

# japantown task force, inc.

a planning, preservation, and development organization

## **JTF Board Meeting Monday, January 28, 2013 @ 6:00 p.m. JACL Meeting Minutes**

**Attendees:** Sandy Mori, Seiko Fujimoto, Caryl Ito, Denis Henmi, Benh Nakajo, Mark Moriguchi  
**Staff:** Bob Hamaguchi and Greg Marutani  
**Guests:** John Ware, Parks Alliance  
**Absent:** Tak Matsuba, Doug Dawkins

### **A. There was a quorum.**

Meeting called to order: 6:15 p.m. by Sandy Mori, President

### **B. Approval of Minutes of the Board Meeting on November, 24, 2012 was approved.**

### **C. Guest Speaker: John Ware, Parks Alliance**

The Parks Alliance's consolidated has been completed. The Alliance has had a fund restricted for the Japanese Tea Garden \$35,000 raised over the years. Mr. Ware has been a volunteer at the garden and recognizes the commitment of the community. He is recommending that an alliance partner be formed with the Parks Alliance as a fiscal sponsor that will be dedicated to improvements to the tea garden. He has particularly noted that the pagoda is seriously in need of repairs. He has requested funding from the Parks Department, but has been advised there are no immediate allocations available. He has reviewed past estimates and finds them very unreliable. He has solicited the help of Len Brackett, who did the renovations to the tea house and gift shop, who will do a cost estimate to renovate the pagoda. There is a bond issue for renovation of City parks. It is possible to lobby for tea garden, but first get an estimate from a reliable professional like Len Brackett. The alliance partner group would be a separate committee that would organize to support the tea garden. This is not a fundraising group. This group would be advocacy role to the Alliance. There was not a request for the JTF support, but a request for individuals to be recognized at this alliance partner. Sandy Mori, Caryl Ito, Mark Moriguchi, Benh Nakajo, and Bob Hamaguchi. Doug Dawkins had previously given John his support. Benh Nakajo recommended Steve Doi, Hats Aizawa, Travis Kiyota, June-ko Nakagawa would likely have interest.

### **C. Staff Report from Bob Hamaguchi, Executive Director and Greg Marutani, Community Aide**

#### Neighborhood Plan (Bob Hamaguchi):

The EDASH very preliminary draft was presented. It was mentioned that the document was still in draft. Steve Wertheim is still working on the final draft document. It will change, so be aware there will be a complete document for review before the next meeting. The community meeting is set for Tue Feb 26. This meeting will be rollout of the document and the upcoming months of March and April will be used to gather community feedback. Also,

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the Organizing Committee will be conducting outreach meetings during March and April. We hope to make revisions in May and take to Planning Commission and Historic Preservation Commission in June. The Issues spreadsheet from the EDASH was presented which could be used as a summary. A good summary of this document is that this is what can be done, not what is being done. We need a strategy document.

JCGC Board of Supervisors: (Bob Hamaguchi)

The Japan Center Garage Corporation is a non-profit manager of the garage. It is sanctioned under a lease with SFMTA. As part of a bond offering for renovations to city wide garages, the lease was needed to be amended. The amendment has been negotiated and approved by the JCGC board. The amendment is now being approved by the Board of Supervisors. The Budget/Finance Committee met and there were serious questions about extending the lease. Not all garages operate under similar leases. The Controller has in previous reviews viewed that the non-profits are redundant and not necessary. Also, a part of the lease amendment is that a capital improvement fund of \$2,000,000 has accumulated over the years. Previous requests to use the money have all been turned down by SFMTA. JCGC has agreement with the SFMTA that they will do a complete assessment of the garage infrastructure as part of the bond funding. The recommendation by SFMTA is that the matter is a policy decision of the board.

The JCGC board has prepared a summary of why the non-profit is important to Japantown. That it has managed the garage for over the years efficiently, and the advocacy role of the corporation on behalf of the merchants and stakeholders of Jtown has become an institution in Jtown. The JCGC board will be meeting Tues Mar 5 to develop its strategy.

JEDM Update: (Greg Marutani)

January JEDM meeting was co-hosted by ATT. The subject was safety and crime prevention. The guest speaker was from SF Safe. Among the recommendations made, the idea of forming a Business Watch was of particular interest. This would require the merchants to band together, preferably the Japantown Merchants Assn., to work together to help prevent crime. The JMA Board would need to agree to take this on and we would provide assistance in the formation. SF Safe would advise the group. It was recommended that Mary Ishisaki be advised.

February JEDM meeting was co-hosted by ATT. The speaker was Steve Suzuki who discussed the ADA compliance issue. There have been groups that have sought out businesses and property owners that are not in compliance and sued under the ADA regulations. This has resulted in large settlements that have either closed or seriously harmed some small businesses. Recommendations were made to attendees to get started on assessments of their properties. We were advised if assessments are underway or have been done, there is a much lesser threat of lawsuits.

As part of the powerwashing funding we received from MOED, Greg will be soliciting participation by Nihonmachi Parking Corporation and other property owners to be able to extend the powerwashing to have a greater impact.

MOED Mid-Year Report: (Bob Hamaguchi)

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As part of the process of seeking allocations for our MOED grants for 2013-14, the attached mid-year report was submitted. We far exceed all goals except the areas of marketing and financing requests. There has been a greater interest from clients in the real estate planning and city processing areas. A further discussion will take place with MOED about the objectives for 2013-14 during their upcoming audit.

## **D. Presidents Report from Sandy Mori**

### Paina

Sandy Mori reported that Paina will be heard at Planning Commission on Thur Feb 7. There is a serious question of their community support. Irrespective, Paina has continued to have issues with the theatre. Originally, the idea of entertainment with the dinner has turned into a more nightclub setting. The sound issue has continued with the theatre. Our original support was predicated on the former idea of entertainment with dinner, not a night club. Our position continues that Paina must reach satisfactory noise levels to the satisfaction of the theatre.

Sandy Mori reported that a group from Japantown will meet with Supervisor Breed on Feb 11.

## **E. Other Business and Announcements**

There was no new business or announcements.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:30 p.m.