

**Japantown Task Force  
Board of Directors Meeting**  
Wednesday, March 17, 2021  
6:00 pm – VIA zoom Meeting

**Attendees:** Sandy Mori, Jeremy Chan, Benh Nakajo, Scott Hamaguchi, Alice Kawahatsu, Beau Simon, Daryl Higashi, David Takashima, Gary Barbaree, Jon Osaki, Kenta Takamori, Lori Yamauchi, Lucy Fisher, Mark Moriguchi, Glynis Nakahara, Richard Jue, Rosalyn Tonai

**Absent (excused):** none

**Staff:** Steve Nakajo, Lauren Nosaka, Brandon Quan, Nina Bazan-Sakamoto, Susie Kagami, Max Nihei

**Guests:** Elena Nielsen, Emily Nichols, Emily Glick, Grace Horikiri, Judy Hamaguchi, Karen Kai, Richard Hashimoto, Sheridan Tatsuno, and Michiko Yamada

**I. Call to Order**

The meeting was called to order at 6:01 p.m. by President Sandy Mori. A quorum was acknowledged.

**Approval of Agenda**

It was moved by David Takashima and seconded by Lori Yamauchi to accept the agenda.

The motion passed unanimously.

**II. Approval of Minutes**

Minutes of the JTF Board meeting of February 17, 2021. (Attachment A)

The minutes were amended to include that RHAA is the landscape architecture firm advising on the Peace Plaza Design under Committee Updates in the Peace Plaza Committee section on page 3.

It was moved by Lucy Fisher and seconded by Jon Osaki to accept the minutes from the February meeting.

The motion passed unanimously. No public comments.

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

Susie Kagami and Max Nihei introduced themselves. They spoke about their past job experiences and their roles in JTF. Susie's position is the Strategic Partnership Coordinator and is working on the Consul General next generation young professional focus groups. Max's position is the Small Business Coordinator in collaboration with the Japantown Community Benefit District and will be helping with the sfjapantown.org and ecommerce websites, updating the business registry, and other projects to help the Japantown small businesses.

Steve Nakajo provided additional information for his Executive Director Report. He elaborated that the Japantown Cultural District (JCD) budget had line items for 4 key project areas: Small Business Center, Co-Creative Hub, Community Land Trust/Community Development Corporation and Master Plan. JCD is working on the Small Business Center and Co-Creative hub. The Community Land Trust/Community Development Corporation and Master Plan are paused due to JTF budget cuts. Due COVID-19, the Mayor's Office of Economic and Workforce Development (MOEWD) cut JTF funds and we received \$132,000. The total budget was \$181,000. This left JTF with a budget deficit of \$49,000. JTF used the one-time funds line items: \$30,000 from Kinmon Gakuen and \$19,000 from the Visitor Center Kiosk for a total of \$49,000 to balance out the MOEWD deficit. Both Diana Ponce de Leon of MOEWD and Julia Sabory of the Mayor's Office of Housing and Community Development (MOHCD) allowed JTF to make this change. Each Cultural District is proposed to receive \$43,000 for FY21-22 in the worst-case scenario. Staff has identified

approximately \$91,000 to \$100,000 in rollover savings for FY 21-22. Supervisor Preston gave \$25,000 to JTF for the Visitor Center Kiosk for FY20-21. Steve met with Supervisor Preston for funds for FY 21-22 on JCD support. It was also mentioned that former District 5 Supervisor, Vallie Brown is now the Chair of the Grants for the Arts. On June 22<sup>nd</sup> the Board of Supervisors will approve the budget for the 2024-2025 budget.

No public comments.

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

No public comments.

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

No public comments.

### **IV. Committee Reports**

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

1. Recommendation to send Letter of Support from the Japantown Task Force, Inc. for additional safety measures at the mid-block crossing at Post and Octavia St.

The committee has been supported by the neighbors at Cathedral for additional safety measures. There is a double cross walk at the mid-block crossing leading up to the Sequoias at Post and Octavia St. and has been target for safety concerns for many years. SFMTA has input some measures but many community members feel that it is inadequate.

It was moved by Benh Nakajo and Lori Yamauchi to approve a Letter of Support from the Japantown Task Force, Inc. for additional safety measures at the mid-block crossing at Post and Octavia St.

The motion passed unanimously. No public comments.

2. Committee Updates

##### **SFMTA Crosswalk**

Glynis Nakahara reported that SFMTA held a hearing on March 11 on the removal of one street tree within the median of the crosswalk. She acknowledged and thanked community members who attended and gave public comment. The decision is expected to be made by the end of the month.

##### **Traffic Training Workshop**

There will be Traffic Training Workshop on March 18 to learn how to gather more data on traffic and pedestrian safety. Walk SF will be sponsoring this workshop. Members of the Land Use and Transportation Committee as well as the Pedestrian Safety Committee (#ForMark) will be attending.

##### **Climate Action Plan Community Meeting**

The committee is partnering with the Cathedral Hill Neighbors Association on the Climate Action Plan Community Meeting on March 24 6:30pm-7:30pm. At the meeting, community members will learn about the San Francisco Climate Action Plan and how it will affect residents, property owners and businesses in Japantown.

##### **Community Meeting on Congestion Pricing**

The committee is also partnering with the Cathedral Hill Neighbors Association on the Community Meeting on Congestion Pricing on March 26 6-7pm.

#### Citywide Meetings

The City is updating their general plan. There will be Transportation Element workshops. Kenta Takamori will attend and advise the committee.

#### San Francisco College of the Arts

There will be check-ins with the College of the Arts students and more information on the collaborative project. MOU needs to be signed. Executive Committee will look at this more in depth.

No public comments.

#### B. Cultural Heritage Sustainability Committee (Co-chair David Takashima/Lucy Fisher)

##### 1. Updates on Committee Activities

Lucy Fisher reported that Rosalyn Tonai gave a presentation on NJAHS at the last meeting on March 1. The committee learned a lot about NJAHS role and history in Japantown. They will be inviting the National Japanese American Library and The Center (JCCCNC) to upcoming meetings and have them give presentations on their roles and histories. After that, churches will be contacted and invited to future meetings. David Takashima mentioned that there is a US archive facility in San Mateo that holds San Francisco and Japanese American history in the US.

No public comments.

#### C. Peace Plaza Committee (Co-Chairs, Jon Osaki/Richard Hashimoto)

##### 1. Updates

Jon Osaki reported that the Peace Plaza Project is moving into the design phase, secured resources for RHAA, the landscape architect firm. The co-chairs had a meeting on March 17 with the interim director of Department of Public Works (DPW) and the architect to inform them of the historical and cultural significance of this project. This will be an internal city design process. The committee will be updating the peaceplaza.org website and producing video content and documenting this process.

Richard Hashimoto added that Brandon Quan, JTF staff, sent the work plan for a Peace Plaza Consultant and Community Engagement Consultant funded by the SF Japantown Foundation grant.

No public comments.

#### D. Nominations Committee (Chair Benh Nakajo)

##### 1. Recommendation to approve Richard Hashimoto as a board member with a 3-year term from March 2021 to Dec. 2023; this will be the 19<sup>th</sup> person on the Board

Board Members held a short Q&A session with Richard Hashimoto on returning to the Board (Attachment E). Benh Nakajo reported that the committee is reviewing all the names of board candidates. The maximum number of board members is 21. The committee does not have a timeline to fill all remaining slots. The by-laws state the Nominations committee is made up of 3 board members. Any board member is welcomed to join as long as one of the three current Nominations committee members leave. Benh mentioned that half of the board members have tried to fill out the matrix and advised the rest of the board to try to fill it out.

Board member GN: Is the nominations committee going to revise the matrix?

Board member RH: Suggested that the By Laws be reviewed regarding the fact that currently, only board members can be chairs and co chairs of committees.

Sandy Mori reported that Seiko Fujimoto has resigned from the Board due to health reasons.

It was moved by David Takashima and seconded by Richard Jue to approve Richard Hashimoto as a board member with a 3-year term from March 2021 to Dec. 2023.

The vote passed unanimously. No public comments.

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

##### 1. Update on the Ad Hoc Japan Center Malls Technical Committee held on March 8, 2021

Sandy Mori reported Roy Ikeda gave a presentation on the 3-D Covenants at the March 8 Ad Hoc Japan Center Malls Technical Committee meeting. Roy was part of the team who wrote the 3-D covenants document. The Covenants committee with Chair Paul Osaki has not met for the past 2-3 months. The covenants run with the land until they expire in May 2021. After May 2021, the covenants continue to bind to 3-D Investments but not a successor. However, if 3-D Investments sells the property, then the purchaser will not be bound by the covenants.

No public comments.

#### **VII. Announcements.**

- Emily Nichols, the new General Manager of the Buchanan Hotel, introduced herself to the Board. The Buchanan Hotel is still closed and may reopen in the summer. There is no definite date yet.

- Karen Kai expressed her dissatisfaction with the wording under General Public Comment.

- Jeremy Chan announced on Thursday, March 18 at 10 am, Supervisor Preston, Mandelman, Chan and Ronen will be holding a hearing on Small Business Rent Debt with the Office of Economic Workforce Development and the Office of Small Business. The Supervisors want to hear from small businesses that have been affected by COVID-19.

- Richard Hashimoto mentioned that the Tree Removal SFMTA hearing article was in the SF Examiner, and sent a rebuttal that will be printed in March 17th newspaper.

- David Takashima announced that he has joined the SF JACL Chapter.

#### **VIII. Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 7:52pm.

NEXT BOARD MEETING: Wednesday, April 21, 2021 via zoom meeting.