



ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, PLANNING & PRESERVATION OF JAPANTOWN

**NOTES FROM THE LAND USE/TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE MEETING
OF THE JAPANTOWN TASK FORCE**
1765 SUTTER STREET (ONLINE VIA RING CENTRAL)
THURSDAY, JULY 9, 2020

BOARD MEMBER PRESENT:

Glynis Nakahara, Jeremy Chan, Kenta Takamori, Sandy Mori, Rosalyn Tonai

STAFF PRESENT:

Nina Bazan-Sakamoto

OTHERS PRESENT:

Karen Kai, Tomo Hirai, Paul Wermer, Annie Scott Rogers, Lori Yamauchi, Augie Phillips, Linda Walsh, Bob Rusky, Marlayne Morgan

The meeting began at 6:00 p.m.

NEW BUSINESS:

BUCHANAN HOTEL HOMELESS SHELTER

36 individuals are now residents at the hotel. Providence (based in Bayview-Hunter's Point) is the supporting nonprofit.

Questions have reduced. Sandy has asked Emily what the current rate of questions is.

Hotel Buchanan's FAQ was distributed to the JTF mailing list. Linda distributed it to the St. Francis Google Group.

Supervisor Preston did a site visit at the hotel last Thursday and met with Emily Glick. Sandy's understanding is that he was pleased to observe the program as it is so far.

Kenta reported that the town hall meeting with Supervisor's Preston will not be occurring in light of Hotel Buchanan's FAQ as well as their additional outreach, but Preston was open to holding it.

Ros noted that there is security posted at the hotel.

Alice anecdotally reported that she has seen individuals sitting in the Buchanan Mall quietly reflecting. She also observed someone sitting on the steps of Cafe Mum's playing their boombox loudly. Emily Glick clarified at the JCBD meeting that she did not intend to be sneaky or hide information. Robert Sakai expressed his disappointment that the JCBD board was not aware of this issue. He facilitated the discussion surrounding the Hotel Buchanan issue.

She said she was more comfortable with 1:1 meetings as opposed to a larger event. Sandy reported that Emily Glick was unhappy that the FAQ was sent on JTF's listserve. Jeremy and Glynis discussed that the purpose of an FAQ is to be widely distributed. Linda commented that the FAQ has been helpful to alleviate people's fears and concerns surrounding the issue.

Kenta clarified that the Land Use Committee is not the direct point person for this issue, as Steve/Sandy have had direct conversations with Sandy. However, we are continuing to follow the

issue as a committee.

Paul said that Emily should know that narrow communication does not build wider trust. Glynis said that she shared her thoughts with Emily about sharing information.

At this time, the committee does not need to take any action steps. Sandy will continue to act as the point person if Emily is communicating with JTF. We will continue to monitor the issue.

Karen reported that Emily has been communicating with groups on the block, such as with Nihonmachi Little Friends.

OUTDOOR DINING PERMITTING

Kenta asked if the committee has had any observations for whether it's working in Japantown.

Alice said she observed some Buchanan Mall restaurants like Kippu, Hinodeya, and Ramen Yamadaya. Jeremy discussed Pa'ina, which has been taking advantage of the curbside barrier space for additional outdoor dining. Karen noted that Pa'ina is a good example, as they have contacted the theater as well as other businesses to use additional space, while still leaving room for pedestrians to walk. They also have some portable heaters.

Jeremy discussed Picnic at the Plaza, which is starting on July 18. They are currently hiring people to staff that, either for personal pay or to volunteer on behalf of a community based organization to donate to. They are workign with Rec and Park.

Satsuki Ina has been hired by the Center to mänge the Picnic in the Plaza project. Interested staff can apply at <http://bit.ly/picnicattheplazasignup>

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

SUTTER STREET TRANSIT SAFETY PROJECT

Glynis showed the proposed curb configuration and the new curb configuration.

Augie from Nihonomachi Little Friends reported that the additional lane is used as a buffer lane for loading and unloading. Hundreds of people go to NLF, Kimochi, and the Center every day. It is a transitional lane. Currently, buses can use the second lane to pass. Buses are going to be held up by people loading and unloading.

Glynis reported that SFMTA is proposing the re-striping because they think it's a safety concern. There have been bus accidents. Karen stated that those accident reports have been asked for but haven't been received. Karen also said that the lanes go back to two lanes after the JCCCNC towards Webster, making the restriping even less important.

Karen and Augie said they have not been in meetings with SFMTA.

Paul commented that SFMTA's diagram does not show the before and after (what the lanes look

like now vs. what they will look like). He also reiterated his email to the committee which discussed that Muni is planning to eliminate several lines due to Covid/budget cuts. If the 2 and/or 3 will be eliminated, then there's no need for re-stripping.

Paul said maybe it's appropriate for there to be an auxiliary loading zone lane, similar to what churches use.

Kathy has talked to Preston's office, but he was unsure as to what they wanted him to do. He wanted to know "what buttons to push." Karen said the advocating message should be "it's not broken. Don't fix it." She noted that there are many streets that have narrow lanes but buses still traverse them.

The hearing may take place within the next month. Paul noted that waiting until the community hearing is too late.

Paul said to get a legal commitment that the 2 and 3 are continuing before moving forward. But Kenta noted that they have expressed traffic calming. Karen said that SFMTA needs to present these clearly, and Paul noted that the bus issue was the primary one presented.

Kathy has asked us to put the brakes on things since she is proceeding on another path with Supervisor Preston. Glynis said that they (JCCCNC, JCYC, NLF) are "handling it." Karen said that we should support those efforts.

Sophia, speaking for Edgar/Phil, said they would be happy to attend a community meeting. However, we may not have time before our next committee meeting.

Paul noted that SFMTA is good at telling individual groups what they want to hear, and then reporting something different to management (ex. with Webster St bridge).

Alice noted that Rich Hashimoto is part of the community advisory council meeting.

Jeremy asked why a community meeting hasn't happened yet, even though the committee has been talking about it for a while. Glynis said because SFMTA has continued to dodge the question, up until Sophia's most recent response. They have replied to certain things but not others.

The engineering meeting will meet, followed by the community hearing. Tomo reported that engineering meetings are held on an as needed basis.

Karen suggested that the LUT committee should take a stance and oppose the

Kenta noted that the support shouldn't be tied to the organizations, because the organizations may end up having differing opinions. Kenta noted that it may be better for JTF to take a stance after the community meeting, so that all of the views are on the table.

Glynis noted that she has not heard what the other organizations' opinions are. Augie agreed that it would be good to have all of the parties in one room to hear everyone's opinions. Karen noted that NLF has been meeting with JCCCNC and JCYC, but that other groups that use the Center space may have issues.

Jeremy said that alternatively, JTF could take a stance for/against the re-stripping, independent of the community organizations.

Glynis and Kenta both expressed that JTF doesn't have enough information to support or oppose this issue. Glynis noted that we don't even have an accurate drawing to represent the problem.

Karen expressed her concern that the committee may not be able to move quickly enough to address the issue. Tomo said that in the hypothetical that SFMTA decides to move forward with this tomorrow, JTF could oppose the restriping on the basis that there isn't enough time.

Bob said that we've received information from SFMTA. We have asked for additional information from SFMTA, but have not received it. He doesn't feel like we're fully in the dark.

Kenta noted that the burden of proof should be placed on SFMTA to demonstrate why they should make this change. Status quo seems okay, we've heard complaints.

Jeremy suggested a motion of no support. Kenta responded that it might not be strong enough.

It was clarified that it is okay for us to organize a community meeting without approval of the board. Ros noted that there should be a sentiment of upset/anger, and that SFMTA needs to understand clearly that the burden of proof is on them.

Ros motioned for the LUT committee to organize a public community meeting and invite SFMTA and Japantown community organizations to attend. It was seconded by Jeremy.

Bob seconded. Bob noted that the purpose of this meeting is not just for the SFMTA, but also community based organizations. Jeremy noted that JTF can organize/facilitate the meeting. The motion was passed unanimously.

Karen moved that LUT recommend to the board that JTF oppose the restriping of Sutter St from Buchanan to Webster. Jeremy seconded.

Jeremy noted that we have been discussing this information for several meetings.

Glynis said that she personally feels like she doesn't have enough information. She appreciated hearing from Augie, and she has also spoken with Paul, but have not heard about the Center.

Kenta moved to amend the motion that the committee recommend to the board that SFMTA halts the restriping process unless it sufficiently address community concerns.

Karen noted that this information is subject to interpretation - SFMTA may think they have sufficiently addressed community concerns, but JTF may not. Karen said that we can build a packet of the board so that they have a better understanding of the issue so far.

Jeremy noted that JTF's stance could become stronger later. JTF can submit a letter of opposition to the hearing, etc.

Kenta noted that it may be harder for the board to pass a straight "opposition" motion.

Karen noted that she does not accept the amendment.

Sandy noted that the deadline for the board packet is Friday at noon.

Glynis asked if the committee can request an opposition meeting in between board meetings. Sandy noted that the provision can be amended such that if timeliness is of the essence, then executive committee can take it up.

Jeremy retracted the second and Bob seconded it. Kenta noted that he was against the motion, but he noted that he may probably end up in the same position as Karen.

Bob noted that JTF can always revisit the position and find SFMTA's argument to be compelling.

Jeremy asked what the downside is to opposing and then revising it later if we change our mind.

Karen noted that the board can amend the motion. The committee is merely making a recommendation, and the board can decide later if they want to take a softer stance.

Alice said that she trusts Glynis/Kenta to present the situation. Even though we don't have all of the information, SFMTA has the responsibility to make their case.

The motion passed unanimously.

Jeremy has access to JTF zoom account. We will need to ask staff end of the next week.

Alice noted that if the 2 and 3 are cut, that would be a concern since a lot of seniors use those buses. It will be added to a future agenda.

JAPANTOWN CULTURAL DISTRICT CHHESS

Nina reported that the contracts of the consultants Lewis and Wes have ended. Lori is joining the JCD team on a volunteer basis.

An additional draft of the 20 page document will be posted on Friday 7/10 as well as Thursday 7/16. A final revision will be posted on Thursday 7/23.

There will be a special board meeting on Monday 7/27 to discuss whether to approve the CHHESS report.

The timeline is to submit it at the end of July, but it is okay to ask for an extension.

Nina thanked the committee for their input on the report, particularly about reducing the redundancy.

Lori reported that the report has been reorganized.

There will be only 3 overarching/broad strategies in the CHHESS report.

- (1) Preserve, Sustain, and Develop
- (2) Equip, Protect, and Support Artists/Cultural Businesses with resources / infrastructure
- (3) Advocate and promote Japantown's past present and future with City, donors/investors, and the public

Each of these broader strategies will have proposed tactics that are used to further these strategies (ex. community council, etc.)

Glynis noted that Lori has written long range master plans for Mission Bay, Laurel Heights, etc. Lori noted that she used to be the Assistant Vice Chair for campus planning at UCSF.

Nina clarified that she would prefer the board to comment on the version that on the 16th, and to receive feedback on the 20th. The JCD staff would like people to focus on giving their feedback in the 25 page report.

Jeremy expressed that that doesn't give the community a lot of time to comment on the revision. Bob noted that the the draft should be circulated to the committee.

Nina noted that most of the energy has been dedicated to the shorter version, as that is what will be submitted to the City. Tomo asked if the supplemental document will be submitted to the City, and Nina said that only the short version will be submitted.

Jeremy asked what versions would be posted on the website. Karen said that the timeline should be posted, as well as notify participants of the timeline. Nina said she would publish the 7/16 version on the website and notify participants. Jeremy noted that the timeline of publishing 7/16 and getting feedback on 7/20 is incredibly truncated and does not give the board or the public enough time to give comments.

Nina noted that the City is also behind on their timeline. All of the other cultural districts have extended their timelines. Glynis recommended that unless there is a restriction on Lori's timeline, take the extra time for people to give input.

Kenta noted that a huge burden has been placed on Nina's shoulders, and he appreciates her taking that on.

Sandy noted that the JTF board meeting will include a review of the CHHESS project, including process and timing. Sandy suggested to staff that they should ask for an extension through August. Lori acknowledged the truncated timeline and that they will consider asking for an extension.

Nina said their intent is to clean up the 125 supplemental report, but that right now they're focusing on the 25 page report. Lori noted that she and Nina have been discussing including some of the 125 page report as an appendix. Jeremy reiterated previous committee comments that having the supplement as part of public record is valuable because it puts people on notice.

Bob noted that the ~125 page report is significant because those details are part of the community dialogue ("the devil is in the details.") Ros noted that it can be easy to agree on broad strategies, but it can be challenging to agree on the tactics / how things are carried out. Glynis noted that the supplemental document provides integrity to support the final document.

Nina asked for clarification about why the term "master plan" is triggering, and said they were struggling to come up with an alternative term. They did not like the term "vision plan" cause it's too broad. Glynis reached out to Maya Small for feedback; it was somewhat unclear, but she didn't say that we couldn't have a master plan. Ros noted that that's why JCHESS was called a "strategy" as opposed to a plan. Glynis said she can get further clarification from Maya about the term. Nina noted that if a master plan triggers an environmental impact review, but it is what it is

(although Glynis noted it's super expensive and takes a lot of time).

Lori discussed the idea of a "blueprint" / area plan. Lori said that a similar plan may have been done in Little Tokyo.

Karen asked how this works with respect to JCHESS, since JCHESS did a whole process with respect to zoning, etc. Lori said that then the master plan would then build off of that. Nina noted that it was inspired by design charettes in response to the train line coming through Little Tokyo, where people decided what they wanted their community to look like.

Glynis noted that the Better Neighborhood Plan tried to do that, but it failed because the community felt it didn't reflect what the community agreed upon. Karen noted that the PEace Plaza meetings, as well as JCHESS meetings, also followed a similar model.

Nina suggested discussing Buchanan Mall as Osaka Way since it gets confused with the Fillmore. Karen noted that the merchants include Buchanan in a lot of their branding.

Glynis will email Lori / Kathy and ask them to share with other relevant stakeholders

The meeting adjourned at 9pm.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

None

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

None