



**JAPANTOWN TASK FORCE BOARD MEETING
WEDNESDAY, APRIL 15, 2015
JAPANESE AMERICAN CITIZENS LEAGUE HQ**

Minutes

- ATTENDEES:** Anthony Brown, Judy Hamaguchi, Miki Heitzman, David Ishida, Alice Kawahatsu, Mark Moriguchi, Glynis Nakahara, Neal Taniguchi, Rosalyn Tonai, Paul Wermer
- ABSENT:** Richard Hashimoto, Seiko Fujimoto, Richard Matsuno, Steve Nakajima, Benh Nakajo, Jon Osaki, (all excused)
- STAFF:** Bob Hamaguchi, Greg Marutani, Greg Vilorio
- GUESTS:** Kiyomi Tanaka, Kenji Taguma, Hiroshi Fukuda, Tomo Hirai, Michiko Yamada, Karen Kai, Dave Latina, Kathie Cheatham, Beau Simon, Ryosuke Kimura, Rose Hillson, Marlayne Morgan

I. Call to Order

The meeting called to order at 6:00 p.m. by Alice Kawahatsu, President. Quorum established at 6:55 p.m.

II. Approval of Minutes of the Board Meeting on March 18, 2015.

M/S/C: (Paul Wermer/Rosalyn Tonai) to approve the March 18, 2015 minutes as submitted. Motion unanimously approved.

- i. Comments: Page 2, C. 2. Statement is too vague and needs to be more explicit.

The entry in the minutes “1481 Post Street Development Project - Bob Hamaguchi explained that the JTF has made several attempts to have the 1481 Post Street engage with the community” was re-written as “Bob Hamaguchi explained that the JTF has made three sincere attempts to have the 1481 development team meet with JTF Land Use committee to discuss their project and they have declined to meet with us.”

III. Consent Items – No Consent Items

IV. Special Guests – Ryosuke Kimura – JiNS Eyewear & Kenji Taguma – Nichi Bei Foundation

- a. Ryosuke Kimura, JiNS Eyewear - Mr. Kimura, corporate planning officer, introduced a their new eyewear company located in downtown San Francisco. JiNS is a leading eyewear company in Japan which recently opened a store in San Francisco. They opened on April 10 on Powel Street near Uniqlo and Walgreens. Kimura offered his support to the Japantown community on behalf of JiNS.
- b. Kenji Taguma, Nichi Bei Foundation – Mr. Taguma introduced Kiyomi Tanaka, co-chair of the Soy and Tofu Festival and the Board Chair of the Nichi Bei Foundation. Taguma said the Nichi Bei may have the longest current historical legacy here in Japantown with

the establishment of the Nichi Bei Shinbun in 1899. He introduced current initiatives that the Nichi Bei foundation is undertaking like the Japanese Cultural Guide which lists in one place all the Japanese cultural festivals across the country. Also, Taguma talked about the SF Japantown guide, which lists every business in SF Japantown and some businesses on Fillmore. The Japanese community resource guide lists a 100 word descriptions of all Japanese non-profits in California, a Japanese language school directory, and a focus on the last three Japantowns.

V. Committee Reports

a. Land Use / Transportation Committee (Paul Wermer)

i. 1481 Post Project

Paul Wermer is recommending that the board to approve two motions -- 1) underlying principles for the position that the JTF is taking in regards to the project and 2) the JTF position statement – the project as proposed, exceeding the height over existing code sets a bad precedent. Bob Hamaguchi added that he recently received an email from Linda Corso that they met with Kimochi's board and are aware of the community needs and look forward to meeting with the JTF Land Use Committee soon. Mark Moriguchi added that the Kimochi board did not take an action. Hamaguchi will invite the developer to the May 12 Land Use committee meeting.

Comments: Kathy Cheatham, Sequoia's Resident Association President, commented that the height and breadth of the project has always been the issue and the lack of dialog on the concerns of the project is very disturbing. Marlayne Morgan of the Cathedral Hill Neighborhood Association commented that all of the city is watching this project and is concerned with the precedent this may set. Other comments included that, if needed, find lawyers that can help fight our cause. David Latina of NCPHS stated that Sequoias has not had a dialog with the developer and the developer's message was if we(Sequoias) oppose the project, the community will lose the community benefits. We have proposed an alternative and committed to opposing the project as stated.

M/S/C: (Paul Wermer / David Ishida) The JTF Board approves and adopts the "underlying principles behind the 1481 Post Recommendations" as described in pages 2 and 3 of the "DRAFT: JTF Position on 1481 Post" document.

Motion passed unanimously.

M/S/C: (Paul Wermer / David Ishida) The JTF Board endorses the "Recommended JTF Positions on 1481 Post/1333 Geary Project" and the "Community Benefits potentially justifying a code compliant project", as described beginning on p. 4 of the "DRAFT: JTF Position on 1481 Post" document. The board authorizes Bob Hamaguchi and Paul Wermer, in collaboration with the Land Use Committee, to enter discussions with ADCO as guided by the recommended positions.

Motion passed unanimously.

ii. Neighborhood Commercial District (NCD) Zoning

Paul Wermer reported that the community meeting went well and no comments to date. The people who attended were very supported and the NCD seems welcomed by the community. Will be moved forward to the planning commission.

- iii. Draft Noise Control Proposal – Paul Wermer reported that he drafted the Japantown Noise control proposal that can be used in the conditional use process and apply to the Japantown NCD. Wermer stated that the current city noise enforcement process is not clear. The document outlines controls for fixed noises and a good neighbor policy for restaurants, bars, and places of entertainment with Type 47 ABC license.

Comment: Hamaguchi recommended that we table the discussion until we hear from Supervisor Norman Yee's office. There was a question about how this proposal is enforced. Wermer responded that at construction and at report are areas where it can be dealt with.

b. Japantown Economic Development and Marketing Committee (Alice Kawahatsu)

- i. Visitor's Survey – Kawahatsu deferred to Greg Vilorio. Vilorio reported that the committee launched the online survey on April 4 and received 114 responses. So far, Vilorio reported that respondents are heavily weighted in Bay Area and San Francisco. He said that The 12-44 age group represented two-thirds of the respondents. Buchanan Mall is lagging the places visited compared to the Japan Center East and West Malls. Vilorio said the committee will try to get manual surveys to the Cherry Blossom festival.
- ii. Alice Kawahatsu reported that we have two new sub-committees – Visitor's Greeting Center and 2015 Holiday Planning. the Visitor's Greeting Center sub-committee is being chaired by Alice Kawahatsu and Kathy Nelson. Kawahatsu encouraged suggestions and comments on where the permanent center can be held. Kawahatsu also announced that the 2015 Holiday Planning sub-committee is being chaired by Vicky Mihara of Paper Tree / Mountain Valley Paper Company and Judy Hamaguchi. Kawahatsu encouraged all in attendance to help on one of these committees.

c. Cultural Heritage Committee (Rosalyn Tonai)

Rosalyn Tonai, co-chair, reported that the JCHESS and City Planning agreed that the Peace Pagoda landmarking be pursued. The planning department has a draft report (www.sf-planning.org/peacepagoda) and included in it is the Peace Plaza in the report for consideration. A community meeting, planned for May 27 will be required to get a lot of the community comment on the landmarking and provide a platform for stories, documents and photos on landmarking the peace pagoda and peace plaza.

Comments: As matter of clarification the Historic Preservation Commission will have 3 steps. First, the matter will go before the Historic Preservation Commission as early as their June meeting and then go to the Planning Commission and finally to the Board of Supervisors. This process will go as fast or slow as the JTF wants to push this.

M/S/C: (Rosalyn Tonai / Paul Wermer) The Cultural Heritage Committee is recommending that the JTF organize a community meeting at the community room of

Union Bank on Wednesday, May 27, 2015 from 6:00 to 7:30 pm to provide an opportunity for interested individuals to share their comments and any concerns they may have about the 61-page draft report as well as any additional insight about the historical background about the Peace Pagoda and Peace Plaza, including photographs, news articles, or other documents that would be of value in preparing the final report.

Motion passed unanimously.

VI. New Business: No new business.

VII. General Public Comments: No public comments.

VIII. Staff Reports

In the interest of time, this report was postponed to the next board meeting.

IX. President's Report (Alice Kawahatsu)

- a. MOHCD Grant Update – Kawahatsu deferred to Bob Hamaguchi. Hamaguchi reported that the JTF was not awarded the federal funds this year but awarded \$40,000 from general city funds. Unfortunately, that amount will not get us where we need to implement JCHESS. Next, the JTF has a meeting with Kate Howard, from the Mayor's budget committee, on Thursday, April 23 to make a case for more money and to get it in the Mayor's budget recommendation. Also in attendance, will be staff from the Mayor's Office of Economic Development.

Comment: Board comment asked if MOED staff is strong supporters for the extra money for our money. Kawahatsu responded that Hamaguchi and her would need to make the case for the money not the staff.

Staff Follow-up: Will contact Holly Lung, to see if the attending staff is supporters of the additional money request.

- b. Suite J-town – Kawahatsu visited the Suite J-town opening event in the Japan Center East Mall, 2nd Floor. Suite J-town unveiled the Japantown Mandala artwork, which various groups in the neighborhood had contributed to the art piece. Kawahatsu encouraged everyone to see the final performance on Sunday, May 10 at 1pm and 3pm.
- c. Consul General Watanabe Farewell Dinner – Kawahatsu announced that Consul General Watanabe is moving back to Japan and his farewell dinner is on May 7 at the Hotel Kabuki. Cocktail dinner.
- d. Northern California Cherry Blossom Festival – Kawahatsu deferred to Greg Vilorio to report on behalf of Richard Hashimoto. Vilorio reported that the 1st weekend crowds were higher than in previous years because of the Hello Kitty Café Truck, Sakura 360 area and Glico Pocky Truck. Vilorio mentioned that there were long lines for the Hello Kitty Food Truck and the Glico Pocky Truck which sold out on both days. Overall, Vilorio was very pleased with the first weekend turnout.

Comment: Improvement of Signage at the entry points would be a way. Current signage is too low.

X. Announcements – No Announcements

IX. President adjourned the meeting at 8:31 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Rosalyn Tonai", is written over a light-colored rectangular background.

Rosalyn Tonai
Secretary