



# Japantown Community Benefit District, Inc.

## November Board Meeting Minutes **DRAFT**

November 18, 2020 • 5:00 P.M. - 6:00 P.M. Via ZOOM conference

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

**Absent:** Jerry Ono, Melissa Ayumi Bailey

**Staff:** Grace Horikiri, Brandon Quan

**Guests:** Sandy Mori (JTF), Steve Nakajo (JTF), Alice Kawahatsu (JTF), Diane Matsuda (APILO), Nancy Vega (Kabuki/AMC), Sam Mihara (Property Owner), Adrienne Shiozaki-Woo (Nihonmachi Little Friends), Ryan Kimura (Business Owner, Pika Pika)

1. **Call to order and roll call** **5:00**  
The meeting was called to order at 5:03PM.
2. **Action Item: Approval October 28, 2020 Minutes** **5:03**  
Motion: Robert Sakai; Second: Mary Ishisaki  
The motion passed unanimously.
3. **Action Item: Approval October Financial Report** **5:05**  
Motion: Dennis Kern; Second: Robert Sakai  
The motion passed unanimously.  
Please note there is at the moment a minus figure due to the fact we have yet to receive income for this period. The assessment checks will be coming in sometime between the end of December to the end of January.
4. **Board President Report** **5:10**  
One on ones and the Board Retreat were completed. Board Members, please review the notes that have been shared and make any changes if needed. Comments and feedback were shared anonymously. A few things were suggested that we may want to dig into in the future as a board. Please share any feedback on topics for future meetings. We will be cancelling the December Board Meeting for the holidays and will resume in January on our usually timeline.
5. **Japantown CBD SafeCity Program Updates** **5:15**
  - A. AVS Service Plan  
The Japantown Safe City Working Group met to review the Service Plan that was also reviewed by counsel Claudine Cheng and she provided her comments and recommendations. The Board approved the Service Plan in September based upon implementation of counsel's suggestions. These were put into the contract by AVS and the agreement has been signed.
  - B. SafeCity Program Financial Report  
Dmitri Shimolin was not present at the meeting so no update was provided.
  - C. SFPD, SFFD, Park Ranger Walk Through  
Friday October 23<sup>rd</sup> a orientation took place with Northern Station, Engine 38, and Rec and Park Rangers in order to introduce the attendees not familiar with the Safe City

Camera Program. The boundaries of the JCBD were also explained and demonstration of the capabilities of the system was done through a visit to the work station in the JCBD office. It was a positive interaction between JCBD and agencies, and follow up meetings were requested by SFFD to better understand Japantown's infrastructure in case of large scale emergencies. Through discussion with the rangers we also learned that Rec and Park is going to be installing cameras in the Peace Plaza, which opens up opportunity for cross dialogue between agencies.

**6. JCBD Marketing & Communication Updates 5:25**

**A. Holiday Lighting & Promotions**

There have been difficulties in getting a large scale installation, however given the tightening on restrictions, this ended up being for the best. Neighborhood Arts was able to install its usual string light installations. We are looking for ideas to do promotions during the holiday season that don't include gathering or handouts to the public.

**B. LGPR Updates**

We have put a lot of media work on pause given the pandemic. However, please do let us know about events going on so we can share these with our PR agency to share with local media. We are also looking at upgrading and painting out areas in Japantown that have been somewhat neglected previously.

**C. Naked, Breathe Project**

Scope was narrowed down. The recommendation is a single projector under the Pagoda that would require a 13 foot scaffold on which to put the projector. There is also the possibility of mounting onto the Pagoda or on the roof of the mall. The cost would be between \$15-16k for initial set up and run, and if we would like to go longer than the original quote, it would be about \$5k for every additional week. We are looking for a 4-8 week run. The installations are interconnected to other sites concurrently running, so we are hoping to pair our installation with the one in Osaka in June 2021. There are a number of issues given we don't know what the climate will be or what the vaccine rollout will look like. It takes about 60 days to launch once we get everything approved. Naked is now working on an updated proposal and will send it out in the next week or so. Next steps would be figuring out who we would like to approach for funding. Naked is trying to see if Japanese telecommunications companies they have worked with previously have US contacts. Grace will connect Kim with Shauna and Dana at Rec and Park to start the conversation on approval. This type of installation will need Rec and Park permits as well as Arts Commission approval, which is a lengthy process. We should find out first what permits and costs are associated with an installation on the Peace Plaza.

**7. Executive Director Report 5:30**

**A. COVID efforts (Assistance to small business, COVID testing)**

COVID testing was done on November 4<sup>th</sup> with 187 participants and yesterday had 356. The City was pleased to see the turn out, and because of the demonstrated need, November 24<sup>th</sup> has been scheduled as a third day. Seniors will be prioritized on this date.

**B. The Heart of Jtown Resiliency Fund Update**

Through the fund, Picnic at the Plaza was extended another month. The tents also allowed for COVID testing to come to Japantown as well. Staff has been working with a lot of the restaurants who have outdoor dining because of the weather concerns and upcoming rain.

**C. SFPD Chief Scott Japantown Merchant Walk Through**

This occurred on October 28<sup>th</sup>. Commander Fong and Acting Captain of Northern Station and other staff attended, along with Sandy Mori, Mary Ishisaki, and Claudine Cheng.

The focus of the visits was the Legacy Businesses. Merchants appreciated the one on one time with the Chief and were able to share their concerns about the safety of the neighborhood.

#### D. Cleaning & Safety Reports

We have been seeing a lot more sharps (needles) and that type of cleanup, so be aware. We have also been seeing an increase in homeless and specifically aggressive homeless, which has us keeping an eye on the safety of our ambassadors. We are working with SFPD on this issue. Most of the reports with SFPD have been robbery related incidents. Not as many car break ins as before. Robberies have been steady in rate since about September-October, so there is not an increase in crime. Brandon and Community Ambassador AI did observe two people following people in the Plaza and a community email also confirmed that. This is a reminder to keep an eye out, the decline in cars and tourists turn people to other activities. Brandon followed up and retrieved video of the incident, but no formal video request was made by a member of the public.

### 8. **Community Updates**

#### A. Japantown Task Force

**5:40**

The CHHESS Report is now in the MOCHD's hands. Feedback will be given on what is doable from the report, then input and suggestions will again be sought from the community. We are lining up Eds from other organizations to discuss what work will need to be completed once this process is completed. We have also received one time funds along with eight other Cultural Districts in San Francisco from this same department. However, we are taking a \$49,000 or 27% cut of funding from OEWD due to the overall City budget deficits. We are now working with Tak Onishi at Japan Video and Media on his Legacy Business application. December 2<sup>nd</sup> is his Historic Preservation Commission hearing and his Small Business Commission hearing is December 14<sup>th</sup>. If this is successful, JTF has assisted 14 Japantown businesses with the Legacy Business legacy. JTF has also hired on Natasha Weiss to assist with the Cultural District. Congratulations to Grace and the JCBD for their work on getting COVID testing to Japantown, in particular for the restaurant workers in the community. JTF Board President Sandy Mori received the honor of the Order of the Rising Sun: Gold and Silver Stars. Unfortunately due to COVID, the ceremony was limited.

Thank you to everyone in the community for helping to support and pass Proposition A. It passed at 66% which is a huge percentage. Phil Ginsberg, General Manager of Rec and Park, is very supportive of the project and having culturally sensitive design. We are moving forward and have been waiting a long time for this renovation to happen. The Buchanan Hotel's homeless shelter program is minimally continuing to the end of the year, but likely will continue into 2021 as the City needs more time to find permanent housing for the tenants currently there.

#### B. **Action Item:** Discussion to Approve JCBD's Position Statement

**5:43**

Regarding Property Owner/Tenant Negotiations

Motion to make a statement: Robert Sakai; Second: Kathy Nelsen

The motion passed, Dan Byron abstained.

The JCBD Board received information in the last meeting about the work APILO has been doing with the small businesses in Japantown. We have been asked to issue a statement as a Board on the issue of landlord-tenant negotiations currently going on within the community. We have drawn up a rough draft of a statement for the Board to review to decide 1. If a statement should be made; 2. If any edits or changes should be made to the existing draft if a statement is decided necessary. This is an action item, so it is also open to public comment which will take place prior to the Board's vote.

Board Member Comments: The statement seems fine for a Board. It walks the line of supporting both sides. It makes a good statement for JCBD as a Board. This is an important statement to put forward, is balanced in its language. It is not up to us to tell people how to negotiate, but we should encourage negotiation and the best possible outcome for both sides. There is reluctance to include the specific statement about Supervisors Peskin, Preston, and Safai, as well as opposition to its removal. As written votes: 5; Remove wording about the Supervisors: 3. Dan Byron abstained. The statement will be posted on the JCBD website and made available to those who request it.

Public Comment: Ryan Kimura (Business Owner, Pika Pika): Thank you to JCBD for putting the statement together. There is recognition of the challenges being faced by both tenants and landlords. I also want to acknowledge the tenants have been trying their best to negotiate, but there hasn't been much in communication from the other side. I am grateful for the encouragement of getting them to the table. It is important to understand what a reasonable agreement means to each side. I would like to see more power wielded to get landlords to come to the table.

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| <b>9.</b>  | <b>Discussion and possible action items for future meetings</b>                                                                                                                          | <b>5:50</b> |
| <b>10.</b> | <b>General public comment*</b>                                                                                                                                                           | <b>5:52</b> |
|            | Adrienne Shiozaki-Woo: Nihonmachi Little Friends is conducting a virtual program for its 45 <sup>th</sup> anniversary this Saturday. Tickets are \$25 and available through the website. |             |
| <b>11.</b> | <b>Announcements and New Business</b>                                                                                                                                                    | <b>5:57</b> |
| <b>12.</b> | <b>Action Item: Adjournment</b>                                                                                                                                                          | <b>6:00</b> |
|            | Motion: Robert Sakai; Second: Mary Ishisaki                                                                                                                                              |             |
|            | The motion passed unanimously.                                                                                                                                                           |             |
|            | The meeting was adjourned at 5:59PM.                                                                                                                                                     |             |

**Next JCBD Board Meeting:** Wednesday, January 27th, 5:00 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.