

japantown task force, inc.

a planning, preservation, and development organization

JTF Board Meeting
Monday November 2, 2009 @ 6:00 p.m.
Union Bank Community Room
Meeting Minutes

Attendees: Caryl Ito, Rosalyn Tonai, Mark Moriguchi, Benh Nakajo, Seiko Fujimoto, Denis Henmi
Staff: Bob Hamaguchi
Guests: Dawn Shaloup, Watsunya Ferreira (NJAHs intern)
Absent: Sandy Mori, Doug Dawkins, Tak Matsuba, Lisa Watada

A. Recognition of Quorum established by 8 members. There was a quorum.
Meeting called to order: 6:15 p.m. by Caryl Ito, Vice President

B. Approval of Minutes: The minutes of April 27 and June 1 meetings will have to be approved at the next meeting.

C. Dawn Shaloup, Potion Consultants - Dawn Shaloup, media consultant has been hired by JTF and the Japantown Merchants Association to do a merchant survey, develop a marketing plan for 2010, conduct a branding session, and develop a press kit. She will be completing these deliverables in the next two weeks. Interestingly, she also conducted a survey on her own of various people on her mailing list who are not connected otherwise with Japantown. Generally, the feedback she had was that these people were aware of Japantown, but needed coaxing to bring them here more often. She felt this survey confirmed her thinking that we have good opportunities to promote the area. The results of her report will assist the JEDM Committee in evaluating the potential of a CBD.

D. Report from Bob Hamaguchi, Executive Director

Financials/Funding Sources – There was a budget review. Bob is in process of getting a needed extension to the SFRDA grant before the Dec 16 expiration. He is confident the grant will either get extended or be moved to MOEWD and combined with their existing grant. There are no efforts underway for funding beyond June 30, 2010.

Better Neighborhood Plan Update – A community meeting was held on Sep 9 at the JCCCNC. There were approximately 40 attendees and was a good cross section of the community. There was a review of the Draft Plan, supporting comments by Commissioner Sugaya, a Q/A session, and discussion of the open issues. A proposed workplan (see attached) has been submitted to the Planning Department. It proposes a network of subcommittees to work on the issues raised at the Planning Commission. We are awaiting word from Planning of the amount of funding for the Jtown BNP for this next phase.

JEDM – The Japantown Economic Development and Marketing Committee has had five meetings to develop a plan for marketing Japantown. The minutes of the last meeting are attached. Of special attention are the comments of how the commercial businesses are doing in general. The economy is taking its toll on businesses, but parking volume continues up, the theatres are optimistic about the holidays, and hotels remain booked however at depressing rates.

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MOH/OEWD Business Assistance Grant - Bob reported that he has obtained four clients for business assistance. One is a lease review in which case he is reading proposed lease terms and making sure the client understands the terms and calculations of rent. He is not negotiating with landlords or making recommendations of accepting or denying the lease. The other three are seeking business planning and financing assistance. In all cases, the activities are being held in strict confidence.

CPMC Meeting Oct 28 - Bob reported that a meeting was arranged by Alex Tourk to meet with CPMC management including Judy Li and Geoffrey Nelson. Attendees from Jtown included Richard Hashimoto and Steve Nakajo. CPMC's Cathedral Hill project application to start environmental review has been delayed by the Planning Commission until December. They expect to be in EIR until later 2010. They must get entitlements by the end of 2010 or jeopardize losing funding from Sutter Hill. They must start outreach to communities and sought or advice on how to best do this in Japantown. We recommended they begin asap with a presentation to the BNP Organizing Committee. The presentation could be combined into the next meeting with Planning Department. Bob will coordinate with Alex.

Community Cleanup Oct 31 - In collaboration with the SF DPW, JACL and Kinokuniya, a Japantown clean up was held on Sat Oct 31. There were six volunteers that weeded and swept Buchanan Mall and raked leaves on Webster St. It was disappointing not to have had other merchants to support this effort.

New Quarters beginning Nov 1 - JTF has moved its offices to the second floor of the JACL Headquarters. The smaller suite will reduce the rent from \$458 to \$196. Also, we will be going on the JACL network and will terminate our DSL service further reducing our costs.

New Web Address - The web address for JTF was hijacked by an Australian outfit when the address expired. They wanted way too much money to release it to us. The new web address for JTF will be japantowntaskforce.org.

E. Other Business and Announcements

There will be a meeting with the new Police Chief Gascon on Nov 17.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:15 p.m.

The board went into Closed Session and guests were dismissed.