



January Board Meeting Minutes

January 27, 2021 • 5:00 P.M. - 6:00 P.M. Via ZOOM conference:

Attendees: Robert Sakai, Mary Ishisaki, Rob Malone, Kathy Nelsen, Kim Kolbe, Dennis Kern, Alex Prouty, Dan Byron, Steve Ishii

Absent: Jerry Ono

Staff: Grace Horikiri, Brandon Quan, Melissa Bailey Nihei

Guests: Sandy Mori (JTF), Sam Mihara (Property Owner), Adrienne Shiozaki-Woo, (Nihonmachi Little Friends), Roland Tolosa (AVS), Rich Hashimoto (JMA), Emily Glick

1. **Call to order and roll call** **5:00**
2. **Vice President's Announcements** **5:03**

Emily Glick has changed positions and no longer represents the Buchanan Hotel, so she is off the board. Later on in the meeting we will have nominations, in which she will be nominated as an at-large member.
3. **Action Item: Approval November 18, 2020 Minutes** **5:05**

Motion: Mary Ishisaki; Second: Dennis Kern
The motion passed unanimously.
4. **Action Item: Approval December Financial Report** **5:10**

Motion: Dennis Kern; Second: Rob Malone
The motion passed unanimously.
We received our first assessment check for \$238,950.64, which is over half of what the assessment for what the annual budget is. The budget is set at \$393,000 for the year. Our budget was made with a 25% deduction in anticipation of not receiving all of the assessment funds. We also received a \$1000 donation for the lighting, the Heart of Jtown Resiliency Fund raised \$482,000, and \$10,000 of it is earmarked for staff time on the grant program.
5. **Action Item: Discussion & Approval of Last Half of FY 20-21 Budget** **5:15**

Motion: Dennis Kern; Second: Rob Malone
The motion passed unanimously.
Since we have received more than anticipated for the first half, we are going to re-budget using the full amount we anticipated receiving. It is likely we received some full year payments within that amount and no late assessments were paid, which makes it what we were anticipating coming in for the year. We will have carryovers for the January to June budget, which are banked and shown in the budget. We are talking with OEWD on what has to be used this year. The hope is that the funds can be earmarked for future costs for ongoing work that the JCBD is doing, i.e. camera maintenance, etc.

6. Executive Director & Staff Reports

5:20

- A. COVID efforts (Assistance to small business, COVID testing, Heart of Jtown Resiliency Fund, Meeting with Mayor's Office)
Recently 12-15 small businesses were assisted with their CA COVID Relief grants. Slowly but surely businesses are being moved to the next application round. To date, The Heart of Jtown Resiliency Fund has raised in total \$505,850. Thank you to Rich Hashimoto for assisting with the grant program awardee selection.
A meeting was held with Japantown community leaders and the Mayor's Office and OEWD requesting \$1.3 million to support Japantown.
- B. Board of Supervisors Government Audit & Oversight Resolution 201372
This resolution which passed yesterday is a nonbinding resolution, not an ordinance. OEWD is going to work on administration to figure out rules and regulations so CBDs are in compliance re: donations. Anonymous donations above \$100 are no longer allowed. They will also be ensuring that regulations around the camera systems are transparent. OEWD is working on this in order to save the CBDs the administrative time working on this issue. A draft will be issued in the next few weeks and one on one meetings will be held with Executive Directors.
- C. Japantown Cultural District & JCBD Partnership to assist Small Businesses
JCBD will be partnering with JCD to assist with the Small Business Outreach Program. We have been meeting with JCD staff to hone in on the position and how it can help the JCBD's work and the small businesses. This would be funded through the JCD with the JCBD providing management and oversight. A part time staff person will be hired by JCD to work with JCBD to assist the small businesses. This will help both JCBD and JCD meet their goals. The position will terminate at the end of November.
- D. Grant Submission Updates
Melissa Bailey Nihei presented a summary report on grants submitted from October 2019-January 2021. Around the three year anniversary of the JCBD, the number of grant awards increased, which is a milestone date for many funders. To date, \$15,000 was received from the SF Japantown Foundation for COVID relief and small business support. We have 3 grants pending, the Union Bank Recovery Program (\$50,000), 2 RFPs are pending with OEWD and were submitted on January 12th. Program Area P (\$250,000) supports storefront improvements through a mini grant program. We requested \$250,000 in order to award \$5000 mini grants to 50 small businesses. Program Area T (\$40,000) supports public space improvements. We requested funding to support the continuation of our Big Belly Trash program, since the current grant terminates this year, as well as funding for research to install permanent lighting in public spaces throughout Japantown that either do not currently have lighting or are in need of updated or repaired lighting fixtures. JCBD was waitlisted on the CA COVID Relief grant (\$15,000) but moved forward to the next round in February automatically. This week we will also submit a grant to the JA Community Foundation Emergency Grant Program requesting COVID relief funding for small businesses (\$20,000). \
- E. Cleaning & Safety Reports
There has been an increase in sharps cleanup, which has been documented to 311. We have seen more auto glass on the streets but have not received any requests for video. Within the past 3 weeks there were about 3 incidents of this.

There is also a rise in break ins in the garage as well. The next safety alert will mention to be careful with what is left in people's cars. We received 10 requests for video in December. 3 came from SFPD and 7 came from the community, which were also forwarded to SFPD. We also had 3 more from the general public. Brandon Quan received his first subpoena to appear in court to discuss footage collected from a fatal auto accident on Geary. However, court rooms are backed up and Brandon will be notified when he has to appear. A protest occurred on Saturday at Geary and Laguna and SFPD was out in force. Information was also shared from social media with SFPD by JCBD staff ahead of the incident. The situation was handled brilliantly with no outbreaks of significant violence. There were approximately 400 officers in and around Japantown that day.

7. Japantown SafeCity Program Updates

5:30

Last November the agreement with AVS was signed. There is approximately \$104,000 left in the account to use for FY2021-22 and part of FY2022-23. This is an item we are hoping the carryover revenues can be used towards.

8. JCBD Marketing & Communication Updates

5:33

Most recently we've been focusing on actionable and immediate support for businesses. This is looking to be mainly digital and e-commerce support. For JCBD, our role is to help set up these small businesses for long term success while they handle the day to day survival. We are setting up a pilot program with a few businesses to create a proof of concept and see what works best to get small businesses set up. Another possibility would be a Japantown wide gift card program, but much still needs to be discussed around the specifics of it. We have continued our social media work and have been working with incoming responses from influencers, etc. We are also producing Merchant Reelz and are speaking with Chris Killman to shoot 6 15 second videos for social media. The street lamp banner permits have been extended for a year, so those will remain up and we will have substantial savings on having to replace them. Our contract with LGPR has ended for the time being, but we will reassess the contract when we are able to hold in person events in future when it is safe to. Wayfinding and experience Japantown signage is put on hold for the moment. The Voices of Japantown document is almost finished and will be sent out to press who make inquiries.

A. Naked, Bless/Breathe Project

We are scheduling another meeting with Rec and Park when Dana Ketchum is back in town to go over the updated proposal and their recommended changes. The next board meeting we hope to have a full breakdown ready to go in order to decide how to proceed, in particular on the funding end.

9. Community Updates

A. Japantown Task Force

5:40

Sandy Mori: Proposition A passed by over 66%, which included the \$25 million for the Peace Plaza Project. This was a huge victory. We are now moving forward with the design and construction phases of the project. Rec and Park has hired RHAA which specializes in Japanese design to continue their design work and aspects of the project. I also wanted to share the Consul General Toru Maeda is very supportive of Japantown's efforts to survive. He is co-sponsoring 3 focus groups with the younger generation to get their comments and feedback on their concerns and what they want to see in the future of Jtown. Individuals were selected in groups of 12 within the 25-40 age group.

- 10. Discussion and possible action items for future meetings 5:45**
 A. Nominations for Officers and Board vacancies
 Next month several action items related to Board members will be included. Emily Glick is nominated as an at-large Board Member, and the Officers are also seeking other people to join as President, Secretary, and as other Board Members. Any Board Member please forward your recommendations for nominations to Robert Sakai, Mary Ishisaki, or Grace Horikiri. Officers should be nominated from the existing Board.
- 11. General public comment* 5:55**
 Emily Glick: I appreciate all the work of the staff and committees and hope to continue that work. Thank you Robert for the nomination and I look forward to the decision. Emily Nichols has been hired by the Buchanan Hotel and is looking forward to meeting everyone soon.
- 12. Announcements and New Business 5:57**
 Grace Horikiri: Carmen Chu is now the new City Administrator, and Joaquin Torres of OEWD will be the new City Assessor.
 Mary Ishisaki: Last Saturday's demonstration coverage was coordinated over email and text messages and set up on short notice on Friday. SFPD more than did Japantown proud with how the situation was handled. Thank you to Alex for your assistance with providing access for SFPD. Thanks to everybody for doing a great job ensuring Japantown's safety that day.
- 13. Action Item: Adjournment 6:00**
 Motion: Mary Ishisaki; Second: Kathy Nelsen
 The motion passed unanimously.

Next JCBD Board Meeting: The December JCBD Board meeting will be cancelled. The first scheduled Board meeting for the new year will take place on Wednesday, February 24, 2021 at 5pm. Due to Shelter in Place Order the board meeting will be conducted on ZOOM. Login information is located at the top of the page

*General Public Comment: Members of the public may address the Board for up to two minutes with respect to each item on the agenda, and may speak up to two minutes regarding matters not on the agenda during general public comment.

Meeting materials distributed to the JCBD Board members are available for inspection and copying during regular office hours at the Japanese American Citizens League Building, 1765 Sutter Street, 2nd Floor, prior to the meetings.