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ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, PLANNING & PRESERVATION OF JAPANTOWN

**NOTES FROM THE LAND USE/TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE MEETING
OF THE JAPANTOWN TASK FORCE**
1765 SUTTER STREET
THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 12, 2019

BOARD MEMBER PRESENT:

Kenta Takamori, Glynis Nakahara, Rosalyn Tonai

STAFF PRESENT:

Steve Nakajo

OTHERS PRESENT:

Jeremy Chan, Linda Walsh

The meeting began at 6:05 p.m.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

BIKESHARE

JTF sent a letter, drafted by Glynis/Kenta, to Adrian Leung criticizing the location outside of Nihonmachi Little Friends and suggested the north side of the Post St, west of Webster. Adrian seems supportive of the alternative site.

Adrian said that he confirmed with the site manager of Golden Gate Apartments that they approved of the site location as well.

CULTURAL DISTRICT GRANT / PLANNING INITIATIVES

Steve Nakajo provided an update on the Cultural District Initiative. He distributed a handout called "SF Cultural Districts: Snapshot."

The CDI team meets every Monday, consisting of Steve Nakajo, Nina (project manager), the consultants, and Steve Nakajima. Each of them has read and reviewed the JCHES. They are sorting initiatives amongst the Cultural District categories. They have been mapping out visions, challenges, goals, and an action plan.

The CDI team will be hosting two community meetings and one primary launch. They plan on engaging the JTF committees. Staff and the two Cultural Heritage committee co-chairs (Coco and David). Coco and other committee members have reviewed the Cultural District "Stabilization Strategies" (Historical Preservation, Resident Engagement, Arts and Culture, Economic and Workforce Development, Land Use, and Cultural Competency). to match the JCHES existing/proposed strategies to them. Coco submitted her recommendations to staff. Some of the strategies fit with multiple goals.

Each committee will have 2 designees. Steve Nakajo has assigned Nina to attend the Land Use meetings, and will rotate the consultants to work with the Land Use committee. (Today, Nina did not attend because Steve assigned Nina to attend an Arts Commission meeting).

Steve would like to arrange an evening meeting with David, Coco, Jackie, Glynis, and Kenta so

that the Land Use co-chairs can hear what Coco has been doing and create a working relationship between CDI staff and the committees. They are looking to collect Land Use strategies to place in the CHHESS report.

A seventh cultural district has been added. Each cultural District is at a different stage in the process; currently Japantown is farther ahead due to past organizing and strategic planning, including JCHESS. By next year, the department anticipates there will be 9 districts.

Although Steve initially expected each Cultural District to receive the same amount of money, Japantown has received \$230,000, whereas the SOMA Pilipinas District has received \$456,000, and Compton's Transgender received \$530,000.

Two groups have delayed their funding until the winter yet since they are not ready - the African American Arts and Cultural district and the Castro. The African American Arts and Cultural district is based at the Bayview Opera House. Steve asked about the Western Addition / Fillmore, and he suspects that they are not involved.

JTF has assisted other districts, such as by sharing the Japantown Cultural District's job description with other districts.

Glynis asked if the other Cultural Districts are housed within existing organizations (ex. The Japantown Cultural District is housed in JTF). Steve said it varies - Calle 24 and SOMA Pilipinas seem more sophisticated and more organized, whereas other groups seem to be newer.

Steve commented that three of the districts (Compton's Transgender, Leather & LGBTQ, and Castro) are supporting the LGBTQ community.

Sandy said that they want to have an honest conversation with the staff about why the distribution of funding is different. She also commented that while the Cultural District department may have challenges with respect to the organization of other districts, but that Japantown should focus on the development of their own district.

Sandy commented that Chinatown community folks also want to be a Cultural District and are in the pipeline to be ready by the next time.

The Cultural District department had mandatory leadership and fiscal training. Steve said that himself, Nakajima, Nina, and Sandy went to a leadership training, and that Nina, the consultants, and JTF's staff also attended a second leadership training.

Kenta asked why the opportunity was not used to train board members. Steve said it was mandatory for Cultural District staff to attend.

Steve Nakajo said that the Cultural District Initiative Stabilization Strategies titles cannot be altered, but they can make additions to the title (ex. "Historical Preservation / Sustainability) to meet Japantown's goals.

Glynis commented that the CHHESS is to be revisited every three years, but that she hoped these efforts would last longer than that. She also expressed disappointment at the lack of the city's flexibility in the Stabilization Strategies, given that Japantown is further ahead in the process.

Kenta commented that it seems the intention is for the Accelerator is to increase the knowledge

of Cultural District leaders. He suggested to provide that knowledge to Japantown community leaders, as opposed to temporary consultants.

Jeremy commented that JTF is not bound to the project manager / consultant structure. Steve commented that the initial blueprint of the city is with respect to Project Manager and consultants. Glynis asked and Steve said that there are 30 people attending the trainings (combined from all the cultural districts). The training is specifically with respect to the Cultural District.

Ros commented that Japantown as a whole is further ahead in the process. However, she also commented that new JTF board members may require training in financials, political organizing, etc. Sandy commented that board development can be a separate project.

Kenta commented that they need a better sense of how the CDI team will engage with the committee.

Steve said the CDI will have a mini launch at Aki Matsuri. The first community meeting will be on Thursday, November 14.

Steve discussed the financing of the visitor kiosk, and leasing Kinmon Gakuen with Rich Hashimoto for gallery/rehearsal/performance space (although it's not wheelchair accessible). They are looking to host various arts projects.

Steve commented on JTF's budget - they received a minimum amount from MOED and therefore was able to implement minimal programming.

Steve said he was interested in buying Kinmon Gakuen and the JACL building. Rich said it will cost \$900,000 to bring it up to code.

Glynis commented that community land trusts and real estate trusts (the later of which are used in Little Tokyo) could be used to support this. Steve commented on the difference in models between Japantowns (for example, San Jose and LA have more representative bodies compared to JTF).

Glynis commented that the Land Use committee should discuss planning initiatives to share. She clarified that the co-chairs can still initially meet. Ros commented that there is overlap between the two committees, and recapped the insight and comparisons of past and present strategies that were shared at the Cultural Heritage committee meeting.

Steve said they will be meeting with different resources, including Joyce Oishi (who worked on the Salesforce Transit Center) and Daryl Higashi (former JTF constructor).

Kenta suggested that the committee could discuss the strategies under the Land Use category, and prioritize their importance.

Linda asked about how the Community Meeting will be structured, and how non-Japanese community members may be involved. Steve clarified that it encompasses everyone in the neighborhood. Sandy clarified that St. Francis Square has always been considered part of Japantown

Steve discussed how the "launch" is supposed to be fun/innovative, such as a block party, hence why they are aiming for a Cherry Blossom Festival related event.

Jeremy asked about what CDI programming will be at Aki Matsuri. Steve said it's still in the developmental stage, but that Nina is planning something with respect to health and wellness.

Glynis asked Ros about the Arts and Culture Stabilization strategy, specifically "to attract and support artists and cultural enterprises." Ros says this was based on the displacement of artists in the Mission. In Japantown, artists don't directly live in Japantown, but they still require support and resources.

Glynis commented that in a way, a specific structure is being forced on Japantown. Ros said that JCHESS is being overlain on CHHESS to align the stabilization strategies to Japantown.

Glynis asked about the responsibility of the consultants, and commented that Coco and Jackie could have directed the staff tasked. Ros sees the consultants as facilitators, and that the board should direct staff tasks. Ros relayed that Mark Izu was brought on to organize artists, which Glynis commented is 1 of the 6 strategies. Wes is the "editor" with respect to writing.

Ros suggested that JTF should become a CDC (Community Development Corporation.) Kenta asked and Ros clarified that a CDC is a nonprofit developer. Kenta asked if this is a popular opinion. Glynis said that Japantown is the only community in SF that doesn't have a CDC (Mission, Tenderloin, and Chinatown have them, as well as Little Tokyo in LA). Ros said it comes from an affordable housing perspective, and Japantown historically lost its housing. To be a player in the land use game, you need development leverage.

Glynis said that controlling the real estate and education are the two most crucial investments in developing a community.

Glynis said that JTF shouldn't be in the business of becoming a presenter of culture, but that JTF can facilitate and connect artists. Ros suggested that JTF should have a board retreat to determine what direction JTF will go in its next phase.

PARKING LOT

Kenta suggested removing the parking lot from the Agenda.

Ros suggested that new staff should be involved in participating in the discussion. Jeremy repeated Steve's earlier comment that he double booked Nina this meeting.

NEW BUSINESS:

None

PUBLIC COMMENT:

None

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

It was decided to reschedule the October meeting to Tuesday, October 8, because the District 5 Candidate Forum on Thursday October 10.

The meeting adjourned at 7:56 p.m. The next meeting will be at 6:00 p.m., October 8, 2019 at the Union Bank Community Room.