



**NOTES FROM THE
JAPANTOWN TASK FORCE
LAND USE COMMITTEE MEETING**
1765 SUTTER STREET
TUESDAY, JANUARY 13, 2014

BOARD MEMBER PRESENT:

Paul Wermer, Richard Matsuno, Glynis Nakahara, Robert Sakai, Alice Kawahastu

STAFF PRESENT:

Bob Hamaguchi, Greg Marutani

OTHERS PRESENT:

Jason Tran, Hanna Lee, Jimmy Chang, Eun Hee Giron, Eun Young Choe Giron, Ray Giron, Karen Kai, Robert Rusky.

Meeting began at 6:05 p.m.

UOKI APARTMENTS/PEARL SPA AT 1656 POST STREET

Jason Tran, with the architecture firm Kwan Henmi Architecture/Planning, is the architect for both Uoki Apartments and the Pearl Spa projects reported that the work that has been going on includes installation of new power transformers, electrical upgrade, elevator installation, conversion of the top floor into four apartment units. Both projects require a change of use approval from the Planning Commission.

The two projects are being combined into one application to go before the Planning Commission. It is anticipated that the seismic upgrades should be completed in May 2015 with the apartments and spa completed some time in April 2016.

Notification of sidewalk closure and/or street congestion will be sent out in advance to the neighbor.

They intend to place the two logos (kanji) and the historical plaque on to the new structure.

Jimmy Chang, the architect working on the Pearl Spa portion of the project, presented the proposed plans for the spa. The target will be the local female residents. The spa will be for women only, this is due in part because the space is limited and attempting to develop a co-ed spa would not be financially feasible. Hours of operation would be from 8:00 am to 10:00 pm. No plans to serve alcohol. The front windows will provide a view of the lobby and the waiting area.

Recommendations:

- * use solar energy (thermal or PV) to reduce the power consumption to operate the spa
- * use lighter color on the front of the building
- * Ensure the rear yard at around level is designed as a permeable surface, so that storm water does not run to city sewers.
- * increase Japanese motif to the façade

The recommendation to the Board will be support the apartment portion of the combined project. There is no objection at this time to the spa portion at this time due to concern about the “women only” clients being legal and uncertainty about whether they have a policy regarding transgender clients.

CHANGE OF USE FOR SPACE IN KINOKUNIYA MALL

Richard Matsuno reported that a section of the Kinokuniya Mall is being considered to become a bakery. The space had previously been office space.

It was recommended that the owner go to the Planning Commission to find out if a “Change of Use” may not be required.

UPDATE ON NOISE ISSUE APPEAL AT BOARD OF APPEALS

Due to the confusion, inaccurate information, and no clear and effective process to follow between city departments, effective enforcement/resolution of noise and vibration issues is very difficult, causing stress and annoyance to residents. Often fixing the problem is very expensive, because so much was spent on initial but inadequate equipment installation – while designing the appropriate mitigation features as part of the initial installation would prevent the problem at much lower cost. The intent is to provide proactive resolution for all parties involved.

The recommendation is to make certain types of businesses a “C” (Conditional Use) until San Francisco revises the noise ordinance to address “tones” (noise with a very narrow frequency distribution), low frequency noise and vibration, and expands the definition of living space to cover kitchens, home offices, etc. In addition, for Japantown, the “C” criteria would be expanded to include demonstration of adequate noise controls and good neighbor policies as a pre-condition of approval. As part of the ordinance revising the noise and vibration criteria, the “C” for the trade shop, restaurant, etc. would be changed to “P”. Paul will present details at the JTF Board meeting on the 21st.

The meeting adjourned at 8:10 p.m.