

**Japantown Task Force
Board of Directors Meeting**
Wednesday, July 15, 2020
6:00 pm – VIA zoom Meeting

Attendees: Sandy Mori, Alice Kawahatsu, Glynis Nakahara, Daryl Higashi, Elena Nielsen, Jeremy Chan, Seiko Fujimoto, Beau Simon, David Takashima, Jon Osaki, Kenta Takamori, Lucy Fisher, Mark Moriguchi, Rosalyn Tonai, Scott Hamaguchi, and Benh Nakajo

Absent: Richard Hashimoto (excused)

Staff: Steve Nakajo, Lauren Nosaka, Brandon Quan, Nina Bazan-Sakamoto

Guests: Lori Yamauchi, Grace Horikiri, Karen Kai, Kim Kolbe, Masahiro Inoue, Michiko Yamada, and Nancy Nagano

I. Call to Order

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

II. approval of minutes

Minutes of the JTF Board meeting of June 17, 2020.

It was moved by Benh Nakajo and seconded by David to accept the minutes from the June meeting (Attachment A).

The motion passed unanimously. No public comments.

III. Update from the Executive Director, Steve Nakajo

Steve Nakajo reviewed the highlights from the June 17, 2020 ED report (Attachment B). Steve gave an update that the Takahashi Warehouse was sold to a new owner. The Planning Department contacted Steve as a resource due to Takahashi Warehouse's origins in Japantown. Sandy has been in contact with Nihonmachi Little Friends, Kimochi, JCCNC, and JCBD to have a virtual meeting with the direct representatives of the Buchanan Hotel's shelter program. On July 15, she had a meeting with Abigail Steward-Kahn, the Interim Director at the San Francisco Department of Homelessness and Supportive Housing to set up the meeting between community organizations and her staff. The intention is to have good community relations with the Buchanan Hotel's new program in Japantown. As of the date of this JTF Board meeting, there are 60% men and 40% women housed in the hotel and no children.

No public comments.

Update from the Japantown Cultural District, Nina Bazan-Sakamoto

Nina Bazan-Sakamoto reviewed the highlights from her board report (Attachment C).

No public comments.

Update from the 2020 Census Project, Brandon Quan

Brandon Quan summarized his monthly report (Attachment D). Due to COVID-19, the Census has been extended to October 31, 2020. Response by phone and online will end on July 31, 2020. Starting August 1 to October 31, the only way to respond will be through an enumerator. An enumerator will be sent to each household that has not responded. Enumerators will also be sent to homeless shelters and homeless encampments for those people to be counted. 52.2% of households in Japantown have responded. Alice

Kawahatsu offered to contact the Japanese American Religious Federation to see if the local churches could help get the word out about completing the Census 2020.

Public comments:

- It is concerning that Japantown has a low response rate. Communicate with the census agency on the low response rate and the situation in Japantown. It helps any agency to listen to the public's concerns. A board member asked what was the percentage of response in this area the last time the census was taken. Brandon would check this and report back to the board with this information.

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

Grace Horikiri summarized her monthly report (Attachment E). The applications for the Heart of Jtown Resiliency fund are still open. The deadline for small businesses to apply for the grant is July 24. So far, there are 39 applicants. Go to jtowncbd.org for the application and more information. Applications for sneeze guards are open until July 17. Orders will be placed and JCBD will receive the orders during the week of July 20.

No public comments.

IV. Committee Reports

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

1. Report on the MTA Proposal to restripe Sutter St.

Kenta Takamori reported that the committee continued to have a conversation on the MTA's proposal to restripe Sutter St. MTA plans to dedicate one lane for public transportation. Due to COVID-19, the #2 Clement bus is not running. It is possible that the #2 bus may not run even after COVID-19 is over.

There have been many concerns from people in the community, particularly JCCCNC and Nihonmachi Little Friends on Sutter St. Over the past few months, the committee has been engaging with the SFMTA and questioning the proposal. The committee met on July 9 and decided to recommend to the board that they oppose the striping of Sutter St. to the MTA. Within a few days, some developments have changed. On July 15, Supervisor Dean Preston's office (District 5) organized a zoom meeting with Glynis, Jon Osaki from JCYC, Cathy Inamasu from Nihonmachi Little Friends, Paul Osaki from JCCCNC, Philip Pierce as the SFMTA representative, Edgar Orozco, Assistant Engineer of SFMTA, and Britt Tanner, Senior Engineer of SFMTA. The consensus and support for extending the white zone from Nihonmachi Little Friends to the end of the property line of JCCCNC. It will displace 3 parking spaces. There will still be 5 parking spaces at the west of JCCCNC at the end of the block. All parties agreed to move forward with this extension. SFMTA is agreeing to implement colored curbs first and see how that works out. Then it will be reevaluated and the restriping will be considered later. The committee will reevaluate this new proposal.

2. Recommendation to oppose the Sutter Street Safety Project from Buchanan to Webster

SFMTA is compressing 2 westbound lanes into 1 westbound lane and extending a striped white zone. The 2 nonprofits, Nihonmachi Little Friends and JCCCNC, want to continue working on this process with the city. Due to the new developments, the committee is not ready to bring a new recommendation to the board. Co-chairs Glynis Nakahara and Kenta Takamori put the recommendation on hold and will continue this item with the Land Use and Transportation committee.

Public comments:

- It is very concerning regarding this concept of the white zone. It doesn't address the issue of the restriping. It's surprising to hear that it's ok now with the nonprofits along Sutter St.
- There have been a number of accidents. SFMTA used a 5-year picture as a need to change the lanes. They cited 5 incidents between Laguna and Buchanan. 2 of the 5 incidents did not have

enough information that the incident was caused by narrow lanes. The remaining 3 incidents were cars trying to pass buses. None had serious damage or injury. All 5 incidents happened within 2 years out of the 5 years. For 3 years, there were no incidents.

- Concerned that it will keep moving forward and the community will not have a voice on this issue.
- SFMTA is collapsing all 3 lanes into 2 lanes. The single eastbound lane will be widened. They will create a dedicated left turn lane westbound on Sutter and south on Webster. The parking spaces at the end of Sutter may have to be eliminated to create more space.
- Executive Director of JCBD, Grace Horikiri mentioned that she is part of the SFMTA Small Business Advisory Group. The group will be meeting on July 23 with Director Tumlin. If there are any questions or concerns, please send them to JCBD to address them at this meeting.

B. Cultural Heritage Sustainability Committee

(Chair David Takashima)

1. David Takashima reported that sadly Jacquelyn Chew has resigned from the CHS Committee as co-chair and also from the JTF board. She has moved back home to LA to take care of her family.

2. The CHS Committee made a recommendation to have Lucy Fisher become a member of the CHS Committee.

*It was moved by David Takashima and seconded by Kenta Takamori to approve Lucy Fisher to be added to the Cultural Heritage Sustainability Committee.

The vote passed unanimously. No public comments.

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

1. Updates on the Health and Recovery Act Bond scheduled for the November 2020 Ballot
Jon Osaki thanked everyone who sent in Peace Plaza renovation support letters and gave public comment at the City Budget and Finance Committee hearing on June 24 and at the second reading on July 8. The Board of Supervisors unanimously passed \$487.5 millions dollars on the General Obligations Bond for the Health and Recovery Act Bond through its first reading on July 14 before the full board. There will be a second reading by the Board of Supervisor on July 21. JTF received a \$30,000 grant from the SF Japantown Foundation for Peace Plaza Project work. The grant funds from the SF Japantown Foundation can be used for Peace Plaza education and information and education. There is a remaining balance of about \$26,000 left in the SF Japantown Foundation grant.

D. Finance Committee

(Chair Mark Moriguchi)

1. Updates

Mark Moriguchi reported the Cultural District budgeting process for the Mayor's Office of Housing and Community Development (MOHCD). For fiscal year 20-21, each cultural district receives a grant of \$230,000. In addition to that, each cultural district will receive a one-time fund of \$150,000 in fall 2020 and a second one-time fund of \$115,000 in spring 2021. MOHCD asked JTF to submit a budget proposal for all the 3 funds by July 15. Staff put together a rough budget to secure the funds within a couple of days. The Executive Committee met on July 14, to review the budget and approve the budget. They approved the budget with the caveat due to the uncertainty of this pandemic and that the programs may need to be changed. MOHCD understands and gives flexibility to the programmatic content of this budget due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Programs being proposed in the budget are the Visitor Center Kiosk \$30,000, renovation and leasing of the Kinmon Gakuen Auditorium space \$68,600, and stipends for artists \$25,000 and volunteers \$45,000. No contracts have been signed and none of the programs are set in stone. New consultants will be hired to assist with the Cultural District. The positions will be advertised and individuals will be interviewed.

The Cultural Heritage Sustainability Committee along with the oversight from the Finance Committee, has agreed to be charged with the overview on how the programs should be handled logistically with a coordinator and make sure that budget is followed accordingly.

Public Comments:

- There were concerns on this budget did not come before the full board so that they could take a look at it. President Sandy Mori explained that there was a strict deadline of (July 15, 2020 by 3:00pm). Under these circumstances, she wanted the Executive Board to look at the budget prior to sending it in. This budget is not written in stone as the Covid Pandemic may change plans and dates of the projects. She made sure to communicate this to MOHCD upon submitting this by the deadline.
- It was suggested that the Board should have been informed immediately of this budget and the deadline.
- There were concerns on how some items were determined. JTF ED Steve Nakajo answered in depth questions about how the numbers added up.
- A question was asked about the \$20,000 kiosk cost.

V. General Discussion of the Cultural, History, Housing, Economic Sustainability Strategy (CHHESS) Report

The special board meeting for July 27 to focus on the CHHESS report has been cancelled. Nina reviewed the Board update report and timeline (Attachment C & F). There are 2 documents: the 25-page CHHESS report and the 140-page Supplemental CHHESS Report. The JTF Board, committees and public will receive the draft final CHHESS and supplemental version for review on July 24. The Board of Directors will review and will be asked to approve this 25-page CHHESS report for approval at the August 19 board meeting. The CHHESS report deadline has been extended to August 21 and will be submitted to MOHCD for feedback. Lori Yamauchi is assisting to restructure and finalize the Final CHHESS report and supplemental version on a pro-bono basis. She explained that not everyone's comments will be incorporated into the final CHHESS report. But everyone's voices will be incorporated into the supplemental CHHESS report. CHS Committee will review the 25-page CHHESS draft at their next meeting on August 3. Land Use and Transportation committee will also plan to meet to go over the updated CHHESS report and give feedback.

Public Comments:

- The supplemental report is very important. Everyone should be comparing the final CHHESS to the supplemental report. It is important to get as much information as possible and recognized the report will become official once it's been adopted.
- A question about having a special board meeting in August was raised.

VI. Update from the president and executive committee

1. Update on 1st Ad Hoc Japan Center Malls Technical Committee meeting on July 13th
Sandy Mori reported the Ad Hoc Japan Center Malls Technical Committee held their first meeting on July 13. There are 10 members serving in that committee. Paul Osaki, who originally agreed to be on the Ad Hoc Committee, will not be a committee member nor a co-chair. His JCCCNC board has requested him to focus on fundraising for JCCCNC Center. However, Paul Osaki will serve on the separate Community Covenants Committee. He is working with 13 committee members including Steve Nakajo, Grace Horikiri, Richard Hashimoto and Sandy Mori. This committee will be focusing specifically on the covenants and its expiration in May 2021. If 3-D continues to own the malls, they will still have to comply with the covenants.

Public Comments:

- Due to the COVID situation, it is important if the board can look into more ways to provide and post information to the public (i.e, meeting dates and times, agendas, minutes and Zoom links on the JTF website. In this way, all interested can plan to attend.

VII. Announcements

No announcements.

VIII. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 8:47pm.

NEXT BOARD MEETING: Wednesday, August 19, 2020 via zoom meeting.

DRAFT