I. Call to Order
The meeting called to order at 6:10 p.m. by Alice Kawahatsu, President.

She introduced Jeremy Chan, newly-hired staff at JTF with the resignation of Greg Viloria.

II. Approval of Minutes of the Board Meeting on November 18, 2015.
It was moved by David Ishida to replace “forbidden” with “prohibited” and seconded by Seiko Fujimoto to approve the November 18, 2015 minutes as submitted.

The motion was unanimously approved.

III. Guest Speaker
Vas Kiniris, President of Fillmore Merchants Association (FMA)
He opened Zinc Details, a home furnishing store “featuring the best of Scandinavian and Japanese design,” 25 years ago in the Tenderloin before moving to the Fillmore. He recently took over the presidency of the FMA, which extends from O’Farrell and Jackson Streets.

The FMA has about 250 members, with a sliding payment scale for independent to corporate businesses. They meet every two months and also communicate via a Facebook group. One of their largest events is the Fillmore Jazz Festival in July.

Vas is meeting with concierges from hotels and working on partnering with AirBnB Superhosts to encourage guests to visit Fillmore street. For the holidays, the merchants decided to set up a string of lights from O’Farrell to Jackson.

IV. Committee Reports

A. Land Use / Transportation Committee (Paul Wermer)

1. Geary BRT Meeting with Tilly Chang
Paul reported that the meeting with Tilly Chang and her staff at the SF County
Transportation Authority (SFCTA) was very productive as they expressed their
willingness to consider alternatives to the initial proposal to remove the Webster
Street Bridge.

Bob added that Vallie Brown conveyed Supervisor London Breed’s concern about
this issue and support the community’ concern about the removal of the Webster
Street Bridge and would continue to follow this matter. Paul clarified that the SFCTA
staff does not plan to remove the bridge until after the road work is completed and
tested, and that Breed wants the community to verify these safety improvements.

Paul added that a working meeting with the SFCTA staff and interested community
representatives has been scheduled for Wednesday, January 6, 2016 at the JACL
HQ starting at 6:00 p.m.

Prior to that meeting, Paul reported a planning meeting has been scheduled for
Monday, December 21, 2015 at the JACL HQ at 6:00 p.m. to confirm the issues and
prepare strategies for the January 6, 2016 meeting.

2. The Face Shop Update
Paul reported they agreed to join the Japantown Merchants Association (JMA) and
assist with other community events.

3. 1805 Buchanan Report
Paul reported the project has been approved by the Planning Commission but have
agreed to consider installing sidewalk gardens to break up the “concrete” look. He
added that the LUT would reach out to the Buchanan and the condominium that flank
the proposed project to see if they might be interested in extending the sidewalk
garden along their sidewalks where possible.

4. Neighborhood Commercial District (NCD) Zoning Update
Paul reported that the Japantown Neighborhood Commercial District (NCD) was
approved by a unanimous vote of the Land Use and Transportation Committee of the
Board of Supervisors.

Greg Viloria added that this item was adopted by a unanimous vote of the Board of
Supervisors at its December 8, 2015 meeting with Supervisors Campos, Mar, and
Peskin co-sponsoring the item.

B. Economic Development / Marketing Committee (Greg Viloria)

1. Holiday 2015 Update
Greg reported that there are a few items he has been working on with the lighting
contractors and Nihonmachi Parking Corporation (NPC) related to the tripping of
circuit breakers. He anticipates being able to have these resolved.

Alice added that a closing ceremony is being planned for the closing of the lights on
January 23, 2016. (See Item VIII -President’s Report).
2. Japantown Communication Update
Jeremy reported that he will be creating an ad hoc committee for (1) creating a central portal for public outreach about events in the Japantown community and (2) improving communication between Japantown organizations.

C. Cultural Heritage (Ros Tonai)

1. Landmarking of Peace Plaza / Pagoda Update
Ros reported that the Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) would accept oral histories from individuals who wanted to share their reflections on the Peace Plaza and Pagoda if they are submitted by January 2016.

Efforts continue to be made to schedule another joint meeting of the SF MTA, Recreation and Parks Department, and JTF to confirm the plans to landmark the Pagoda and/or the Peace Plaza and the possible impact on repair work that is needed on the Pagoda and resolve the leaks into the Japantown Parking Garage structure.

It was reported that Jonathan Lammers would be leaving the SF Planning Department as of December 31, 2015.

D. Finance Committee (Mark Moriguchi)
Mark deferred to Bob who reported that he would be working on preparing a grant application for funding for development of a Commercial Business District (CBD) that is due January 14, 2016.

E. Nominating Committee (Alice Kawahatsu)
Their work continues to recruit new board members to address the vacancies of the board members who have resigned.

V. NEW BUSINESS
Community Benefit District (Bob Hamaguchi)
A CBD would assess the property owners in the designated area based on sidewalk frontage, square footage, and height of building on the property.

He outlined the guidelines that need to be followed to create a CBD Beau Simon added that leases need to be restructured for commercial property owners to pass through the additional assessments to their tenants.

VI. GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENT**
Jon wanted to know if the JTF should consider responding to the recent comments that the incarceration of Japanese Americans during World War II was appropriate by some of those who want to bar Syrian refugees from entering the U.S.

VII. STAFF REPORTS

A. Crime Report (Greg Marutani)
Greg referred to the crime charts prepared each month since September 2013 highlighting that November 2015 numbers are down over half when compared to the same month in 2013. He noted that the November 2014 through May 2015 are incomplete as the SF Police Department data were not shared with Crime Mapping, the program used to gather crime numbers in any area of the US.

At Greg’s introduction, Rumiko Tauber, co-chair of the Japantown Business Watch Group (BWG) reported that at a meeting with Captain McEachern from the Northern Station in Japantown he indicated that he is planning to have a foot patrol for Japantown and Fillmore area as soon as the number of officers increases.

B. Japantown Observations (Greg Marutani)
Alice referred to the December 2015 “Japantown Observations” that highlighted a variety of happenings in Japantown such as the destruction of a cherry tree on Laguna Street, new trash receptacles, and the meeting with Captain McEachern.

VIII. President’s Report
Alice reviewed some of the major highlights in her President’s report that highlighted the holiday lighting ceremony, along with the planning of the Oshogatsu New Year’s ceremony on January 23, 2016 at 5:00 p.m. to take down the lights.

Alice also added that she and Reverend Kawahatsu would be on an interfaith special being broadcast on KPIX on December 24, 2015 at 10:30 p.m.

The next Board meeting will be Wednesday, January 20, 2016 at the Union Bank Community Room

The meeting adjourned the meeting at 7:35 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Rosalyn Tonai
Secretary