

Japantown Task Force  
Cultural Heritage & Sustainability Committee  
Minutes  
Monday, July 5, 2021  
5:30pm – via Zoom

Board members present:

Lucy Fisher, David Takashima, Gary Barbaree, Sandy Mori, Kenta Takamori, Steven Santa Maria  
Staff:

Steve Nakajo, Susie Kagami

Guests:

Emily Murase, Tatsuki Tomita

Meeting called to order at 5:32pm by Lucy

Agenda: Moved to approve by Gary, seconded by David – approved unanimously

Minutes of June meeting: Moved to approve by David, seconded by Gary – approved unanimously

Staff report:

Steve: met with the Mayor's Office of Community Development on June 24 – funding will be continued; announced two new positions for JTF (small business coordinator and co-creative hub coordinator).

The revised CHHESS report will be submitted to mayor's office on July 9, 2021.

Susie: announced free rehearsal space donated by a small theater group. Susie presented JTF at a Cultural District webinar sponsored by Alaska Airlines; will present JTF again in August.

Unfinished business:

Gary reported he will be meeting individually with the executive committee of JARF. Letter sent to JARF members inquiring about any holdings of archival material.

Lucy reported a tour of the Japanese cemetery (Jikeikai) led by Seiko Fujimoto. Gary added that a book is in process to describe the history of the cemetery, along with videos and photos.

New business:

Kenta described his proposal of a Prefectural Japan Antenna Project: Japantenna Shop. The project steering group includes Emily Murase and Tatsuki Tomita; the third member, Kaz Maniwa was not present at the meeting.

Kenta walked the committee through this store-front proposal via power point. Goal of this project is to promote cultural and economic sustainability in JTown. Business model: economic self-sufficiency from government grants, prefectural promotion funds, and volunteers. The Japanese Counsel General (CG) is very supportive of this proposal. Will start as a demonstration project with one prefecture. Why concern JTF? The Shop group wants to partner with a non-

profit and JTF has credibility with the City and the CG. JTF has “operational flexibility” that other JT non-profits do not have; mission of JTF coincides with the Project’s goals.

Kenta is asking the committee to recommend the full board adopts this project.

Lucy asked for questions and comments from committee members:

David: requested reactions from Sandy and Steve about this proposal.

Sandy: What has been Counsel General Maeda’s reactions?

Kenta: at least 6 meetings held with CG, who supports the idea and partnership with JTF. CG offered to approach/invite prefectures to participate.

Sandy: this project matches the mission of the JTF but legal aspects should be investigated before recommendation to full board.

Emily: this project has been “incubating” for at least 2 years; 5 prefectural governors have visited the Bay Area and are anxious to expand their markets.

Gary: this fits one of 4 doable priorities of the JTF and requires minimal effort from JTF. He said Roz is in favor to enhance genealogy research by Japanese Americans.

Steve: Only learned about this project about 2 months ago. Conceptually this demonstration project is a great idea but concerned about capacity of administrative staff to assist with this.

Kenta: JTF can pull out at some point if the Board believes it doesn’t fit JTF’s mission.

Steve: Wants a serious commitment from Kenta to go forth.

David: He supports this project to highlight the relationship between Japantown and Japan.

Lucy: called for the question

David: moved to refer this project to the full Board

Sandy: suggested to recommend to the board for JTF to work with the Prefectural Antenna project; is concerned about location of Shop and other practical matters.

Gary and Steve: the relationship (workload) between the Task Force and the project should be addressed.

David moved and Gary seconded to recommend approval to full Board. Approved unanimously.

Public comments:

None offered

Announcements:

David: Supervisor Mar of District 4 will host a meeting to discuss establishing a Chinese Cultural District in the Sunset.

Meeting adjourned at 7:03PM