



**JAPANTOWN TASK FORCE BOARD MEETING
WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 16, 2015
UNION BANK COMMUNITY ROOM**

Minutes

ATTENDEES: Anthony Brown, Seiko Fujimoto, Judy Hamaguchi, Richard Hashimoto, David Ishida, Alice Kawahatsu, Mark Moriguchi, Glynis Nakahara, Benh Nakajo, Neal Taniguchi, Rosalyn Tonai, Paul Wermer

ABSENT: Jon Osaki, Miki Heitzman, Steve Nakajima (all excused)

STAFF: Bob Hamaguchi, Greg Marutani, Greg Vilorio

GUESTS: Kathy Masaoka, David Monkawa, Karen Kai, Kathie Cheatham, Beau Simon, Mari Matsumoto, Michiko Yamada, Tomo Hirai, Rodney Chin, Karl Matsushita

I. Call to Order

The meeting called to order at 6:08 p.m. by Alice Kawahatsu, President. Kawahatsu called roll of the board members and everyone at the meeting were asked to make introductions.

II. Approval of Minutes of the Board Meeting on August 19, 2015.

It was moved by Paul Wermer and seconded by David Ishida to approve the August 19 2015 minutes as submitted.

Motion unanimously approved.

III. Consent Items – No consent items

IV. Guest Speaker

No Guest Speaker

V. Committee Reports

A. Land Use / Transportation Committee (Paul Wermer)

1. Neighborhood Commercial District (NCD) Zoning
Paul Wermer reported that NCD hearing will be heard at the October 22 by the Planning Commission. Wermer will create and distribute a comparison sheet between 'what it is' today and 'what it will change to' after the proposed changes.
2. Geary Bus Rapid Transit (Geary BRT)
Wermer gave the floor to Rich Hashimoto to update. Hashimoto announced that a new date for the Geary BRT Citizens Action Committee is now set for Wednesday, October 7, from 6 to 8p. Hashimoto urged everyone to attend since the draft EIR will be available to committee members and one of the topics will be the removal of the Webster Street bridge. Paul Wermer updated the board that the action from the previous board meeting to draft a position letter will be made available before the October 7 meeting for comment. Paul added that he is working with Karen Kai to get

a better sense about the Webster Street bridge concerns from the St. Francis Square residents.

3. 1481 Post St. Project

The 1481 developers held their listening session with the community on September 15 at Japanese Cultural Community Center of Northern California. There were about 60 people in attendance and lasted till about 8 p.m..

Comments: Kawahatsu commented that the meeting was more than just a listening session and the developers wanted to know what community benefits would be needed to get support for the project. She added that there was good representation from the senior community (Sequoias, The Carlisle, St. Francis Square, etc.) and the attendance was primary local residents. Hamaguchi recommended to the developer at the meeting to continue to outreach and not stop with this community listening session. Hamaguchi also noted that there were two advocates for the project – one resident and one non-resident. Wermer was asked if any organization, individuals or groups discuss what community benefits were needed in Japantown. Wermer commented that he told the developer that they should provide affordable housing that offsets the demand in units for the city as well as providing funds to offset the demand in transportation. A comment was made that the developer has been consistent that they have elected to pay into the general Mayor's fund for rehabilitated affordable housing. Another comment made during the meeting that the main community benefit would be that the developer should stay within the height limit as described by the JCHESS and defined for the Japantown area planning code.

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

1. 2015 Japantown Holiday Sub-committee (Vicky Mihara-Avery/Judy Hamaguchi) – Judy Hamaguchi updated the status of the project. The outreach letter needs to be updated to reflect what each donor gets for his or her contribution amount and will be updated next week.

Comment: Richard Hashimoto commented that he updated the Recreation and Park department about this project.

2. 3D Mural Project Proposal – Kawahatsu reported that Adam Straus presented at the Japantown Economic Development and Marketing Committee meeting that he is proposing a mural project for the Geary side of the East and West Japan Center Malls. Straus is in the process of polling the merchants of the mall about the project and presenting the results to the mall ownership. Kawahatsu also reported that Straus stated at the meeting that he would like to see a greater project of art murals around Japantown. Project has not been vetted or started by mall ownership.

Comment: There was comment if this will be public art and Bob Hamaguchi responded that he was told it will not be public art. Kawahatsu reported that there was some concern at the meeting that a community artist(s) should get involved in the project. There was a comment of concern of the “permanency” of the mural that is in public view and should warrant public oversight. A comment was noted that the Visual Rights Act exists in State and Federal forms to protect artists from taking down artwork may play into this project.

C. Cultural Heritage Committee (Rosalyn Tonai)

1. Peace Pagoda and Peace Plaza Landmarking - Rosalyn Tonai gave the floor to Bob Hamaguchi. Hamaguchi reported that they had a cross-agency meeting that had jurisdiction of the Peace Pagoda and Peace plaza, namely, Planning Department, SF Metropolitan Transportation Agency (SF MTA), SF Recreation and Park Department. Hamaguchi pointed out that the leaking of the Peace Plaza has not been addressed and gave them a memo that outlined the needs other than the leaking issue. The meeting was attended by all agencies except SF MTA. There will be subsequent meetings for follow up.

Comments: It was commented that if the grant proposal to the SF Japantown Foundation be funded, then JTF staff would be fortified to pursue the community oversight needed for the Peace Pagoda/Plaza renovation more effectively. Board suggested that a written plan/timeline be developed for the next steps so that this project can move forward with lessons learned from the past and with greater accountability and coordination among all parties and departments.

Staff Action: to develop a timeline / plan for the Peace Pagoda/ Plaza renovation as a guide to direct agencies and dollars. The SF Japantown Foundation grant award shall be used to fund this activity.

2. Arts Commission Passport Event – Arts Commission Passport Event – Tonai reported that we are still moving forward on the passport event. The event is held every year by the SF Arts Commission (SFAC) and **this year will** be held in SF Japantown on Sunday, October 18 from 12p to 4p. There will be 14 artists and 12 merchant locations. Kawahatsu added that there is a pre-event for the artists on October 7, 6pm-8pm at the Japanese American Citizen's League Headquarters, 1765 Sutter Street. Kawahatsu encourages the board to attend since this is a JTF event.

Comment: There is concern that the pre-event overlaps with the Geary BRT CAC meeting on October 7.

3. Comfort Women Resolution Update: Committee chair Rosalyn Tonai reported that the recommendation from the committee is to request a delay in the passage of the resolution in order to conduct outreach and to review the outcome and impact of the establishment of such memorial on Japantown residents and the Japanese American community in the wake of a perceived anti-Japanese backlash. It was clear that JA leaders were not consulted before the draft resolution was first introduced. Eric Mar's Committee on Public Safety and Neighborhood Services will meet on September 17 to move this to the Board of Supervisors for a vote.

Comment: Judy Hamaguchi reported that she attended the meeting that Peter Yamamoto requested of Sup. Mar's office. Only Eric Mar's staff was present to answer questions. Comments ranged from opposition to support of the memorial with conditions. There was comment that the JTF make a stand on this issue. Comments were made to have JTF secure better communication with Eric Mar so that we can work together.

Motion: David Ishida moved to request Supervisor Mar to delay the passage of the resolution and grant us the opportunity to review and address the anti-Japan backlash concerns and the potential impact that the memorial may have on the Japantown community. Anthony Brown seconds the motion. Paul Wermer requested that we amend the motion to include that the Board of Supervisor's take no action until there is a design, wording, and designated location. Amendment dropped. Motion stands and states that the JTF board accepts the recommendation of the JTF Cultural Heritage committee to request a delay in the process of establishing a memorial to comfort women so that outreach and education can be made to the Japantown community, given the perception that an anti-Japanese backlash may impact the lives of members of the community and that a broad and inclusive process be established that includes key members of the Japanese American community to bring about a more amenable resolution to this contentious issue. And let it be known to the Supervisors that leaders in the Japanese American community were not approached to work with the broader Asian American community to resolve this comfort women memorial issue. And to direct the committee chair on behalf of the JTF to issue a letter to Mar's committee and the BOS. (See Attachment)

Motion passed unanimously.

D. Finance Committee (Bob Hamaguchi)

1. Grant funding from the PG&E is progressing forward and appears we have commitment for \$8,000.

VI. New Business:

- A. 110th Anniversary for Japantown – Bob Hamaguchi reported that the 110th Anniversary of SF Japantown is coming and Hamaguchi recommended that the JTF participate in the Silver sponsorship level of \$500.

Motion: To approve \$500 to the sponsoring organization for the 110th Anniversary of SF Japantown.

Approved unanimously.

VII. General Public Comments:

Kathy Masaoka, from Glendale, representing Nikkei for Civil Rights and Redress, came to speak on behalf of supporting the comfort women memorial. David Monkawa spoke and gave a perspective from Glendale and opposition to its memorial as well as the support for the memorial.

VIII. Staff Reports

- A. Time did not permit

IX. President's Report (Alice Kawahatsu)

Note: Below is a summary of the president's handout. Time did not permit presentation. For full text see Handouts for the August Board meeting at japantowntaskforce.org

- A. August 27, 2015 - Bob and I attended a meeting with Alicia Bert, the new Manager of Government Relations at PG&E. During the meeting, we briefed Alicia on all the current projects JTF is supporting and implementing and presented her with a bound copy of the JCHESS document. She has promised us that PG&E will be awarding JTF a grant for \$8,000 this year.
- B. Sept 20, 2015 (Sunday) - Sumo Demonstration at the Japantown Peace Plaza 11:00-5:00. Our "Discover Japantown Visitor's Information Booth" will be up and running during the event. Look for the RED tent near the Peace Plaza. The booth will be staffed by JTF board members, volunteers and a few merchants. Please come by and say hello.
- C. October 7, 2015 (Wednesday) Passport Artist pre-stamping gathering at JACL. JTF board will be hosting San Francisco Art Commission artist from 5:30 p.m.-8 p.m. as they meet each other and pre stamp 100 passports. The San Francisco Arts Commission will have some food, but welcomes the JTF staff and board to contribute food and dessert as well. If you can bring something for this gathering, please contact me at Alikakawa@gmail.com. Please note: Oct. 7 is a "working" party and the artists will be focused on prestamping passports which will be sold for much higher than if you come to the October 18th event and buy a blank one at 25.00 each. On that day, visitors get a map of the location where each artist is located and collect their stamp from the artist!
- D. October 18, 2015 (Sunday) SAVE THE DATE!!! JTF Board members are needed to help volunteer during the Passport event. Please email Alice K. if you can be there that day. Following the event, there will be a post party for the artistst, merchants, SFAC volunteers and JTF Board members. We are awaiting DOSA on Fillmore for the final arrangements.
- E. October 21-29- I will be on a trip to Japan for about 8 days. Please contact your committee chairs if you would like to put anything on the agenda for October. It should arrive no later than Oct 7. Please send to Executive Director, Bob Hamaguchi.
- F. *December 9,2015 (Wednesday) SAVE THE DATE!!! JTF Staff and Board of Directors Holiday Dinner and get together. Time: 5 p.m.-9 p.m.. Location TBD (your suggestions are welcomed!)

**X. Announcements –
Upcoming Events:**

- A. September 15, 2015 (Tuesday) 1481 Post meeting at JCCCNC 6 p.m.-8 p.m. (please attend!!!)
- B. September 19, 2015 (Saturday) JCCCNC "Tabemasho" Annual Fundraiser
www.jcccnc.org
- C. September 18, 2015 (Friday) Kimochi Golf Tournament email: asawamura@kimochi-inc.org
- D. September 20, 2015 (Sunday) – Sumo Event at the Peace Plaza
- E. September 25, 2015 (Friday) Nichi Bei Foundation film: Picture Bride (New People)
Tickets online www.nichibei.org/picture-bride

- F. September 26, 2015 (Saturday) SF Konko Church Yard Sale 11 a.m.-5 p.m.
- G. October 3, 2015 (Saturday) Nikkei Angel Island Pilgrimage 11 a.m.-3 p.m.
www.nichbei.org/angel-island-pilgrimage
- H. October 17, 2015 (Saturday) Kimochi Fundraiser “Sansei Live!” 8 p.m.-Midnight
Email: Steve Nakajo snakajo@kimocio-inc.org
- I. October 18, 2015 (Sunday) Passport Day in Japantown
Email: Cece Carpio at SF Arts Commission cece.carpio@sfgov.org
- J. October 25 , 2015 – (Sunday) 1945 : “A Year of Infamy” with Dr. Anthony Brown and talented musicians and singers . Location: Herbst Theater 7:30 p.m.-8:30 p.m. presented by SF Friends of Chamber Music.
- K. November 20, 2015 – Nihonmachi Little Friends 40th Anniversary dinner: Hotel Kabuki
email: nlfchildcaregmail.com

IX. President adjourned the meeting at 8:24 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Rosalyn Tonai
Secretary

September 16, 2015

Supervisors Eric Mar, David Campos, Julie Christensen
Public Safety and Neighborhood Services Committee
1 Dr. Carlton B. Goodlett Place, Room 244
San Francisco, CA 94102-4689

Dear Supervisors,

On behalf of the Japantown Task Force (JTF) Board of Directors, I am issuing public comment and a letter to the Public Safety and Neighborhood Services Committee on the draft Resolution FILE NO. 150764

The issue of the resolution's controversy was raised at the JTF board meeting in August and Board took action to direct the issue be explored further at the JTF Cultural Heritage Committee, headed by myself and members of the Japantown Taskforce and Japan town community.

We reviewed the resolution, spoke to a few members who attended an impromptu informational meeting after a request was made to Mar's office, checked in the local JACL, and asked Japanese and Japanese American community members about their concerns regarding the memorial and resolution.

As a result, we made our recommendations be known to the full board last night. The Japantown Task Force Board unanimously passed a motion to formally request that the process of establishing a memorial to comfort women be delayed and reviewed so that 1) proper outreach and education can be made to the Japanese American and Japantown community, given the perception that an anti-Japanese backlash would impact the lives and their community and that 2) a broad and inclusive process that includes key members of the Japanese American community be put into effect toward a more amenable solution that would draw all parties and neighborhoods together toward a peaceful, amenable resolution of this contentious issue.

In addition, it was clear that leaders of the Japanese American community have not been approached to work closely with the broader Asian Pacific Islander community on the comfort women memorial issue.

Thank you for your attention in this matter.

Sincerely,

Rosalyn Tonai, Chair, Cultural Heritage Committee
On behalf of the Japantown Task Force