

**JAPANTOWN TASK FORCE**  
**AD HOC JAPAN CENTER MALLS TECHNICAL COMMITTEE**

**AGENDA**

Monday, February 8 2021

**5:30 PM – VIA ZOOM MEETING**

Committee Members Present: Daryl Higashi, Grace Horikiri, Roy Ikeda, Sandy Mori, Glynis Nakahara, Joyce Oishi, Beau Simon, Kenta Takamori, Lori Yamauchi

Others Present: Alice Kawahatsu, Benh Nakajo, Elena Nielsen, Lucy Fisher, Sheridan Tatsuno, Karen Kai, Derek Tahara

Staff Present: Steve Nakajo, Lauren Nosaka, Brandon Quan

- **Call to Order**
- **Discuss potential series of workshops for the committee (Joyce to lead).**
  - The purpose of the workshops would be to develop a common understanding of topics that would apply to the future of the Malls. Perhaps, the committee could hold extra meetings focused on the workshops.
  - The Ad Hoc committee would be the audience. There would also be members from the public and various organizations.
  - We would propose educational workshops as a forum to to learn of and discuss issues such as affordable housing, community development, institutional financing. Case studies and outside speakers, such as happens at SPUR, could be considered.
  - A potential problem that we may incur is the fact that not everyone can double our time commitment to the committee for the workshops. The question was also raised about over what timeframe will the workshops occur?
  - A tutorial on the covenant, history of redevelopment of JapanTown and the malls, discussion of what the community needs, and a workshop on community engagement and outreach strategy for the malls could be potential topics.
  - We should pay attention to the Covenants agreements (with 3D Investments) immediately. However, we should coordinate our information gathering with the Community Covenants Committee (chaired by Paul Osaki). After that, the committee can delve into topics which are selected by the committee, so that we all have the same information. A small group will be convened to plan the workshops.
- **Brainstorm on near-term goals for the Japan Center Mall Properties (Lori to lead).**
  - May 2021 is the end of the ownership retention period that 3D is obligated to meet, which means 3D cannot sell the property until after that date.
  - There are different goals, depending on who you speak about or to.
  - There are goals for tenants, buildings, community, ownership and control of properties. We should focus on a small number of goals/strategies, and then determine an action plan to accomplish such goals.
  - Our immediate goal/strategy should be on our sources of leverage as a community, which exist and which can be created, and how to use them to to establish community influence in negotiations with property owners of the Malls and the adjoining property.

- We should get an understanding of how the city interacts legally and economically with the private owners of the malls to help us identify sources of leverage in that relationship.
- **Discuss City agencies/departments with whom the community should work on accomplishing near and long-term goals for the Japan Center Malls Properties (Lori to lead with Sandy)**
  - There were 2 staff people assigned by the Mayor's Office of Economic and Workforce Development (MOEWD) to work with Japantown on the Japan Center Malls covenants agreements, Ted Conrad and Anne Taupier (who was named Acting Director of MOEWD today).
  - The Office of Community Investment and Infrastructure (OCII) is the successor of the former Redevelopment Agency. The OCII Commission president is Miguel Bustos, who would understand Japantown's concerns.
  - Even though the Redevelopment Agency doesn't apply to Japantown anymore, there are legacy issues that the OCII must respond to, such as the Certificates of Preference issued to residents who were displaced by Redevelopment, including those in Japantown.
  - The OCII staff are doing research and outreach regarding the Certificates of Preference, however this effort focuses mainly for the African-American and Latino communities. We need to make sure our (Japanese American) voices are heard and that Japanese American displacement from JapanTown due to incarceration not just forgotten about.
- **Discuss how best to connect with other Japantown organizations and institutions to work together on the Japan Center Malls properties (Joyce to lead with Sandy/Steve)**
  - Sandy will contact Paul Osaki and suggest that the Ad-Hoc Committee collaborate with the Covenants Committee.
    - A question was raised about the community becoming a party to the covenant agreement. The current agreement involves two parties - Kintetsu, the seller, and 3D Investments (previously Japan Center), the buyer. The community is not able to enforce or renegotiate the terms of the agreement.
    - If the community becomes a party to the covenant contract, it could exert some influence and be more than observers.
  - Steve Nakajo and JTF staff have been meeting with Executive Directors of different community organizations on the Japantown Cultural District program. The dynamics within the community have changed and staff are trying to communicate with grassroots constituents, as well as organizations.
  - We will have a workshop in the future with various organizations like Little Tokyo Services (LA), Chinatown Community Development Corporation (CCDC) and EBALDC (East Bay Asian and Local Development Corporation).
- **Announcements**
- **Public Comments**

### **Next Meeting**

Next Ad Hoc committee meeting will be held on 03/08/2021 via zoom.

**Adjourned at 6:50 pm**