

April 2021 Board Meeting Minutes **DRAFT**

April 28, 2021 • 5:00 P.M. - 6:00 P.M. Via ZOOM conference:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81445128895> Meeting ID: 814 4512 8895

One tap mobile +16699006833,,81445128895# US (San Jose)

Attendees: Robert Sakai, Mary Ishisaki, Kathy Nelsen, Daniel Byron, Kim Kolbe, Dennis Kern, Alex Prouty, Emily Glick

Absent: Steve Ishii, Rob Malone

Staff: Grace Horikiri, Brandon Quan, Melissa Ayumi Bailey

Guests: Greg Vioria (JCM), Rich Mongarro (Block by Block), Jim Anderson, Dmitri Shimolin (AVS), Max Nihei (JTF), Sam Mihara, Susie Kagami (JTF), Rich Hashimoto (JMA), Stephen Jordan (Sakura Sakura), Emily Nichols (Hotel Buchanan), Roland Tolosa (AVS), Elena Nielsen (JCCCNC), Hank Willson (SFMTA), Deanna Desedas (SFMTA), Nehama Rogozen (SFMTA), Kenya Wheeler (SFMTA)

- 1. Call to order and roll call** **5:00**
The meeting was called to order at 5:04PM.
- 2. Vice President's Announcements** **5:03**
Motion: Mary Ishisaki; Second: Jerry Ono
The motion passed unanimously.
A motion and approval was requested to add an agenda item- SFMTA will make a presentation on extended parking meter hours. This is something that was approved by Chris Corgas, but Grace will follow up to double check on compliance with the Brown Act on the 72 hour rule for posting agendas. This will be placed between Items 10 and 11 on the agenda.
- 3. Action Item: Approval March 24, 2021 Minutes** **5:05**
Motion: Mary Ishisaki; Second: Jerry Ono
The motion passed unanimously.
- 4. March Financial Report** **5:10**
 - A. Action Item: Approval of March Financial Reports**
Motion: Kathy Nelsen; Second: Jerry Ono
The motion passed unanimously.
The second large payment from the City has been made to us to pay all but about \$4000 of the assessments within JCBD boundaries. The check issued was for \$151,193.22 leaving a balance of just under \$4000 which should be paid with a penalty charge within the next 6 months. This affects P&L to read in the plus column instead of the negative column. The negative amount is \$23,085.66 which is a minimal loss, and with the assessment we are over by about \$125,000, so with 3 months remaining of expenses we should come out

about even. We are looking good also because of a recent grant award that came in that will be addressed later in the meeting.

5. Block by Block Update: Rich Mongarro, Regional VP - Pacific NW 5:15

I wanted to touch base and speak to the Board after meeting with Grace and Brandon recently at the event where Al and Shanice were awarded Community Service Awards. I've been meeting recently with the City on budgets and looking at what is going to happen during the opening up of services and opening up of San Francisco. It's been good seeing tourists and more people in bigger numbers in different parts of the City. Right now, analyzing what is done with Block by Block and seeing where we want to go in the next year, there are a lot of unknowns and it will take time to get back to normal processes. Over the past month or so, Grace and Brandon and I have discussed what we want the ambassadors to focus on over the next year. Al and Shanice have been phenomenal, Al especially as Operations Supervisor during the pandemic, doing whatever they can to better Japantown overall and provide a level of service that meets the special needs of the district. One thing we are looking at is if we should consider assessments being impacted by the overall pandemic. Most accounts in the City have not had a direct impact on this going forward thus far, but depending on what happens with businesses and the overall health of the City could change things and a surge is always a possibility.

One thing discussed with Grace has been Operations Supervisor Al Rhone. I believe Al has had a direct impact on the overall wellbeing of the Japantown CBD, especially in the past year. Depending on budget and need, districts may have an Operations Manager or Operations Supervisor. In my opinion, Al is underpaid for the services he is providing. He is taking on the role of an Operations Manager and performs stellar, but his salary is about \$15,000 below what the state minimum wage for salary employees is. Currently Al is paid at an hourly rate. I feel he deserves to be paid an Operations Manager salary. I understand the difficulty in budget for all of the CBDs, and I have worked from the start of the JCBD to provide as much service as possible with the least amount of impact on the budget. I want to see this partnership continue. I just want to bring to the Board's attention the work the Community Ambassadors are doing and request to get their salaries to a higher level while maintaining a budget that works for JCBD overall. Wages are going up and we are seeing difficulty in recruitment. It is difficult to find quality staff and quality upper management at this time. We can agree on the value Al and Shancie bring to this program and I want to see this continue and see both of them remain in Japantown and keep the account going the direction it is going. I will work with JCBD over the next couple months on the budget to get it to a place that's appropriate for all involved.

6. Action Item: Nomination of new Board Member, Emily Nichols 5:15

Motion: Alex Prouty; Second: Mary Ishisaki
The motion passed unanimously.

7. Executive Director & Staff Reports 5:20

A. COVID efforts / Heart of Jtown Resiliency Fund Update

San Francisco has two new grants, Equity Storefront Grant and Community Anchor Grant, and the Restaurant Revitalization Grant will also go live Monday. Staff will be assisting businesses with their applications as the turnaround time is very quick. We gave a \$5000 grant to Festa, located in the Kinokuniya Building, which has not yet been

able to reopen yet. The Committee agreed to provide a grant due to this fact. Murals are being developed for 1700 Post to put up on the boards at the entrances to the building. Derrick Higa, Brenden Oshima, Eryn Kimura, and Nate Tan are the artists that have been engaged for the project. We are hoping to install in mid May.

B. CBD Consortium 501(c)6 Formation Update

A kickoff meeting took place last Wednesday. In that meeting, moving forward was discussed, committees were planned, etc. A better update will be available next month after the followup meeting next week. Next month JCBD will also be hosting the Consortium meeting.

C. Japantown Public Safety Meeting

In the last two months, Japantown leaders have been meeting to discuss safety measures in response to recent anti-Asian hate crimes and what Japantown can do to be proactive in case something happens. Everyone is working on different things, and one idea that came up was a request for the Community Ambassadors to escort seniors from residential homes in the area, and distributing informational leaflets to visitors in Japantown. Next meeting I will provide a line item list of what efforts are being done and a PSA will also be filmed.

D. Grant Submission Updates

The Union Bank Recovery Program just awarded us \$50,000 for COVID related work. This brings us to \$75,000 total grant awards in this fiscal year. We are still on the waitlist for the CA COVID Relief grant as well which is a potential award of \$15,000.

E. Cleaning & Safety Reports

The statistics in Cleaning have been fairly steady, but I wanted to highlight some before and after photos of what the Community Ambassadors have been doing. One photo in particular shows AI intercepting a vehicle in the Peace Plaza which he helped guide out and back to the street safely. In another photo, AI is assisting a senior who was stuck in the Post/Buchanan intersection when the light changed. He stopped the cars and made sure she crossed safely. Another service the Community Ambassadors have been assisting with is calling a taxi for a senior who had been having issues flagging one down daily with less traffic during COVID. Re: Cleaning, JCBD received a request from NPC for the Ambassadors to begin cleaning the NPC lots. An arrangement was made between NPC and JCBD for \$50/hr or \$100 a week for services. This began in February and has continued since. The contract is for one year.

There were only 4 requests for March, 2 from SFPD. One was for a car break in, and one from Ramen Yamadaya for a break in. Aloha Warehouse and Kippu were also broken into. Kippu filed a police report, but I have not yet heard back from Aloha Warehouse. Ramen Yamadaya also filed a police report. A brief update on the anti-Asian graffiti, an officer reviewed the footage and said the suspects look like a mixed race group of high schoolers. There has not been any followup on an investigation at this time, but they came through Japantown on two separate occasions. 3 or 4 of the 13 tags they did could be viewed as anti-Asian. They also hit other locations as well.

8. Japantown SafeCity Program Updates **5:30**

In the month of April, the SuperMira installation was completed at Buchanan and Sutter Sts. Cameras went up last week. Thanks to Mr. Mihara for working with us throughout the process as well as Mr. Miura. Calibration is taking place now. The team located an operating manual in Japanese which will be provided to Mr. Miura. We have also completed a camera inspection report where performance is reviewed and any calibration needed for the cameras is completed. Especially in the past year, parklets, lights, etc. have changed the environment from when the cameras were installed and adjustments are often required. We are going to put more energy behind signage. Decals were distributed to reopening businesses and storefronts but we're looking at more obvious signage to add deterrence and communicate there is a camera program in the area. SF Safe will likely partner with us on this.

9. JCBD Marketing & Communication Committee Updates **5:35**

The 6 Marketing Reelz were completed and will be added to the JCBD website at this point, and will be shared with the participants to use on their own websites and social media accounts. Max Nihei and Emily Nichols worked with Kippu to set up their social media-claiming their listings, deleting duplicate listings, vetting and working with influencers, walking the owners through how to post on Instagram, etc. We are hoping to do this for more businesses going forward. We are also continuing to work on the postcards and will review drafts in the Marketing Committee meeting and will have final drafts ASAP. We had a meeting with Adam Straus, Greg Viloría, and other stakeholders on work they have done previously on installing murals in/on Japan Center Malls. We will provide the board more information once this is further developed. The desired location for murals would be on the exterior Geary side of the malls.

Grace met with Anna Mindess of KQED who will be featuring On the Bridge and Benkyodo in an upcoming article. This will be featured in the KQED major publication with a large subscriber list.

10. Community Updates **5:40**

A. Japantown Task Force

Susie Kagami introduced herself to the JTF Board. She is one of the newest members of JTF as Strategic Partnership Coordinator. Susie has spent 11 years in Japantown raising her son, who attended NLF and JBBP at Rosa Parks where she ran the Parent Board. Her son continues to participate in JTown extracurriculars such as JCYC, Taisho, and SF Taiko Dojo. Susie worked on fundraising with NLF as well. She was Executive Director for the Asian American Women Artists Association and during COVID has been working with Greg Viloría on fundraising efforts for SF and SJ Japantown nonprofits. Susie was first brought in to facilitate the Future of Japantown Focus Groups with the Consul General's office and JTF. 29 people attended 3 sessions between January and April. The selection process involved people who have lived or worked within Japantown for at least 5 years. Information was collected on how they feel about Japantown and where they would like to see it go. We were also able to include the parent group in this process. We are hoping to keep the groups engaged and hope to facilitate their greater involvement in Japantown leadership. A community land panel was recently hosted with Little Tokyo Service Center and Chinatown

Community Development Center in which they shared how they are implementing and addressing land use issues and policies. They spoke about land trusts and community development coordination. Work on the Cultural District has continued, and since it is funded through Prop E which is entertainment funds, there is concern about budget cuts going forward, so funding from other sources is being researched.

B. SFMTA Presentation on Extended Parking Meter Hours - added agenda item

Hank Willson from SFMTA presented for 5 minutes. He was joined by Deanna Desades, Kenya Wheeler, and Nehama Rogozen. The project looks to modernize parking meter hours for businesses in current times. The meter hours have not changed much since they were first installed in 1947 and still reflect that time period. Businesses are now open much later, so meter hours should match when commercial districts are open and happening. Meters are the best tool for keeping parking available when they are running, but this stops when they are turned off. When Sunday metering was run in 2013, it was found that parking was much easier to find and within the target range of usage to availability. Proposed modernized hours would add a 6-10PM time band when meters previously ended at 6PM. The pricing would be responsive and based on the block demand. Sundays would be added in from 12-6PM with two time bands. Currently appropriate neighborhoods are being selected for a phased rollout beginning in Summer 2021. A customer education campaign would take place in neighborhoods where meter rates and times are changed. Japantown is an area of interest and we are looking to get as much community feedback as possible on this matter. Since the garage is central to the community, we are hoping there will be more incentive to use it when the meter hours are extended and street parking is no longer free at 6PM.

11. Discussion and possible action items for future meetings 5:45

- A. **Action Item:** Change in Board meeting start time
Motion: Mary Ishisaki; Second: Jerry Ono
The motion passed with 6 in favor and 2 opposed.
Board Meetings going forward will now begin at 6PM due to availability/preference of Board Members.

12. General public comment* 5:50

Rich Hashimoto (JMA): I wanted to bring to the Board's attention the article in the San Francisco Examiner that featured Grace Horikiri. If any board member would like a print copy I am happy to deliver it to them. Grace is a godsend to the Japantown community and businesses.

Emily Nichols: I also wanted to shoutout Grace and mention she was featured on our Woman Wednesday post. Thank you Grace for all you do.

13. Announcements and New Business 5:55

14. Action Item: Adjournment 6:00

Motion: Mary Ishisaki; Second: Kathy Nelsen
The motion passed unanimously.
The meeting was adjourned at 6:30PM.

Next JCBD Board Meeting: The next scheduled Board meeting will take place on Wednesday, June 23, 2021 at 6pm. Due to social distancing recommendations, 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.

Agenda materials distributed to the JCBD Board members are available for inspection during regular office hours please contact melissa@jtowncbd.org to request materials.