



ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, PLANNING & PRESERVATION OF JAPANTOWN

**JAPANTOWN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND MARKETING COMMITTEE  
WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 11TH, 2017  
JACL HEADQUARTERS**

Attended: Alice Kawahatsu, Kimi Fukuyama, Merry Nishimura, Sheron Chiu

- I. Greetings & Intros - Business Roundtable
- II. Holiday Lights Update
- III. New Business

**I. Business Round Table:**

**Ichibankan Store: Post Street entrance closure**

Penny from Ichiban Kan reported to the Japantown foot patrol Officers Yuka N. and Officer Shawn F. regarding the reason for the store entrance closure on Post Street. Since this entrance is the quickest exit to the street, many shoplifters choose to use this entrance/exit to quickly get away.

Suggestions were made to post an instruction map on the closed door on how to get to the store via side entrance past Kabuki Hotel's detour door or through East Mall. Sheron Chiu mentioned that there is a one way turn-style item that can be installed so that people can come in, but it would not rotate the other way to leave.

Penny of Ichibankan mentioned that since the door on Post Street has been locked to entry, they have experienced less shoplifting. The problem still remains that not many customers, especially seniors can come into the store due to it being locked during store hours.

Committee member, Merry Nishimura made a suggestion that management can record data of how many items are being stolen and keeping track of loss revenue. JEDM recommended additional signs leading to Ichibankan's entrance. Alice suggested having a greeter or security guard at the Post Street entrance.

**Mall traffic during the holidays:**

Sheron Chiu reported that the mall has experienced good clientele in the last two weeks. In the West mall there is one elevator that is out of service. Regarding Santa's Workshop last month, foot traffic was moderate during the holiday events. After the event, traffic picked up and the first week of January was a busy time.

**Question: Why are there very few bathrooms in the food and retail establishments in the malls?**

Sheron mentioned that the businesses would have to decide whether they want to sacrifice space for a restroom or use the space for merchandising. Also, depending on their budget, it may be costly to get permits and add restrooms in a space that never had one prior. It was mentioned that clear signage for porta potty locations during festivals and larger events are needed so that the bathrooms in the malls don't attract huge lines or create plumbing issues.

**2. Holiday Lights Update:**

Alice mentioned receiving positive comments regarding the Holiday Lights. Mostly from the merchants at Buchanan Mall. Many of the merchants in the Buchanan Mall would like to see the bistro lights be a permanent installation that would illuminate year round. Alice mentioned that Nihonmachi Parking Corporation (NPC) would have the final decision on this. Richard Hashimoto is looking into the permit process for this from the city and how much it would cost to install the lights permanently. Manager of NPC will have a discussion with Rich Hashimoto regarding decision.

**Ideas which would attract more guests to Japantown:**

Sheron likes the idea of having friendly animated characters walking around the plaza and mall welcoming people and providing photo opportunities. Merry suggested having more places that offer breakfasts or brunch. Also, operating hours vary and not many of the stores are open later in the evening.

**Planning for a closing lights ceremony:**

In order for many merchants and business owners to attend the ceremony, an idea which was discussed was to hold a small thank you coffee early in the morning for merchants to attend. Another idea was to hold an interfaith New Year blessing for the community, utilizing the local church leaders to lead the blessing. The main purpose of this celebration is to thank the donors for their support, cultivate future supporters, and bring community together. It would also be a great way to invite Supervisor London Breed and congratulate her for her reelection. An opportunity to update Supervisor Breed and the community on major projects which JTF will take on in 2017 would also be presented at the event. Since it was the closing of the lights, it was mentioned that it would be a good idea to have the event held during when the lights are on.

Sheron generously offered to let us use Suite 525, which is located on the second floor of the East Mall. This suite was used for last year's ceremony. Insurance, lightening and logistics would still need to be worked out. Sheron suggested having our own padlock for the door, so we could come and go in and out during setup and take down. She gave us permission to come in the day before. Alice will put out an ask for

volunteers for the lights ceremony. Vas Kiniris of Zinc Details offered to loan some lights from his store to light the space and Ed Ong offered to help with the set up.

### **3. New Business**

#### **Wishing Tree status:**

The Wishing trees are on display in the Union Bank Community room window and will be sharing space with the “Wall of Compassion” project presented by NJHAS and JACL. Vas Kiniris would like to borrow these trees for his store window in February. Alice visited the store and dropped off some additional blank wish tags with origami cranes attached so Vas’s customers can add their wishes to the tree. Date TBD as to how long the tree will be displayed at Zinc and where and how it will be stored later.

#### **Upcoming Events:**

50<sup>th</sup> Cherry Blossom Festival- April 8-9, 15-16

**Next JEDM meeting will be February 8<sup>th</sup>, 2017 at 11pm.**

**Please note: We are back at our original location at Union Bank Community Room.**