



**JAPANTOWN TASK FORCE BOARD MEETING
WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 21, 2015
UNION BANK COMMUNITY ROOM**

Final Minutes

ATTENDEES: Richard Hashimoto, Mark Moriguchi, Glynis Nakahara, Benh Nakajo, Neal Taniguchi, Rosalyn Tonai, Paul Wermer

ABSENT: Anthony Brown, Seiko Fujimoto, Judy Hamaguchi, David Ishida, Alice Kawahatsu, Miki Heitzman, Steve Nakajima (all excused)

STAFF: Bob Hamaguchi, Greg Marutani, Greg Vilorio

GUESTS: Kyle Tana, Nancy Nagano, Kathie Cheatham, Beau Simon, Michiko Yamada, Tomo Hirai, Jill Shiraki, Mike Buhler

I. Call to Order

The meeting called to order at 6:03 p.m. by Paul Wermer, Vice President chairing for Alice Kawahatsu who is on vacation. Wermer 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 September 16, 2015.

It was moved by Glynis Nakahara and seconded by Richard Hashimoto to approve the September 16, 2015 minutes as submitted.

Motion unanimously approved.

III. Consent Items – No consent items

IV. Guest Speaker

Mike Buhler – Executive Director, SF Heritage – SF Heritage is a city-wide non-profit dedicated to preserving and enhance the city's architectural and cultural identity since 1971. Buhler spoke about Proposition J – Preserving San Francisco's Legacy Businesses. Proposition J creates the Legacy Business Historic Preservation Fund, which would provide grants to both Legacy Business owners and property owners who agree to lease extensions with Legacy Business tenants. Buhler recapped that in 2013, SF Heritage launched the SF Bar & Restaurant campaign, which was launched to bring public awareness to longstanding Bars & Restaurants in San Francisco. Supervisor Campos invited SF Heritage to collaborate on what was unanimously approved by the Board of Supervisors as the SF Legacy Business Registry. As a followup to this registry, Proposition J was conceived.

Under Proposition J, Buhler stated that Legacy Registry businesses will be eligible for a yearly grant based on number of employees (\$500 per employee, with a cap of 100 employees). Buhler added that property owners who extend ten year or longer leases to Legacy Businesses will be eligible for a yearly grant (\$4.50 per square foot per, with a cap of 5,000 square feet). The purpose of this legislation is to shift the burden away from the landlord and create a collaborative atmosphere.

Comments: There was a question on funding for this program. Buhler stated that this will be funded by the general fund and has to be approved each year. The Board of Supervisors have sole discretion on the funding. There was comment that the proposition has two misconceptions. Firstly, that it would economically boost floundering businesses and secondly, it would force landlords to enter into leases that are unfavorable. Buhler stated that it doesn't economically help the business and this Proposition is a tool to bring two parties into a leveled and equitable conversation with the lease negotiation. Buhler added that this is not regulatory and is only incentive-based approach. It was commented that this proposition maybe more helpful to neighborhood businesses and maybe less helpful in high rent areas like downtown.

V. Committee Reports

A. Land Use / Transportation Committee (Paul Wermer)

1. **Neighborhood Commercial District (NCD) Zoning**
Paul Wermer reported that Japantown NCD will be heard October 22 by the Planning Commission for recommendation. Wermer estimated that the item will be coming up around 1pm.

2. **Geary Bus Rapid Transit (Geary BRT)**
Wermer announced that on November 5, there will be a public meeting at St. Mary's at 6:30p. Wermer reported is clear that there is strong support on the keeping the bridge. The JTF will be submitting comments focusing on 2 items of question in the DEIR. Even though St. Francis Square and Japan Center are listed as eligible for registries, the bridge was not identified as of significant cultural area significance as it was built at the same time. The study also did not recognize that the issue of safety of pedestrian crossing failure of managing large groups of elderly and children and is a separate issue than an ADA crossing. Japantown needs both. Richard Hashimoto distributed drawings of the aerial view of the pedestrian refuges. He encourages people to come out to the meeting.

Comment: A question was made as to how many people can fit in the refuges. Wermer answered that it was not clear and the drawings were very conceptual.

3. **Face Shop**
Wermer reported met with project sponsor and 3D investments. Wermer stated that the store opened in July of 2012 and notice of violation in November of 2012. There was a CU application in 2013. Face Shop does not franchise people and what they do is license its name to people who use their products. The project sponsor owns 7 Face Shop store in the bay area. The store has a lot of support of the neighboring businesses.

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

1. **2015 Japantown Holiday Sub-committee (Vicky Mihara-Avery/Judy Hamaguchi) –**
Greg Vioria reported that we have hit the first goal of \$20,000 to light up the Buchanan Gate and the trees on the Peace Plaza. The committee is still seeking

more bids for the lighting. Vioria announced that it is planned to have an opening lighting ceremony on November 28, 2015.

Comment: It was commented that we should fundraise further through social media. Vioria commented that in this first year it was determined that we will limit the solicitation effort to see how we do in fundraising in general.

C. Cultural Heritage Committee (Rosalyn Tonai)

1. Peace Pagoda and Peace Plaza Landmarking - Rosalyn Tonai reported that three of the organizations met (Recreation & Park, Planning Department, Metropolitan Transportation Authority was absent) Tonai mentioned concern about the landmarking slowing down the plaza improvement process, and a letter from the Historic Preservation Commission stated that landmarking should not. Tonai mentioned that the committee is progressing with the landmarking designation. Hamaguchi added that the committee needs to meet with Recreation and Park Department to see how they can get it on the capital budget. Hamaguchi mentioned that Japantown needs to get an independent assessment to speed up the process.
2. Arts Commission Passport Event – Arts Commission Passport Event – Tonai reported that we had a successful event. Tonai acknowledged Katachi, Kinokuniya, MaruQ, International Art Gallery, Inchiban Kan, NJAHS, Nagata Dance Studio, Paper Tree, Pika,Pika, Machiko Folk Art, JCCCNC, YakiniQ café as participating merchants. About 400 people showed up with approximately 250 books sold. Greg Vioria shared some video footage he shot at the event.

D. Finance Committee (Bob Hamaguchi)

1. Hamaguchi reported that the JTF does not have to go through another RFQ process for the additional \$100,000 in Mayor’s grant funding and will go straight to contract and scope negotiations. The PG&E grant has been received. The Japantown Foundation grant has also been added. The JTF operating plan and budget has been put in the advanced materials package online. Hamaguchi is asking the board to review and comment on the budget.

E. Executive Committee (Bob Hamaguchi)

1. Hamaguchi reported that the executive committee is planning an annual dinner. The staff is looking into recommendations to changes in the bylaws. Hamaguchi expects the recommendations to be met. We talked about establishing a nominating committee for new board members and recommended that the executive committee, Judy Hamaguchi and Glynis Nakahara
- 2.

VI. New Business:

No new business

VII. General Public Comments:

No public comments.

VIII. Staff Reports

- A. Time did not permit

IX. President's Report (Bob Hamaguchi for Alice Kawahatsu)

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

- A. September 17, 2015 – Kawahatsu was in attendance for the Comfort Women Sub-committee meeting at City Hall. JTF Board Members who were also in attendance that day were, Judy Hamaguchi, Richard Hashimoto, Rosalyn Tonai, Seiko Fujimoto, David Ishida, and Benh Nakajo. During the three and a half hour meeting many representatives from the various Asian communities and a comfort women who traveled from Korea, were able to speak before the subcommittee members. Ros Tonai, JTF secretary and committee Chair of Cultural Heritage was able to present to the subcommittee a formal JTF board action statement which communicated to the subcommittee that this topic of the monument and resolution only recently was presented at our JTF board meeting and many of us were unaware of what was going on. Therefore, the JTF board requested that Supervisor Eric Mar and his subcommittee members delay the vote of this resolution and monument to the BOS until further dialog and community building could take place.

The subcommittee voted "Yes" to bring this resolution to the whole BOS to take a vote. One week later, the BOS voted unanimously to pass the resolution urging the creation of a memorial in San Francisco for the "comfort women". A full article of this meeting has been written and is in the Oct 1, 2015 Nichi Bei weekly.

- B. October 3, 2015 – The second Nikkei Angel Island Pilgrimage was held. Kawahatsu boarded the ferry from San Francisco Pier 41 with my church members, students from SF State and their professors, people who attended last year, seniors in wheel chairs, musicians who played on the ride over and at the site, and this years honorees and their families. Approx. 250 people were in attendance at the pilgrimage. A recognition of those who helped to preserve the Immigration Station, Christopher Chow and Paul Chow of the Angel Island Immigration Station Historical Advisory Committee were given certificates of appreciation and they shared their experience of how many committed people were able to rebuild and rehabilitate Angel Island up from the ruins and make this a historical place where this history will never be forgotten.
- C. October 7, 2015- The Passport Pre Stamp party was held at the JACL conference room from 6:00-8:00pm. 13 out of 16 artist attended this event. The evening was hosted by the JTF and the San Francisco Arts Commission. The

main purpose of this event was to provide a place where the artist could meet with each other, meet with their respective host from the store or organization in which they will be assigned to on the day of the official Passport Event (Sunday, Oct 18, 2015). This was also a work night for the artists and staff to get 100 passports pre-stamped and ready to sell to folks who can't come to the event , however, want to purchase one for 125.00(blank passports are now on sale for 25.00 each). It was such an enjoyable evening to see all the artists hard at work and also to be able to bring the merchants and business people together on this project.

D. October 9, 2015- Nihonmachi Little Friends Ground breaking Ceremony took place at the 1830 Sutter Street site. Kawahatsu was able to attend this event with Bob Hamaguchi. Special thanks go to Karen Kai (Cultural Heritage Committee) for helping to plan and implement a very traditional Japanese ground breaking setting prior to the blessing. Miki Heitzman from Xperience After School program as well as members from the NLF board, architect and planner, staff and teachers, students and parents were in attendance as the 3 representatives from the Japanese American Religious Federation (JARF) conducted an interfaith blessing. Initial construction of the addition to the existing school building should begin in 2-3 weeks. The site will be able to increase in enrollment and will serve from 80-96 preschoolers. Nihonmachi Little Friends will also have a celebration of their 40th anniversary in November. It will be held at the Hotel Kabuki. Please see their website for more info.
nlfchildcare@gmail.com

E. October 11, 2015 – Cherry Blossom Alumnae's 8th Annual CBA Conference, was held at the JCCNC. This years event was not a conference per se, but a hands on workshop learning how to make all kinds of sushi. The workshop was taught by Master Chef Kaz Matsune. There were about 40 participants in all. The 2 ½ hour workshop helped me realize that there is much to learn and appreciate about the art of sushi making and the importance of sharing your culture with others. Kawahatsu was able to also meet many of the past queens and courts, as well as some of the supporters and organizers of the Cherry Blossom Queen program. This was their yearly fundraiser.

X. Announcements –

Upcoming Events:

- A. October 17, 2015 (Saturday) Curry Cookoff (JARF Fundraiser) @ Christ United Church 4-6:30pm
- B. Oct 17, 2015 (Saturday) Kimochi Sansei Live Event (Hotel Kabuki)8pm-12:00 midnight

- C. October 18, 2015 (Sunday) Passport event in Japantown 11:00-4pm
Followed by a after party at Dosa for JTF board and volunteers and artists
*if you can volunteer, we can use 4-5 people! Help with setting up the
“Discover Japantown booth” and staffing it. Please get in touch with Alison at
NJAHHS.
- D. October 25, 2015 (Sunday) 5th Annual Spooktacular Halloween Party and
Trick-or-treat, Featuring Alphabet Rockers. 12-4 Peace Plaza
- E. October 30, 2015 (Friday) Halloween Carnival at the Japanese Cultural and
Community Center of Northern California, 6-8:30pm
- F. November 20, 2015 – Nihonmachi Little Friends 40th Anniversary dinner:
Hotel Kabuki email: nlfchildcare@gmail.com

IX. Vice President Wermer adjourned the meeting at 7:36 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Rosalyn Tonai
Secretary