

JAPANTOWN COMMUNITY BENEFIT DISTRICT, INC.
BOARD MEETING MINUTES

March 14, 2018, 6:00 P.M.

National Japanese American Citizens League Headquarters Building
1765 Sutter Street, 1st Floor
San Francisco, CA 94115

Attendees: David Ishida, Kimberly Kolbe, Mary Ishisaki, Steve Ishii, Kathryn Nelsen, Rob Malone, Dennis Kern, Michael Sim, Robert Sakai, Chip Nakamura

Absent: Jerry Ono, Eric Moulton, Sim Seiki, Abraham Sanez, J.P. Oliver.

Staff: Steve Nakajima, Coco Tando, Steve Nakajo.

Guests: Judy Hamaguchi, Benh Nakajo, Alice Kawahatsu, Sandy Mori, Helen Mar, Tats Ogawa, Manami Iiboshi.

I. Call to Order and Roll Call

The meeting called to order by David Ishida at 6:05pm.

II. Discussion and Approval of Minutes from February 14, 2018 Meeting

It was moved by Mary Ishisaki and seconded by Robert Sakai to approve the minutes from the February 14, 2018 JCBD Board Meeting

There was no public comment on the item.

The motion passed by a unanimous vote.

III. DPW Deep Steam Cleaning Report

Steve Nakajima reported the DPW Deep Steam Cleaning that was performed at midnight in February and March. Most sidewalks inside the District were steam cleaned, but the area on Post Street between Buchanan Street and Laguna Street could not be steam cleaned during the four weekends. The streets in Japantown have not been cleaned for many years, therefore many storefronts required at least one hour of steam cleaning. SFDPW has generously spent many hours steam cleaning the streets in Japantown. As the contract with Block by Block comes in effect in early April, deep steam cleaning is not included in their services, but ambassadors would be using their own cleaning equipment to maintain the sidewalks on a daily basis.

Steve Nakajima mentioned that San Francisco Recreation and Parks and Nihonmachi Parking Corporation have also performed major cleaning at the Peace Plaza and Buchanan Mall, respectively. Dennis Kern reported that Rec & Parks is also currently working on cleaning the flag pole in the Peace Plaza and installing upward facing lights to light up the flags at night. Once the installation is completed, Rich Hashimoto from the Japan Center Garage Corporation would be maintaining the flags.

Chip Nakamura commented that he has been frequently observing illegal dumping by the garbage can on the corner of Post Street and Laguna Street. This garbage can could be removed temporarily as an experiment to see if the amount of trash decreases from the garbage can removal.

Following the presentation, guests from the public mentioned their concerns regarding **maintenance in the** neighborhood, including: the front of Benihana and Union Bank that accumulates trash every afternoon, cigarette butts found in tree basins and storefronts, and broken tripod supports of planted cherry trees.

Photos from the deep steam cleaning and the Peace Plaza and Buchanan Mall cleaning can be found in Attachment A.

IV. Employment Attorney

Steve Nakajima reported that JCBD has signed a contract with Jane Kow, an employment attorney, to set up a basic foundation for staff and personnel matters that would ensure compliance with the federal and state employment law. Jane Kow would assist JCBD on preparing federal and state workplace postings, job descriptions, employee handbooks, employment contracts, and application processes.

V. Updates

A. JCBD Funding

Steve Nakajima reported that JCBD has received a payment of \$164,000 this month from property owner levies, **which** was \$33,000 short from the expected amount. The upcoming payments are scheduled in May, July, and September this year. The property owners who did not submit their payment will be contacted.

B. Executive Director search status

Steve Nakajima reported that the Officers and staff are in discussion with one potential candidate who is currently deciding if he or she wishes to proceed in the process.

C. Block by Block status

Steve Nakajima reported that the contract with Block by Block has been signed, and the start date of their service is scheduled to be April 4th. Two ambassadors will be assigned to Japantown, and they will provide cleaning, safety, and security services to the neighborhood. A week before the start date, the ambassadors will start meeting with the merchants and property owners throughout the neighborhood, and their contact with the community will continue as an ongoing process to increase their familiarity with the businesses. A card with the ambassador's contact information would be distributed to the property owners and merchants for reporting broken glass or windows, illegal dumping, cleaning requests, and any other requests that are included in the contract. The storage space for the cleaning supplies and equipment is being constructed in the Fillmore Japan Center Garage.

D. Marketing strategy, logo and branding

Steve Nakajima reported that another meeting was held with Kaz Naganuma and Greg Horikiri from NDD Creative. NDD Creative presented a proposal of a long-term marketing plan for Japantown, which includes marketing research, promotion of San Francisco Japantown, research on the selling points and points of improvement of Japantown, branding and logo of Japantown, and media and communication methods that would connect Japantown outside the community. The proposal will be re-worked and will be discussed again.

As the long-term marketing plan for Japantown is being developed, Steve Nakajima mentioned having short-term and or smaller marketing ideas that would run in parallel. JCBD can support ideas that require smaller funding, as they are brought up internally or externally by other individuals or organizations. JCBD can fund ideas that drive businesses to merchants and support the economic enhancement and tour business of the community.

Kim Kolbe presented a website she developed for JCBD, and explained the layout and contents of the website. Some contents of the website include: JCBD works; contact page; and a documentation page. A website for San Francisco Japantown as a whole is also being considered and discussed.

E. City grant RFP

Steve Nakajima reported that two city grants came available for JCBD to apply. One was for non-profit organizations, and the other was for CBD organizations.

F. Newsletter and Outreach

Coco Tando reported that the March newsletter (Attachment B) has been distributed to property owners, merchants, and community members. The newsletter highlighted recent JCBD activities including the SFDPW deep steam cleaning service and the Block by Block agreement. Steve Nakajo expressed the importance of having the community feel personally connected to each member associated with JCBD. Having a picture and description of the JCBD Directors in the newsletters would be helpful for the community members build familiarity to the JCBD Directors.

G. Accountant and auditor for JCBD*

Mary Ishisaki reported that she contacted an auditing accountant but may need to meet with another auditor to support the staff with QuickBooks and bookkeeping operations. She is also working towards finding a payroll service to submit paychecks to JCBD employees.

H. Nichi Bei directory and map*

David Ishida reported that JCBD has contributed \$3,000 to the Nichi Bei Foundation for a Japantown map and directory of all businesses in Japantown. The directory lists the Japantown businesses in categories. The request for funding came to JCBD after the map and directory layout was made. It was mentioned that in future years, JCBD should be

able to have more input in the layout and elements of the map and directory to better serve the businesses within the District.

Attachment C is a draft sample front page of the Nichi Bei map and directory.

VI. Cherry Blossom Film Festival Proposal*

Manami Iiboshi representing SUPERFROG Project presented a proposal for the Cherry Blossom Film Festival (Attachment D). The film festival was launched in 2017 as a part of Japantown's Cherry Blossom Festival with support from the Northern California Cherry Blossom Festival Committee and the San Francisco Consulate General of Japan. This year, SUPERFROG Project **hopes to** host a free Japanese film festival that features Hayao Miyazaki films. Detailed information of the event, budget breakdown, and data from the 2017 screening can be found in the proposal (Attachment D).

The Board asked questions after the proposal was presented, and received the following answers:

- The total cost of 2017's film festival event totaled \$16,200.
- The 2017 event sold a total of 450 tickets and had a revenue of \$5,000 from the ticket sales. Most tickets were sold before the event and less than half of the sales were from walk-ins. The profit went to the Cherry Blossom Committee. Other than the tickets, nothing else was sold during the event.
- If the proposal is approved for this year, promotion products can be passed out during the event, and businesses can be advertised on the screen.

After the presentation, the staff and Directors shared their thoughts on the proposal.

The following comments were shared from the public:

- The event brought successful results last year, and the revenue went to the Cherry Blossom Committee
- Approximately 200,000 visitors come to the Cherry Blossom Festival every year, so having an additional 450 coming in may not be a significant benefit. There should be more discussions before funding is made to proposals, but there is not enough time for a decision to be made for this proposal.

From examining the cost, JCBD budget, scheduling and timeline, and possible benefits to the property owner(s), merchant(s), and the Cherry Blossom Festival, a decision was made to pass on the proposal and suggest SUPERFROG Project other organizations that may support fund the film festival. In future years, the film festival may be a project that JCBD may be interested to support and build on.

VII. SFPD presentation

No presentation.

VIII. Discussion and possible action on items for future meetings

None

IX. General public comment

Members in the public shared their appreciation towards community members who have been voluntarily cleaning the neighborhood including: Mr. Kawahatsu from Konkō Church who picks up cigarette butts every day as he takes walks around in the neighborhood, a Japanese man who comes to trim the pine trees in the neighborhood, Dr. Chip Nakamura who weekly cleans the trash on Post Street, and Alice Kawahatsu who has been contacting owners of lost suitcases and baggage that likely were abandoned after car break-ins. All members in the community are ambassadors of Japantown, and therefore should contribute what they can to improve the public image and experience of the neighborhood.

David Ishida suggested that these individuals and others who voluntarily clean or maintain Japantown should be publicly recognized and appreciated more by the community.

Kathy Nelson reported that the Kabuki Springs and Spa will be at the San Francisco Historic Preservation Commission hearing to receive approval of a Legacy Business application on March 26th at 1pm, which would be two days before their 50th anniversary since opening.

Sandy Mori announced the 50th anniversary celebration of the Japan Center on March 28th. A community celebration will be held from 11am to 12:30pm.

X. Adjournment

It was moved by Robert Sakai and seconded by Mary Ishisaki to adjourn the meeting at 7:30pm.

The next board meeting will be on Wednesday, April 11th at 6:00pm at the National Japanese American Citizens League Headquarters Building (1765 Sutter Street).