

Japantown Task Force
Cultural Heritage & Sustainability Committee
Minutes
Monday, November 1, 2021
5:30om – via Zoom

Committee members present: Lucy Fisher, David Takashima, Jeremy Chan, Benh Nakajo, Rosalyn Tonai, Gary Barabee

Board members present: Kenta Takamori, Sandy Mori, Alice Kawahatsu

Staff: Steve Nakajo, Susie Kagami, Lauren Nosaka

Guests: Koki Isshiki, Katie Furukawa, Emily Murase, Emily Nichols, Judy Hamaguchi, Derek Tahara

- I. Meeting called to order at 5:32pm by Lucy Fisher. Quorum was present.
- II. Agenda:
Moved to approve by Benh and seconded by Gary. Approved unanimously.
- III. Minutes of October 2 meeting:
Moved to approve by David and seconded by Jeremy.
Lucy noted that two names were misspelled: corrected names are Julia Sabory of the OEWD and Natasha Maki Jesse-Peterson. Approved as corrected.
- IV. Staff report:
Steve Nakajo:
Steve welcomed Koki Isshiki and asked him to introduce himself. Koki is an international student from Japan at SF State University who contacted JTF to volunteer with the Task Force. Steve also acknowledged Katie Furukawa as a volunteer.

Steve reported that the co-creative hub from the CHHESS report is progressing well and that Suzie will present more in her report.

Steve commented that this committee's purview includes the need for arts and culture venue space, highlighted in the CHHESS report. Specifically, the Hokkai Nichibei Kai building and Kinmon Gakuen, a "community treasure" have been identified in the CHHESS report as possible locations.

Susie Kagami:
Update on co-creative hub: original scope of work has shifted from virtual during the pandemic to beginnings of in-person activities. The Hub has a name, branding, brand

promise, and website which will be presented at the next Board meeting. She has been fielding calls from many artists and performers interested in participating.

Grants: Battery Powered grant: the cultural districts are among other 10 well-deserving finalists. Two or three entities will be selected for a total of \$250K. Susie is submitting a Hass grant for \$40K.

MOHCD just finalized a contract with JTF with other approvals pending. Until then, JCYC is supporting JTF's administration payroll.

Susie introduced Katie Furukawa, who has done valuable community work with the Cherry Blossom Festival. Katie is expanding her volunteer time with select cultural district activities.

Lucy asked if there was any downside to the delay in finalizing the CHHESS report; Steve said there wasn't any. He added that Supervisor Mar has created a 9th district in the Sunset and that he has been instructed to spend funds rather than to hold on to it.

V. Selection of new CHSC co-chair:

David has announced he is resigning as co-chair but remain on the committee. He said procedure is the committee recommends a co-chair, which goes to board for approval.

David nominated Gary to be co-chair; Benh seconded the motion. Gary's expressed his concerns: co-chairs should have clear responsibilities; that he is a white male in a J/A group and asked for Sandy and Steve's reactions to this. Sandy: Gary has been a part of this community for many years; Steve has known Gary and his family "forever", has a "strong and honest" relationship with him and supports him in this position. Jeremy said he also thinks about not being Japanese and acknowledged Gary for his openness and self-reflection about this issue.

Lucy called the question; Gary's nomination was approved and will be moved to the full board for approval.

VI. Unfinished Business

1. Kenta updated committee on the Japantenna pilot project. The site will be open Friday - Sunday starting 11/12 -14, 11am – 6pm and closing December 5. Looking for volunteers for launch event and at the site. Funding: received a \$10K grant from Nihonmachi Merchants association; waiting to hear about grant from Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs which must be spent by end of calendar year. Store buildout: Karen Bryant created logo for signs and other publicity; store layout and construction. Furniture donated and site provided pro-bono in West Mall.

Lucy asked how to volunteer: email Kenta or to general email address at info@japantenna.org. Lucy and Benh met someone from Kyogo Prefecture who

expressed interest in the Antenna Project; Lucy will send her info to Kenta. Gary mentioned the church-ken connection as a valuable relationship.

2. Lucy opened discussion of focus areas for committee work for 2022. Potential areas include updating registry of traditional and contemporary organizations and supporting preservation of historic places and landmarks. There are 12 legacy businesses in JTown. Roz stated that Little Friends is state approved and considered for federal designation. Kinmon Gakuen is a “delicate issue” because of restrictive guidelines to preserve sites. In the past, SF Planning Department explained the process when Kinmon and JCL building were considered for local, state and federal designation. Roz reminded us that governing boards of each building must approve any initiative. Steve reported that the Takahashi Trading Company started in JTown and that Niki Yoshikawa helped 10 businesses for legacy designation. Nihonmachi Street Fair does not have a legacy designation.

Lucy asked for other areas for the committee to pursue: Gary said Susie has been linking with other cultural districts; have others reciprocated? Steve: There are monthly cultural district meetings and most districts are new ones. JTown is the oldest, including designated location, buildings, events, etc and looked as an example by other districts.

Susie: Kerri Young of SF Heritage reached out to her and is interested in supporting JTown projects; possibility to join this committee.

Lucy asked if there are other topics and projects for next year. Discussion to be continued next month.

- VII. Public comments: Community Resource Guide (CRG) update: Derek Tahara reported that a new CRG is “huge” (70+pages), more comprehensive than in 2014; is a national guide and includes sister-cities in other states. In-print edition will be available in the next week or two; digital date has not been set.

- VIII. Announcements:

Lucy: Letter to community leaders from Dean Preston’s office re: ceremonial renaming of Buchanan Way to Ruth Asawa. Sandy said there will be a community-wide planning group for Osaka Way; Ting designated \$5M through the State which must be used within 3 years. Hotel Buchanan update: KHP withdrew offer to sell hotel to the city but will continue to be shelter-in-place until residents are relocated. Emily: hotel is moving forward with scope-of-work and renovation.

Lucy: Mark Chakel, Phil Ting’s aide will visit Kinmon.

Gary: JARF will video a Thanksgiving observance at Kokoro and Nihonmachi Terrace.

Sandy: JTF’s new ED hire is extending deadline to December 1.

Meeting adjourned at 7pm.