



# JAPANTOWN TASK FORCE

日本町の経済発展・計画・保存

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, PLANNING & PRESERVATION OF JAPANTOWN

## NOTES FROM THE LAND USE/TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE MEETING OF THE JAPANTOWN TASK FORCE RING CENTRAL MEETING THURSDAY, JANUARY 14, 2020

### BOARD MEMBER PRESENT:

Glynis Nakahara, Jeremy Chan, Kenta Takamori, Lori Yamauchi, Alice Kawahatsu, Sandy Mori

### STAFF PRESENT:

Nina Bazan-Sakamoto

### OTHERS PRESENT:

Rich Hashimoto, Debra Low-Skinner, Annie Scott Rogers, Tomo Hirai, Karen Kai, Linda Walsh

The meeting began at 6:00 p.m.

### STAFF/COMMITTEE UPDATES:

#### JAPAN CENTER MALLS

Sandy reported back on the brainstorming session that occurred at the last meeting to discuss strategy and get to know each other, including what expertise they bring to the table.

The recording is available upon request. Please email Sandy Mori at [sandymori118@gmail.com](mailto:sandymori118@gmail.com) to request a copy.

#### CULTURAL DISTRICT / CHHESS

Nina-Bazan Sakamoto reported that there are new job postings. They are hiring a part time Japantown Platform and Marketing Associate to create the Cultural District website as well as the co-creative hub ([job posting here](#)). They are also planning to hire a fundraising coordinator and web developer.

They have been meeting with several city departments, and the one-time funds should be coming in within the next week.

The CHHESS Report will be updated based on the input from city departments, including what resources they can provide.

Four Japantown artists submitted a San Francisco Arts Commission application from the Seeding Reciprocity program. There will also be a [Japantown Artists Meetup on Friday 1/22](#) from 5pm-7pm. The purpose is to help artists network with each other, and also determine what their needs are and how they can be met by the Co-Creative Hub. Eryn and Ryan have been contracted to help with the logo, and lead a community engagement process for it. They will hold the artists meetups monthly.

They are planning a March panel with organizations like EBALDC, Little Tokyo Investment Fund, etc. to begin the discussion and explore options about community acquisition of land.

Glynis asked the committee members to send in matrix input by January 20.

## **NEW BUSINESS:**

### SF CLIMATE ACTION PLAN

A number of public hearings will be held discussing the SF Climate Action Plan. They are taking requests for presentations. Paul Wermer brought this item to the committee's attention and suggested having two meetings - one for merchants and one for residents and seniors.

Linda Walsh reported that she attended a webinar. One item is converting all gas heating to electric, which may affect homeowners and residents, and they will provide funding for people who can't afford to do this. Glynis noted equity issues relating to this.

Karen suggested expanding merchants to include businesses and nonprofits.

Jeremy suggested having one meeting instead of two meetings for ease of scheduling. Tomo noted that merchants have a hard time coming out to meetings, and said that the time period might warrant having separate meetings.

Glynis asked if anyone in the committee is interested in taking the lead on this issue. Paul Wermer is very involved.

### SFMTA TREE REMOVAL

There is one tree in the middle of the planned Buchanan crosswalk. SFMTA appealed to have this tree removed, and it was declined by the Bureau of Urban Forestry.

SFMTA appealed, and then realized that they have full autonomy with respect to transportation and can just remove the tree anyway.

If objections are submitted by February 10, 2021, then they will schedule a hearing.

Karen pointed out that the notice says they will plant 8 new trees to replace it. Karen does not think that the prunus subhirtella cherry tree is the best choice because they are small, and the branches will weep and block people entering/exiting their cars. Karen said the kwanzan cherries with a big double pink blossom are better because they grow pretty big, upright, and are hearty. It's also helpful for Cherry Blossom Festival visitors.

Glynis and Jeremy supported Karen's recommendation. Kenta said his personal favorite is the Yoshino; Karen noted that as a single blossom, the Yoshinos are less resistant to the wind.

Karen will communicate this discussion to Dan Murkowski. Rich invited people to send emails for him to forward to SFMTA.

## **UNFINISHED BUSINESS:**

### HOUSING ELEMENT COMMUNITY MEETING DATE

There will be a meeting scheduled in February. The first draft will be released at the end of January.

### CONGESTION PRICING COMMUNITY MEETING DATE

They are looking to schedule a date in March and April.

### 2021 COMMITTEE PRIORITIES AND GOALS

Goals for 2021:

A more methodical approach to monitoring the city's decision making processes and gathering data on land use and transportation factors

#### **Which target departments should we as a committee focus on?**

Kenta suggested: local District 5 supervisor, Planning Department, SFMTA, Public Works.

Alice noted that the Board of Supervisors' Land Use and Transportation committee is a good one to monitor. District 5 Supervisor Dean Preston sits on that committee. She noted that they discuss many relevant topics like the traffic speed on Geary.

Lori discussed the overseeing commissions, such as the Planning Commission and SFMTA Commission. Signing up to receive their agendas may be helpful. There's also the Historical Preservation Commission. The commissions themselves also have committees focusing on different topics.

Kenta noted that the areas we need to monitor may shift over time. Lori noted that there are different people at different levels, and it may be helpful to know key leaders.

Glynis noted this is a lot of work, and that we should coordinate who is monitoring what to avoid redundancy.

#### **Gathering Data and Information**

Kenta listed some examples, such as mapping the neighborhood and getting a better factual base as to how land is being used in Japantown.

Also, what are questions that the committee has tried to address that would benefit from more data.

For example, traffic ata. Demographics - who lives here, who comes here. Demographics of Japanese Americans in the city.

Lori asked if other community organizations may already have collected data on these topics. For example, the Center released data on Japanese American demographics.

Tomo noted that he works on the commercial map for Nichi Bei. Historically, Kenji Taguma has been very protective of this data, but Tomo is willing to share information.

Kenta noted that for a small community, everyone would benefit from shared data and information. Many of us may be looking for information on similar topics.

Alice Kawahatsu said that Walk SF has offered to host a workshop for us on how to collect data (specifically with respect to pedestrian safety?). For example, they could loan us a speed gun so the community can keep traffic records.

Jeremy suggested documenting what the Land Use and Transportation Committee has done up until this point as a resource for both current and new committee members. Kenta agreed that an orientation packet for new members would be helpful. Glynis noted that many studies have already been done, and that we should leverage those.

Lori suggested (to Cultural Heritage Committee as well) a baseline report of the inventory/resources in Japantown. Kenta wondered if a Japantown Wiki would be helpful.

Glynis asked about gathering data on how the businesses are doing vis a vis to inform future thinking about mixed uses and models for health and viability. Jeremy noted that a survey was done earlier last year, but that continuous, updated data would be helpful. Alice clarified it was an informal survey conducted by Grace and Greg. Kenta said a simple survey may be helpful to increase participation, and that the data can still be useful.

**PUBLIC COMMENT:** None

#### **ANNOUNCEMENTS:**

Jeremy discussed the Cherry Blossom trees in front of the JCCCNC, which were vandalized to the point they will not grow back. Tomo noted that Northern Station announced today that the culprit was caught, using JCCCNC security footage.

He noted that Japanese plums may be a prudent replacement, since they are more resistant to vandalism and will add some color in the winter by blooming.

The GoFundMe has received \$30,000 (<https://charity.gofundme.com/o/en/campaign/replace-cherry-blossom-tree>), and the story also received New York Times news coverage

Alice discussed the crossing, in front of the Sequoias (on Octavia and Post). SFMTA has so far decided to install brighter lights and study the effect, but the Sequoias are not satisfied. Brian from Walk SF has offered to do a 30-40 minute workshop on how to collect information (ex. speed gun). They have taken video to show that the signage/lights are not visible while going up the hill.

Glynis updated on the CCA collaboration. Glynis will be reaching out to interested committee

members about upcoming dates.

The meeting adjourned at 7:23 p.m.

The next meeting will be at 6:00 p.m., February, 11, 2021 online at Ring Central.