



# JAPANTOWN TASK FORCE

日本町の経済発展・計画・保存

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, PLANNING & PRESERVATION OF JAPANTOWN

## LAND USE/TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE MEETING OF THE JAPANTOWN TASK FORCE

1765 SUTTER STREET

MONDAY, JUNE 11, 2018

### MINUTES

#### BOARD MEMBER PRESENT:

Glynis Nakahara, Clint Taura

#### OTHERS PRESENT:

Karen Kai, Robert Rusky, Paul Wermer, Linda Walsh, Michael DeGregorio

#### STAFF PRESENT:

Steve Nakajo, Coco Tando

The meeting began at 6:05 p.m.

#### I. INTRODUCTIONS

##### **Michael DeGregorio from San Francisco Recreation and Parks Department (RPD)**

Michael DeGregorio from SFRPD introduced himself as the Project Manager of the Peace Plaza Project. Michael and JTF will be in close contact for the community design process, with the first meeting coming up on July 31, 2018.

#### II. UNFINISHED BUSINESS/UPDATES:

The committee approved moving Agenda Item II E first so that Michael DeGegorio could share information with the committee as part of the update on the Peace Plaza/Pagoda Improvements.

##### **E. Peace Plaza/Pagoda Landmarking and Improvements**

Michael DeGregorio reported updates on RPD plans to prepare for the community design process of the Peace Plaza Project, including:

- An initial survey that was conducted by McGinnis Chen Architects and Engineers (MCA) to identify areas of water intrusion and structural integrity of the parking garage. The survey concluded that the garage structure is still sound but water intrusion should be remedied to prevent future, potential structural damage.
- A follow-up study was conducted recently by MCA to identify potential repairs mitigate the water intrusion. The repair chosen by RPD was to reconstruct the expansion joint along the plaza and both the East and West Malls. MCA will prepare construction documents once given a notice to proceed. When asked why RPD is proceeding with interim repairs when the Ad Hoc committee had indicated its preference to consolidate all repairs at the same time to mitigate construction impacts to commercial activities, Gregorio said that given the deficiencies, RPD felt it was responsible to make immediate improvements to remedy the situation. Subsequent repairs will add on to the interim repair.
- Next steps: Community engagement and Peace Plaza design process. The first community meeting on the vision planning of the Peace Plaza is scheduled on July 31, 2018. As of now, there is a total of three scheduled community meetings for the community design process; The first one in July, second in mid-October, and third in January 2019, with the goal to have a final design ready by the March 2019 Parks Bond planning. The first meeting will consist of priming the community members on the potential of the project and receiving their feedback. The second meeting would

present three main frameworks of the Peace Plaza design from what was discussed at the first meeting. The third meeting would present the final Peace Plaza design.

Gregorio confirmed that, due to time sensitivity and March deadline for having concepts to support the bond, RPD will not be hiring a consulting architect for the project because going through a formal RFP process would take too much time. When a recommendation was made to look at DPW's As Needed contract of four teams, each with its own landscape architect, Gregorio said that was not an option although did not clarify why. He said that the Landscape Architect will be assigned from DPW staff.

Outreach will be conducted through attendance and presentations at community group meetings, digital outreach, and email communications.

Members of the LU/T Committee expressed concerns about the Peace Plaza Project, as they had an impression that the last design process of the Peace Plaza did not work out well. Comments were shared that the community input was not effective, and the assigned landscape architect was not responsive to what the community shared during the design process.

Other concerns and requests that were mentioned:

- Meetings with the Japantown merchants are necessary, since the construction of the Plaza will potentially disturb many neighboring businesses and merchants should be well-informed of these plans.
- There should be smaller community process meetings between the larger community meetings, with individuals who are more knowledgeable and interested in the Peace Plaza design process.
- A list of projects similar to the Peace Plaza that were led by DPW was requested.
- An online survey should be sent out to community members before the first community meeting, as many are on vacation during July and may not be able to make it to the actual meeting.

#### **A. Car share/Bike share/Scooters – Zipcar spots on Laguna**

Clint Taura reported that he has been in contact with Andrew Thormley from the SF Municipal Transportation Agency (SFMTA) regarding the Zipcar spots on Laguna. Andrew informed that SFMTA is ready to work with the LU/T Committee to move the Zipcar spots to another location in the neighborhood.

A discussion was held regarding potential spots that the Zipcar spots can be moved to. Some suggestions included areas east of Laguna Street, on Post or Sutter Street. To plan a reasonable space, the committee will be requesting a map of existing locations from Andrew. Suggestions were made to approach the merchants by the current Zipcar spots before the new location is decided. Richard Hashimoto representing the Japantown Merchants Association (JMA) or Grace Horikiri representing the Japantown Community Benefit District (JCBD) would be possible contacts to make during the planning process.

Glynis Nakahara reported that Justin Nguyen from Fort GoBike notified her that plans to install the bike stations have been moved back to 2019. The stations are not permitted yet, and public comments are being accepted. She also noted that despite committee

attempts to alert adjacent merchants and community members, Justin reported that he has not received any input/feedback to date.

**B. Update on Japantown Cultural Heritage District (CHD)**

Glynis Nakahara reported that the Board of Supervisors passed the CHD legislation, however, because the Historic Preservation Committee was passed over before they could weigh in with final recommendations, HPC held a Public Hearing. Committee members expressed concern that JTF took a formal position without vetting the issue(s) through proper protocol and that there was confusion as to why Japantown was not part of a CHD working group that helped shape and weighed in on the legislation. A request was made to clarify this issue at the coming June 20<sup>th</sup> JTF Board Meeting. HPC will be meeting with Supervisor Hillary Ronen's office to discuss the next steps.

**C. Update on Webster Bridge Community Clean Up**

Paul Wermer reported that the green and purple sample colors were painted on the railing of the Webster Bridge, though not on an entire section as requested. Paul will reach out to Public Works to request a redo. To gather feedback from individuals, a social media posting with a survey was suggested. Flyers should include a QR code and URL for individuals to easily access. In the survey, there should also be a question if the individual actually went to the bridge and saw the colors before voting. There was a question on how individuals who do not want to vote online can still vote for a color.

A Save the Date flyer has been sent out to the JTF mailing list for the Webster Bridge painting event.

During the past weekend, Kaz Naganuma reported to JTF that one of the lamps on the Webster Bridge fell and broke. He saved the lamp in his car and reached out to CBD for assistance. CBD staff and representatives contacted Public Works/311 and will be following up with this issue. This is the recommended protocol even though CBD scope does not technically include the Webster/Geary bridge.

**D. Update on Nihonmachi Parking Corporation (NPC) Lot Development**

Glynis Nakahara reported that the efforts to negotiate exclusively with a developer did not result in an agreement. In the meantime, NPC has received multiple offers and will be meeting to discuss how they want to proceed with that.

**F. Neighborhood Design Guidelines**

Glynis Nakahara reported that interested members of the committee will be meeting at Glynis's office on June 16<sup>th</sup> at 1:00pm to discuss and digest the City's new Urban Design Guidelines as the initial step in developing the Japantown Neighborhood Design Guidelines.

**G. 1710 Octavia/BCA Building**

Glynis Nakahara reported she was invited to attend another meeting of individuals who are working on researching short- and long-term remedies to avoid the sale of the Buddhist Churches of America (BCA) building. From her observations, it seems likely that BCA will be selling their building. BCA will be exploring community partners and brainstorming other options to mitigate potential impacts by sale of the building to incompatible development.

There was discussion about whether a Community Land Trust as described in JCHES might be relevant to this case. A suggestion was made to find out what the land would be

used for to better support BCSF brainstorm their next steps and solutions.

**H. Pa'ina Restaurant/Club Extension of Time for Entertainment\***

Beung Kwon was unable to attend the meeting before it was adjourned. Glynis will be in contact with him regarding his request for JTF's letter of support for Pa'ina's live performance permit to 2am.

**III. NEW BUSINESS**

None at this time.

**IV. ANNOUNCEMENTS**

SF MTA will be hosting two Town Hall meetings to update the community on the Geary Rapid Project. One on June 21 and the other on June 23.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:00 p.m.

The next meeting is scheduled for Monday, July 9, 2018.