed it and has two panels that were previously paid for and has budget for another panel costing \$12,000.

Economic and Business Development Program – The Fillmore Jazz revolving loan program will be continued through the Mayor's office of Community Development. The workforce Center provides access to a broad continuum of employment and training opportunities.

Zoning and Entitlements – There is a MOU with the SF Planning Department to return to SF Planning. Underlying zoning for the A2 is similar to what exists. The biggest change is who to report to when applying for permits or going for project review.

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Housing – There are several housing developments in progress. 1345 Turk Street will include 32 units of affordable housing for 1st time homeowners. MLK Marcus Garvey Coop Apartments are 311 existing units of coop homeownership housing in need of substantial rehabilitation. MLK Marcus Garvey Coop Apartments will extend the affordability for an additional 50 years and give preference to certificate of preference holders. Mary Helen Rogers Senior Community (Central Freeway Parcel C) is 100 units of affordable senior housing rental. This will include 20 units set aside for formerly homeless seniors. The initial term is affordable for 65 years plus 44 year renewal and preference to certificate holders. Central Freeway Parcel G is 120 units of supportive housing for formerly homeless with ground floor retail. Kaiser development at 2139 O'Farrell Street is replacement housing with 21 low and moderate income rental units. Nihonmachi Terrace at 1615 Sutter Street is rehabilitating existing low and moderate income rental units. SFRA is going to issue tax-exempt multifamily bonds. RDA will make sure tenants are aware of impacts and are aware of the need for multilingual outreach. Rosa Parks is a new construction of Senior Housing funded by MOH with entitlements by DCP.

Certificate of Preference – As of June 2007, 4,729 certificates were issued with 1,099 be exercised. 488 have been cancelled and no address for 2,942 holders is available. There are 254 certificates currently active. Currently, the certificate is valid until two years after the expiration of the project. Jurisdiction in the Western Addition is January 1, 2009 and can be used until January 1, 2011. Redevelopment has extended the validity for an additional 15 years, so the certificates are eligible until January 1, 2026.

This time extension would allow more time to use the certificates, but also more time to find the information for the remaining certificate holders who do not have contact information. Originally it was given to the male head of household, but a change in 1998 included all people listed in the site occupant records. The program would also assist with establishing a down payment with no additional finance subsidy attached to the certificate holder. On a 2nd loan term, the maximum is \$100,000 or 50% of the purchase price. RDA would be a silent second with a 45 year term open sale or transaction, interest share of appreciation and the buyer would need to have a 5% down payment (with 3% being their own funds). There is also an IDA match of up to \$400,000 with 2.5% of purchase price or \$5,000. This would engage Redevelopment early and provide matching dollars. Expansion of the Preference to residential C for rental or ownership based on exercising the success of a rental lease, purchase of a cooperative share or purchase an SFRA assisted home. Currently, if resident A has exercised the certificate, resident C would not have additional preference rights. This expansion would allow residential C certificate holders to have preference consideration regardless of whether residential A was exercised.

C. Report from Bob Hamaguchi, Executive Director

Financials/Funding Sources– The end of the year financial statement is enclosed in the Board of Directors information packet. JTF closed with a surplus of approximately \$8,000. Of the \$100,000 Japan Center Garage budget we used \$90,000 to fund projects over the past year. We utilized the entire \$25,000 grant from the Gerbode Foundation. We have received the \$8,000 PG&E grant and that will help support us until we get more funding secured. The Mayor's Office of Workforce and Economic Development signed an amendment for \$25,000 and we are waiting to finalize that funding.

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Better Neighborhood Plan Update – At the last community on July 9, we had approximately 125 attendees. We recapped the status of the plan and gave an update on the project schedule. There was also a report from Japan Center stating there was nothing major to update. The process still requires meetings with DPT and DPW.

The preservation and survey process was explained with various options that may be available to raise money for some of the older buildings through a formation of a historic district or identifying individuation properties. Ken Rich, Rosie Dudley and Bob Hamaguchi are discussing the possibility of having a repeat historic district informational meeting inviting property owners with additional subject matter experts like Alice Barkley or Tony Kim and Kelly Pepper.

There was a Landmarks and Preservation meeting on July 16 and prior to that meeting, a small group of steering committee members met and asked for a continuance to have the BNP reviewed at a future meeting.

D. President of the Board Report from Sandy Mori

Landmarks Preservation Advisory Board Meeting – July 16– A small group of steering committee members met prior to the Landmarks Preservation Advisory Board Meeting after discussions with the Planning Department that going before the Advisory Board, it would be inappropriate. Members of the steering committee felt it was premature to have the preservation element of the plan reviewed before having the meeting with more property owners to discuss and inform them of any potential impacts of having their building designated as historic or the impacts of forming a historic district.

Bob will move forward with planning to develop a informational handout that is a balanced view of the positives and negatives of what a historic district is. There are different neighborhoods in the City and the local property owners need to know the specific benefits or non-benefits that will impact Japantown property owners.

Michael Cohen, Mayor's Office of Workforce and Economic Development – July 29 –Michael Cohen visited the community on July 29 and he was very supportive of the issues that tenants in Japan Center are facing with potential relocation problems associated with any development of Japan Center. JTF will continue to work with the MOWED and seek any potential funding opportunities.

E. Other Business and Announcements

1. Community Calendar
2. Press Clippings
3. ADA Compliance (Caryl Ito) – There has been a large rise of lawyers going through the process of methodically filing lawsuits for small businesses for not being in compliance with ADA standards. Many small businesses are being impacted and there is a legislation going for approval that if passed will be in effect in January 2009. The small business administration is trying to help offset fees by giving small businesses \$500, but in reality these upgrades to be in compliance with ADA standards can cost upwards of thousands of dollars. The lawsuit gives businesses 90 days to make the necessary repairs.

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4. Safety Update (Alice Kawahatsu) – There have been several incidents that the community needs to be aware of including a mugging and robbery, another mugging and a third incident of someone attempting to snatch a purse. One incident involved Mr. Suzuki where he eventually died after being struck by a bus. From this incident there was money awarded to educate people about pedestrian safety. Alice will follow up with this and give an update at a future meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 8:57 p.m.