

**NOTES FROM THE
CULTURAL HERITAGE COMMITTEE MEETING
OF THE JAPANTOWN TASK FORCE**

1684 POST STREET
TUESDAY, MARCH 8, 2016

BOARD MEMBER PRESENT:

Seiko Fujimoto

STAFF PRESENT:

Greg Marutani

OTHERS PRESENT:

Patty Wada, Shiz Mihara, Karen Kai, Jim Yonashiro.

The meeting began at 12:05 p.m.

UPDATE ON REPAIR OF THE RUTH ASAWA FOUNTAINS

A recap of last month's meeting on the Ruth Asawa Fountains took place with Jim Yonashiro adding information from the Nihonmachi Parking Corporation (NPC). He informed the Committee that he began working at the NPC in 1993, his predecessor was Nob Mihara.

Jim stated that when the fountains were operational, the NPC had the catch basins cleaned out on an "as needed" basis, but discontinued this procedure once the pump was turned off on the fountains. During the rainy season the rain overflow runs directly into the sewer.

When the bronze fountains were installed he reported that the contractor who installed the pump and pipes was not familiar with fountains. NPC had the pump replaced with one that designed to work for fountains.

He added that the contract prepared by the SF Redevelopment Agency (RDA) for NPC indicates that NPC would be responsible for the maintenance of the surface portion of Buchanan Mall while the capital improvements and repairs underground would be the responsibility of the City and County of San Francisco.

Commenting on the assessment report prepared by the SF Arts Commission (SFAC) contractor, Jim reported that the Board of the NPC would not endorse the current proposal for the repair of the fountains because the assessment did not address the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) issue of the cobblestones not being brought into compliance with ADA standards and that the liability of any accident to any pedestrian needed to be addressed at the same time of the repair of the fountains.

He added that if the NPC endorsed the repair of the fountains it would appear that the NPC supports keeping the cobblestones as they currently exist.

UPDATE ON LANDMARKING THE PAGODA

It was requested that the CH Committee be given a draft version of the latest report to review that would allow the Committee to determine what sort of comments from local community members to formulate their specific observations and/or sentiments rather than leaving the topic so wide open for the individuals to consider.

It was also requested to find out if a replacement for Jonathan Lammers has been hired.

Another request was to “reconstruct the list of individuals who were being recommended for comments so they could be approached once there is some focus on what sort of comments are needed for the final report.

REQUEST TO RECREATION AND PARKS COMMISSION TO FUND ASSESSMENT OF PEACE PLAZA

Via telephone, Bob updated the CH Committee about the letter sent to the President of the SF Parks and Recreation Commission asking for funds to assess the leakage problem from the Peace Plaza into the Japan Center Garage so funds could be budgeted to get the work done as the leak has been an ongoing issue for many years and continues to be a problem that needs to be fixed. The letter included a brief history of the Peace Plaza and the renovation that was supposed to fix the leaks, the settlement of \$500,000 paid to the City and County of San Francisco that did not result in any remediation of the problem.

A consultant from Seattle has been approached to assist in determining the scope of work that the assessment would require and included in the solicitation of a Request For Proposal (RFP).

Bob encouraged individuals to attend the next Park and Recreation Commission meeting to demonstrate how serious an issue this matter is to community members and merchants. The meeting will be on Thursday, March 17, at City Hall Room 400 and begins at 10:00 a.m.

NEW BUSINESS:

A. Disparities in SF Arts Commission - Grants for the Arts

Greg referred to the report issued by Eric Mar from the Budget Analyst’s Office regarding the Hotel Tax Fund. He highlighted that since 2007 the percent of the fund for the “Grants for the Arts (GFTA) received 7.7% (\$13,988,000) of the \$182,604,000 to 4.3% in 2014 (\$271,613,000) that amounted to \$11,774,992.

A coalition of art groups is working on introducing a ballot initiative for November 2016 that would restore the percent to 7.7%. This issue will be followed through the API Council of which JTF is a member, and keep both the CH Committee and the JTF Board apprised of as support for the initiative may be sought from the arts coalition.

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Karen Kai announced a Asian & Pacific Islander Americans in Historic Preservation (APIAHIP) will be hosting their 2016 forum in Stockton from April 23 through 25. For more information visit their website at: <http://www.apiahip.org/#!2016-forum/u6u7a>.

The meeting adjourned at 1:15 p.m.

The next meeting will be at Noon, Tuesday, April 12, 2016 at the NJAHS.