



### October Board Meeting Minutes

October 28, 2020 • 6:00 P.M. - 5:00 P.M. Via ZOOM conference:  
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82907320188> Meeting ID: 829 0732 0188  
One tap mobile +16699006833,,82907320188#

**Attendees:** Emily Glick, Robert Sakai, Mary Ishisaki, Rob Malone, Jerry Ono, Dan Byron, Kathy Nelsen, Kim Kolbe, Dennis Kern

**Absent:** Steve Ishii, Alex Prouty

**Staff:** Grace Horikiri, Brandon Quan, Melissa Ayumi Bailey

**Guests:** Kenta Takemori (JTF), Alice Kawahatsu (JTF), Adrienne Gambala (Recology), Greg Vilorio (JCM), Sam Mihara, Sandy Mori (JTF), Yuki Nishimura, Diane Matsuda (APILO), Dean Ito Taylor (APILO), Ryan Kimura

- 1. Call to order and roll call** **5:00**
- 2. Action to Approve September 9, 2020 Minutes** **6:05**  
Motion: Robert Sakai; Second: Mary Ishisaki  
The motion passed unanimously.
- 3. Action to Approve September Financial Report** **6:10**  
Motion: Robert Sakai; Second: Dennis Kern  
The motion passed unanimously.  
For the close of the first quarter we are in the negative ~\$300. It should balance out next quarter with income coming in from the tax assessments at the end of December. A reminder to the board that the assessments will not increase next fiscal year. We will be working on the budget for the next six months and will hopefully have this by the next Board Meeting, but if not, then we will have it in January when the assessments come in.
- 4. Board President Report** **6:15**
  - A. Recap of 2020 JCBD Board Retreat (please review minutes in advance)
    - a. Affirmed our mission statement is still clear and accurate  
Made sure the mission still encompasses our CBD key priorities.
    - b. Grace's provided ED "state of the union"  
The board members commend JCBD staff for a productive month and year when reflecting on the long term. Partnerships built with Japan Center Malls and Japantown Task Force are particularly significant relationships for going forward. Also reiterated the importance of the different city departments (i.e. OEWD) that have mentored and provided support to JCBD and Grace over the past several years.
    - c. Affirmed Employee Handbook changes made sense

Spoke with attorney Jane Kow to ensure JCBD is up to date and compliant in Human Resources. Paid holidays were added for staff. All of this is accommodated within JCBD financial guidelines.

- d. Decided Officers and ED to oversee process for selection of new board member(s) and for selection of new Secretary from among the existing board membership

JCBD has board vacancies, but there is not an urgent need to fill seats because we are meeting the ratios required for membership. We want to be thoughtful and strategic about what skill sets and knowledge we'd like to see added to our board. An application and interview process are being developed. The existing Officers group and Grace will vet the potential candidates prior to nomination to the full Board. The Officers are open to any suggestions by all Board Members for possible candidates to fill the matrix of what we need on the Board. An overall report of what JCBD does and what is expected is being developed for presenting to potential candidates. We remain in need of a new secretary still.

- e. Bylaws were reviewed and needn't be updated. Term limits not needed (and Board members may be removed for cause if needed)

They are simple and not extensive by design. The by laws talk about what constitutes quorum, board member responsibility, etc. There was no need for additions or revisions. We decided we would like board member longevity.

- f. We want to encourage all nominees to commit to 2+ year term (minimum)

- g. The Marketing Committee will continue to exist but the Finance Committee not needed. Instead, related discussions about budget priorities and categories, fundraising options, and cost containment can remain the purview of the full Board

There was also a discussion if we want to create additional committees to take on the other priorities of the JCBD. It was decided this was not needed at this time. It was also felt that doing report outs on committee work vs a discussion among board members was a better strategy for planning.

- B. Based on Retreat and further input from Officers and ED, we will not yet form an ad hoc committee to lead our 5-Year Strategic Plan process until at least next year (non-urgent because we determine our own deadline for this). Will require a full-day board meeting.

Given the pandemic, we are putting this on the back burner until we are able to meet more in depth and in person.

- C. Upcoming Board Meetings: November = for discussion; December = skipped for the holidays.

A poll was taken to determine the date for the November Board Meeting. The poll was split 50/50 between November 18<sup>th</sup> and November 25<sup>th</sup>. Follow up will be done with each board member after the Board Meeting is done.

- 5. Japantown CBD SafeCity Program Updates 6:25**  
We are looking at the viability of Phase 5. 1900 Sutter who we had approached felt they will not likely be able to participate. The Working Group will be meeting to discuss if this should be put off at this time, discuss the service agreement, and how to generate revenue from services provided to Phase 5 participants. However, we don't have the funds to provide the subsidy we thought we could originally. We need to maintain funds for servicing to the existing cameras.
- 6. JCBD Marketing & Communication Updates 6:30**
- A. Peace Pagoda Inspired Light Tunnel  
We were hoping to have this fabricated and installed by the holidays, but unfortunately the requirements from the City for art installations were too intensive and costly for the this short of a timeframe. The artist Keegan Olston also didn't have much experience with these types of projects with the City. This gave us a chance to learn what the process looks like should we decide to install public art on City property in future. We will have string lights installed on the Plaza and are reaching out to get estimates for that at this time.
- B. Merchant Promo Reels  
Vas Kirinis, the Fillmore Merchants Association President, is now helping merchant corridors by creating promo videos on Instagram and Facebook for small businesses. He has done videos for Benkyodo, Soko Hardware, Kabuki Springs and Spa, Matcha Café Maiko, and Hinodeya Ramen. We will hopefully continue this. The cost is \$175 per reel which makes it affordable promotion for small businesses.
- C. LGPR Updates  
Although we are limited on press trips, etc. LGPR has been very active staying on top of any press and drawing out ideas from us to help promote Japantown.
- D. Other upcoming marketing initiatives planned  
We were looking to get a statement art piece for Japantown, and in this research Kim Kolbe found "Breath/Bless 2020 Project" by Naked, Inc. It is a public art installation that connects to other installations in Asia that are part of the project. Interactive dandelions are blown on or activated with a phone QR code that triggers an animation that then triggers an animation in the other installations in real time. They are very eager to have a US project and thus are willing to work with our budget. There are several installation size options, and we had previously looked at the Medium Sized Installation to possibly project on/in the East Mall. It would cost between \$30-80k, however we may be able to get donated projectors which would take the cost down 20-40%. The JCBD Board Members felt this is a project we should at least try to pursue since they are interested in a US installation, and it would be beneficial in bringing audiences back to Japantown, but there is hesitance around the affordability. Something this large scale would also attract larger press interest, such as the New York Times, etc. which is a positive thing for Japantown.
- 7. Executive Director Report 6:35**
- A. Small Business Support during COVID  
We are still continuing to check in with the merchants and supply PPE.
- B. The Heart of Jtown Resiliency Fund Update

To date we have received \$504,660 and \$400,000 has already been allocated to 80 small businesses who received \$5000 grants. We are also supporting businesses with the Shared Space buildout program. We are leaving a reserve for future costs for merchants. We also contributed to JCCCNC's Picnic in the Plaza. We were approached by The City to host free COVID testing in Japantown, and we will be utilizing the Picnic in the Plaza tents for this purpose. It is a good opportunity for businesses to get their employees tested. Last Friday, SFPD, SFFD, and Rec and Park did a walkthrough of Japantown on the Safe City Camera Program. It let them see how they all interact with each other in case they need footage for cases. Today, SFPD Chief Scott also did a Japantown walkthrough, the first time a Chief has done so. He was also very appreciative of the camera program and its use for SFPD.

C. Community Challenge Grant (added in during meeting)

This grant is for outdoor space buildouts and improvements. It is a reimbursement based grant for FY2021-2022. The cap on the request is \$175,000, with a required 35% match. We are looking to fund repairs to the Mon lamps in Japantown through this grant program.

**8. Community Updates**

**6.40**

A. Japantown Task Force

The Cultural District is still working with MOHCD on finalizing the CHHESS draft. Some requested edits came back and they are working on them now. We have hired Natasha Weiss as the Project Associate. She was hired last week and is familiarizing herself with JTF documents now. The Cultural District is looking to hire a Marketing Associate next, and the job posting will be released soon. Japan Video and Media submitted its application for Legacy Business Registry with JTF assistance and the hearings to decide status will be on December 2<sup>nd</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup>.

Proposition A to pass a Health and Recovery Act Bond requires a 2/3rds vote to pass. We are part of the citywide campaign to promote this. Our Peace Plaza project is a part of this bond. A week ago we had an API press conference to talk about the impact of Prop A on our communities, namely Japantown, Chinatown, and SOMA Philippines. Please inform friends and family to vote yes on Prop A.

The Homeless Shelter Program at the Hotel Buchanan is still in place, and likely will continue through the end of the year. The plan is to transfer residents from the hotel to permanent supportive housing, but the City still needs to find the permanent housing sites. Therefore in the meantime, services will continue at the Hotel Buchanan. The hotel is not up for sale in the state program where hotels are purchased for these housing sites. We meet regularly with Providence, the service provider. There are approximately 120 residents there at this time that are pending transfer to a permanent housing site.

JTF has an Ad Hoc Technical Committee to strategize moving forward on the mall complex. There are many different property owners in the area. We are inviting them all to our meetings to discuss what they're looking to see in the future. It is good to know who they are and have communication with them. The last meeting included Pat Flanagan (owner of AMC Kabuki). He is wanting to be part of the community and supports Japantown's efforts to keep its cultural identity and promote its events. Also

present were Grace Horikiri and Greg Vioria who reported on their communications with the merchants, as well as Jerry Ono representing Union Bank. There is also another committee organized by Paul Osaki that is looking at the covenant and whether or not it should be rewritten.

**9. Discussion and possible action items for future meetings 6:45**

We will add in a discussion on the JCBD's position on the commercial eviction moratorium at the next board meeting.

**10. General public comment\* 6:50**

Dean Ito Taylor: I am from API Legal Outreach, which was born in Japantown as Nihonmachi Legal Outreach. I am here to give background on the work APILO is doing with small merchants in Asian communities, including Japantown. We were concerned about the impact of the shutdowns on small businesses, in particular Legacy and family businesses, who are unable to fulfill rent obligations and requirements. We are supportive of government eviction moratoriums and pushing back rent obligations to March 2021. San Francisco is considering this move and we are seeking support due to small businesses not being able to pay back rent right now. The Japantown malls have been closed for a long time in particular, so we are supporting an extension of these moratoriums. We don't want to lose our Cultural District businesses. We are seeking your support in this effort and are supporting Supervisors Peskin and Preston in their efforts. Thank you for your work in building the capacity of Japantown.

Ryan Kimura: I am a business owner of Pika Pika in Japantown for over 14 years. We are located in the Kinokuniya building. I am on several boards in the community, grew up here, and now am a parent of a community kid. Thank you so much for the support through the Resiliency Fund, PR, and marketing efforts. I am asking you to wield your power as an organization to support small businesses. The moratorium gives you some breathing room, but it isn't the only thing that's needed for small businesses to survive. I'm looking for individual support as well to push the extension of the moratorium. We want to make sure there are still businesses here to PR and market for.

Diane Matsuda: The mechanics and implementation of this ordinance will take some time, but we appreciate any and all immediate support of this effort.

Alice Kawahatsu: I am glad to hear about the COVID testing in the plaza. Please let us know how we can help get volunteers and share information to the community.

**11. Announcements and New Business 6:55**

**12. Adjournment (action item) 7:00**

Motion: Robert Sakai; Second: Kathy Nelsen

The motion passed unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 7:20pm.

**Next JCBD Board Meeting:** Wednesday, November 18, 6:00 P.M. 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.