

**Japantown Task Force**  
**Board of Directors Meeting**  
Wednesday, November 18, 2020  
6:00 pm – VIA zoom Meeting

**Attendees:** Sandy Mori, Glynis Nakahara, Kenta Takamori, Rosalyn Tonai, Lucy Fisher, Benh Nakajo, Alice Kawahatsu, Beau Simon, Jeremy Chan, Mark Moriguchi, Richard Hashimoto, and Daryl Higashi

**Absent (excused):** David Takashima, Jon Osaki, Elena Nielsen, Scott Hamaguchi and Seiko Fujimoto

**Staff:** Steve Nakajo, Lauren Nosaka, Brandon Quan, Nina Bazan-Sakamoto, and Natasha Tamate Weiss

**Guests:** Emily Glick, Lori Yamauchi, Sheridan Tatsuno, Michiko Yamada, and Grace Horikiri

**I. Call to Order**

The meeting was called to order at 6:02 p.m. by President Sandy Mori. A quorum was acknowledged.

**II. Approval of minutes**

Minutes of the JTF Board meeting of October 21, 2020.

It was moved by Lucy Fisher and seconded by Benh Nakajo to accept the minutes from the August meeting (Attachment A).

The motion passed unanimously. No public comments.

**Approval of Agenda:**

It was moved by Glynis Nakahara and Lucy Fisher.

The motion passed unanimously.

**III. Update from the Executive Director, Steve Nakajo (Attachment B)**

Additional information was provided on the budget for staff and programs. The Mayor's Office of Economic and Workforce Development (MOEWD) gave JTF \$107,000 for FY20-21, which was a 39% cut from the previous fiscal year. Steve was able to advocate \$25,000 from Supervisor Preston's office for the Visitor Center. The \$25,000 allocation was redirected towards the total MOEWD funds for \$132,000 which was a 27% cut. The shortfall of \$49,000 was covered by the Mayor's Office of Housing and Community Development (MOHCD) programs. Each of the 8 cultural districts received one-time funds of \$265,000. JTF has paused Kinmon Gakuen (\$30,000) and the Visitor Center (\$19,000) due to COVID-19. There are no plans to spend funds in the Visitor Center line item and would like to carry the funds over to next fiscal year. Currently there is a balance of 50,000. A question from a board member: Are there any issues for making changes on the money that was originally earmarked for Kinmon Gakuen and Visitors Center? ED stated that he received approval from Diane Ponce de Leon of MOEWD and also from Julia who is in charge of the Cultural Heritage Districts.

Takeshi Onishi, owner of the Japan Video and Media Store will have his Legacy Business application up for hearing in front of the Historic Preservation Commission on Wednesday, December 2 at 12:30pm and then for another hearing in front of the Small Business Commission scheduled for Monday, December 14 at 5:30pm. If approved, the Japan Video and Media Store will be the 14<sup>th</sup> business in Japantown with Legacy Business Status.

JCBD had 2 COVID-19 pop up testing sites. Nov. 4 testing site had 190 clients and Nov. 17 testing site had 375 clients. JCBD will have a 3<sup>rd</sup> pop up test site on Nov. 24 and JCBD has placed emphasis on seniors taking the test.

Steve announced that Sandy received the Order of the Sun, Gold and Silver Rays from the Foreign Ministry Office in Japan on October 8. Many of the JTF board congratulated her via the zoom chat.

**Update from the Japantown Cultural District, Nina Bazan-Sakamoto (Attachment C)**

No public comments.

**Update from the 2020 Census Project, Brandon Quan (Attachment D)**

No public comments.

**Update from Executive Director of Japantown Community Benefit District (Property Owners in Japantown), Grace Horikiri (Attachment E)**

No public comments.

**IV. Committee Reports**

A. Land Use/Transportation Committee (Co-chairs, Glynis Nakahara/Kenta Takamori)

1. Committee Updates

Housing Element

Glynis Nakahara reported that Kimia Haddadan and Malena Leon-Farrera from the SF Planning Department attended the Nov. 12 committee meeting and gave an overview on the Housing Element. Kenta Takamori added that the city updates the Housing Element every 8 years. The last update was in 2014 and the current update will be completed by 2022. The SF Planning Department reached out to Japantown to start the process of outreach for community input, and provided a value-based framework. The upcoming Housing Element will be structured around 4 community values of racial and social equity, minimizing displacement, housing choices for all and all neighborhoods, and neighborhoods resilience to climate and health crises. SF Planning Department aims to have Housing Element draft by January.

Glynis Nakahara and Kenta Takamori, Co-chairs of JTF LandUse Committee will take the lead on the Housing Element and schedule a presentation from the Planning Department to the full JTF board. Following this, they will decide on having a community wide meeting. JTF board member R.T. stated that JTown should be informed of over all plans that the city has. Suggested a separate inner meeting of how Japantown will be affected. This could be board led. In addition, board member J.C. suggested it be better to schedule this meeting early in 2021. Staff member N.S. mentioned that there is a difference between a listening session vs. a presentation. She felt that a listening session is better for the community.

Prop H

Glynis reported that Prop H Planning Code Amendment passed.

#For Mark Pedestrian Safety Committee

Alice Kawahatsu reported that she is on the #ForMark Committee with representing members from JTF, JCBD, Sequoias, St. Francis Co-op, Cathedral Hills, and Post International building. Mr. Jim Anderson from the Post International building is Chair of this committee. This committee was organized when the community lost a dear community member who was fatally killed by a driver who was speeding and ran a red light on Geary and Gough. Following the fatality on Geary and Gough, Supervisors Preston and Stefani were invited by the committee to attend a walk-through. The #ForMark committee led the walk through of the Japantown area (specifically Geary and Gough Street, Geary and Laguna Streets, and Post and Octavia crossing.) A second walk through included a representative from Walk SF, and SFMTA as well as Supervisor Preston and his aid. Alice K. attended the November BOS LandUse and Transportation Committee meeting in which Supervisor Peskin and Yee passed legislation to slow down the traffic and incorporate a senior zone all over the Bay Area. District 5 Supervisor Preston has added his name to sponsor this legislation. This legislation was passed by the

whole BOS the following week. The first project will be in the Tenderloin and then hopefully in Japantown. A red-light camera will be installed on Geary and Gough Street to catch the red-light speeders. More follow up by the committee will be done on reduced speed signage/ senior zone signs, timing of lights, red light camera, and improvements for Post/Octavia crossing lights. Supervisor Peskin and Supervisor Yee (creator of Vision Zero Pedestrian Fatalities) would like to see an oversight committee to SFMTA.

#### CCA

Glynis Nakahara reported that the JTF LandUse committee was approached by CCA for a potential studio collaboration on the future of retail. The committee has expressed interest in learning about CCA.

- B. Cultural Heritage Sustainability Committee (Co-chair David Takashima/Lucy Fisher)
1. Lucy Fisher reported that no CHSC meeting was held in November. The co-chairs are talking with committee members to reconfigure the committee and prioritize certain issues. The next meeting will be Monday, Dec. 7<sup>th</sup> at 6pm.
- C. Peace Plaza Committee (Co-Chairs, Jon Osaki/Richard Hashimoto)
1. Passage of Proposition A, the \$487.5 million Health and Homeless, Parks and Streets Bond and next steps  
Richard Hashimoto announced that Prop A passed with 71% vote. The co-chairs held a meeting with SF Rec & Park's General Manager, Phil Ginsburg, Michael Degregorio, Steve Nakajo and Sandy Mori on the passage of Prop A, and agreed with the co-chairs to have a community person or designer oversee the design element of the Peace Plaza Project. The project has to go through at least a year of designing, bid specifications, and RFP. The community won't see anything happen to the Pleace Plaza until fall 2022. The next meeting will be Tuesday, Nov. 24 5pm.
- D. Nominations Committee (Chair Richard Hashimoto)
1. Updates  
Richard Hashimoto announced that Elena Nielsen's last meeting will be January 2021. She is resigning.
  2. Consideration of Recommended Slate of Board Officers for 2021  
Current Slate of Board Officers:  
Sandy Mori, President  
Glynis Nakahara, Vice President  
Alice Kawahatsu, Secretary  
Mark Moriguchi, Treasurer  
  
The committee has put a hold on this item until the Dec. board meeting. No vote was taken to give interested board members time to decide if they would like to become a Board Officer and talk to the current officers about their positions. Interested individuals are to send their interest to Richard Hashimoto (Nominations Chair) by Dec. 2.
  3. Possible Consideration of a Recommended New Board Member  
The Nominations Committee interviewed Lori Yamauchi and is recommending her to the Board as a New Board Member (Attachment F).

The motion was moved by Kenta Takamori and seconded by Rosalyn Tonai to accept Lori Yamauchi as a New Board Member. The vote passed unanimously. No public comments.

## **V. Discussion of the Japantown Businesses and Their Pandemic Hardships; Advocacy Requests would be Addressed by Board Members, as Individuals**

Glynis Nakahara provided background that this discussion is in response to solicitations for advocacy around commercial tenant hardships. The most recent example is the eviction moratorium and JTF was asked if we can support it. JTF could not make a decision due to not having the updated legislative language to access the situation. On Nov. 17, the full Board of Supervisors passed the amendments for one more reading and is expected to pass at the next meeting. JTF will continue to review on case by case basis.

### **Public Comments:**

- Emily Glick, JCBD President, commented that the JCBD would very carefully make a statement but the statement will not be broadcast proactively. The statement will be available on the JCBD website. The statement would stand for communication and information and bring both parties together to promote the future economic vitality and culture of Japantown.

JTF board member comments: suggested that JTF can possibly assist tenants in Japantown on how to access and apply for city funds so that tenants can use those funds to pay for their rent. JTF member mentioned that the JTF mission includes supporting economic sustainability and that JTF should take a more proactive approach. Another member mentioned that we as an organization are not privy to legal communication between landlord and tenant and therefore should not take sides. One member had to recuse himself as he has clients in the Japantown business district.

## **VI. Update from the President and Executive Committee**

1. Update on the Ad Hoc Japan Center Malls Technical Committee held on November 9, 2020  
Sandy Mori invited Santino DeRose from Maven Properties as a guest to the Nov. 9 meeting and the committee had an informal dialogue with him. His company works directly with 3-D and is open to working with Japanese tenants and owners.
2. Support letter for 1830 Sutter Local Landmarking  
JTF sent a support letter for the 1830 Sutter Local Landmarking (Attachment G). It was approved by the Historic Preservation Commission on Nov. 18 to bring forward the landmark designation to the Board of Supervisors.
3. Invitation to submit names for Equity Council  
Sandy reported that the Equity Council under the SF Planning Department will have 10 representatives from the city to work with the Equity Council on equity issues. Shelley Caltagirone, Senior Planner of the SF Planning Department approached Steve Nakajo on submitting names for this council. The Equity Council is not open to the public and the Planning Department requests that each organization choose one individual chosen as this person has to be vetted. The Executive Committee decided to submit Glynis Nakahara's name.

### **Public Comments:**

-The Community Equity Advisory Council will advise staff on work program priorities, policies and strategies focused on addressing the current crisis and resolving historic inequities. This Council will provide a path of communication amid the current health crisis, which has placed high pressure on our communities of color and constrained their time and space for dialogue.

## **VII. Announcements**

- Buchanan YMCA will have their first Sentimental Trivia night on Thursday, Dec. 10 at 7pm.
- Nihonmachi Little Friends will be having a "Sushi Social" virtual event in celebration of 45<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the School on Friday, Nov. 20. They are selling \$25 tickets for virtual

celebration and virtual performances. They are also taking orders for sushi bento boxes. Some of the proceeds from the sale will be given to Nihonmach Little Friends.

**VIII. Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 7:41pm.

NEXT BOARD MEETING: Wednesday, December 16, 2020 via zoom meeting.