Legacy Business Registry Staff Report

Hearing Date: December 14, 2020

JAPAN VIDEO & MEDIA

Application No.: LBR-2020-21-002
Business Name: Japan Video & Media
Business Address: 1737 Post Street, #305
District: District 5
Applicant: Takeshi Onishi, President
Nomination Date: July 7, 2020
Nominated By: Supervisor Dean Preston
Staff Contact: Richard Kurylo
legacybusiness@sfgov.org

BUSINESS DESCRIPTION

Japan Video & Media is a retail store selling Japanese and Korean TV shows and films and anime merchandise. The store was founded by Japanese immigrant Takeshi Onishi at 1781 Buchanan Street in September 1984 and has been owned and operated by Onishi for the entirety of its 36 years. In 1988, the store relocated to the southeast corner of the Japan Center’s West Mall at 1737 Post Street #305.

After completing college in the United States, Onishi wanted to open a store that introduced and promoted Japanese culture, making it accessible to Americans, and allowed anyone the ability to learn the Japanese language. At the time, there were no retail stores in San Francisco selling a notable inventory of Japanese and Korean TV shows and films with English subtitles. Today, the store remains one of the top retailers of such shows and films, with thousands of anime, samurai, Godzilla, and kaijyu films in its collection, attracting enthusiasts from abroad and around the country.

Japan Video & Media also has an extensive inventory of anime merchandise including T-shirts, scrolls, posters, keychains, bags, plush dolls, and other collector’s items. Continuing his desire to introduce and promote Japanese culture in San Francisco, Onishi became involved in local Japanese cultural events, organizing the Summer Festival in Japantown through the 1980s and 1990s. After realizing the need to connect San Francisco’s youth to Japanese cultural events and recognizing the growing popularity of anime, Onishi organized the first Anime Costume Parade for the Cherry Blossom Festival in 1999, and the first Japan Center Anime Fair in 2010. At the time, this was the first anime parade in the country. Since then, the Anime Costume Parade and Fair has continued annually, attracting more than 10,000 visitors to Japantown each year. Onishi ultimately helped popularize anime in San Francisco.

Japan Video & Media’s customers come from all walks of life, places, and level of familiarity with Japanese culture. Onishi recalls Robin Williams being a consistent patron of the store, frequenting Japan Video & Media nearly once a month.

The store gives back to the community it serves, donating large amounts of anime merchandise to the Japanese Cultural Community of Northern California’s Children’s Day Festival and Japanese film DVDs to the San Francisco Buddhist Church’s Ginza Bazaar and Obon Festival each year.

CRITERION 1

Has the applicant operated in San Francisco for 30 or more years, with no break in San Francisco operations exceeding two years?
Yes, Japan Video & Media has operated in San Francisco for 30 or more years, with no break in San Francisco operations exceeding two years:

1731 Buchanan Street from 1984 to 1988 (4 years)
1737 Post Street #305 from 1988 to Present (32 years)

CRITERION 2
Has the applicant contributed to the neighborhood's history and/or the identity of a particular neighborhood or community?

Yes, Japan Video & Media has contributed to the history and identity of the Japantown neighborhood and San Francisco.

The Historic Preservation Commission recommended the applicant as qualifying, noting the following ways the applicant contributed to the neighborhood's history and/or the identity of a particular neighborhood or community:

- The business is associated with the Japanese and Korean genres of TV and film. The business is also associated with the Cherry Blossom and Summer Festivals, and the Anime Costume Parade and Fair, which are all significant annual cultural events for San Francisco's Japanese American community.

- Japan Video & Media is located within the Japan Center Mall, which is identified in the San Francisco Modern Architecture and Landscape Design 1935-1970 Historic Context Statement for its association with landscape architects Royston, Hanamoto, & Mayes, and for its association with architect Van Bourg Nakamura. The Japan Center Mall is also subject to the Japantown Special Area Design Guidelines, area specific design guidelines that work in conjunction with the Planning Department's Urban Design Guidelines. The Japan Center Mall is mentioned several times in the Japantown Cultural Heritage & Economic Sustainability Strategy (JCHESS), which was adopted by the Historic Preservation Commission, Planning Commission, and Board of Supervisors in 2013.

- There have been a number of features and articles on Japan Video & Media and Onishi’s association with the Anime Costume Parade in online anime blogs and publications. Onishi and Japan Video & Media have also been written about several times in Nichi Bei Weekly, a Japanese American, community-focused, ethnic publication based in San Francisco.

CRITERION 3
Is the applicant committed to maintaining the physical features or traditions that define the business, including craft, culinary, or art forms?

Yes, Japan Video & Media is committed to maintaining the physical features and traditions that define the business.

HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION
The Historic Preservation Commission recommends that Japan Video & Media qualifies for the Legacy Business Registry under Administrative Code Section 2A.242(b)(2) and recommends safeguarding of the below listed physical features and traditions.

Physical Features or Traditions that Define the Business:
- Collector item anime posters hanging inside store.
- Four-foot Totoro plush doll at entrance of store.
- Retail store with inventory of Japanese and Korean TV shows and films, including anime, samurai, Godzilla, and kaiju films, with English subtitles.
- Inventory of anime merchandise, including dolls, posters, bags, keychains, and t-shirts.
- Involvement in annual Anime Costume Parade and Fair at Cherry Blossom Festival.
Window displays of anime merchandise.
- Physical store layout of merchandise and DVDs/videos.
- Location within Japan Center Mall.

**CORE PHYSICAL FEATURE OR TRADITION THAT DEFINES THE BUSINESS**

Following is the core physical feature or tradition that defines the business that would be required for maintenance of the business on the Legacy Business Registry.
- Video store.

**STAFF RECOMMENDATION**

Staff recommends that the San Francisco Small Business Commission include Japan Video & Media currently located at 1737 Post Street, #305 in the Legacy Business Registry as a Legacy Business under Administrative Code Section 2A.242.

Richard Kurylo, Program Manager
Legacy Business Program
Adopting findings approving the Legacy Business Registry application for Japan Video & Media, currently located at 1737 Post Street, #305.

WHEREAS, in accordance with Administrative Code Section 2A.242, the Office of Small Business maintains a registry of Legacy Businesses in San Francisco (the "Registry") to recognize that longstanding, community-serving businesses can be valuable cultural assets of the City and to be a tool for providing educational and promotional assistance to Legacy Businesses to encourage their continued viability and success; and

WHEREAS, the subject business has operated in San Francisco for 30 or more years, with no break in San Francisco operations exceeding two years; or

WHEREAS, the subject business has operated in San Francisco for more than 20 years but less than 30 years, has had no break in San Francisco operations exceeding two years, has significantly contributed to the history or identity of a particular neighborhood or community and, if not included in the Registry, faces a significant risk of displacement; and

WHEREAS, the subject business has contributed to the neighborhood's history and identity; and

WHEREAS, the subject business is committed to maintaining the physical features and traditions that define the business; and

WHEREAS, at a duly noticed public hearing held on December 14, 2020, the San Francisco Small Business Commission reviewed documents and correspondence, and heard oral testimony on the Legacy Business Registry application; therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Small Business Commission hereby includes Japan Video & Media in the Legacy Business Registry as a Legacy Business under Administrative Code Section 2A.242.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Small Business Commission recommends safeguarding the below listed physical features and traditions at Japan Video & Media.
Physical Features or Traditions that Define the Business:
- Collector item anime posters hanging inside store.
- Four-foot Totoro plush doll at entrance of store.
- Retail store with inventory of Japanese and Korean TV shows and films, including anime, samurai, Godzilla, and kaiju films, with English subtitles.
- Inventory of anime merchandise, including dolls, posters, bags, keychains, and t-shirts.
- Involvement in annual Anime Costume Parade and Fair at Cherry Blossom Festival.
- Window displays of anime merchandise.
- Physical store layout of merchandise and DVDs/videos.
- Location within Japan Center Mall.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Small Business Commission requires maintenance of the below listed core physical feature or tradition to maintain Japan Video & Media on the Legacy Business Registry:
- Video store.

I hereby certify that the foregoing Resolution was ADOPTED by the Small Business Commission on December 14, 2020.

_________________________
Regina Dick-Endrizzi
Director

RESOLUTION NO. ____________________

Ayes –
Nays –
Abstained –
Absent –
Application No.: LBR-2020-21-002
Business Name: Japan Video & Media
Business Address: 1737 Post St., #305
District: District 5
Applicant: Takeshi Onishi, President
Nomination Date: July 7, 2020
Nominated By: Supervisor Dean Preston

CRITERION 1: Has the applicant has operated in San Francisco for 30 or more years, with no break in San Francisco operations exceeding two years?

X Yes  No

1731 Buchanan Street from 1984 to 1988 (4 years)
1737 Post Street #305 from 1988 to Present (32 years)

CRITERION 2: Has the applicant contributed to the neighborhood's history and/or the identity of a particular neighborhood or community?

X Yes  No

CRITERION 3: Is the applicant committed to maintaining the physical features or traditions that define the business, including craft, culinary, or art forms?

X Yes  No

NOTES: N/A

DELIVERY DATE TO HPC: November 4, 2020

Richard Kurylo
Program Manager, Legacy Business Program
July 7, 2020

Re: Nomination of Japan Video and Media to the Legacy Business Registry

Dear Director Regina Dick-Endrizzi,

I am writing to nominate Japan Video and Media, located in the Japantown Mall, for the Legacy Business Registry. Founded in 1984 by Takeshi Onishi, an immigrant from Ashiro City in Japan, Japan Video and Media has spent more than 35 years providing premier cultural education and entertainment through Japanese media.

At its opening, Japan Video and Media only had a few hundred VHS tapes in its inventory - now, it is one of the best sources of Japanese films in San Francisco, carrying a large collection of media including anime, samurai films, and classic Godzilla movies. Mr. Onishi has also worked tirelessly to ensure that Japan Video and Media has helped sustain the Japanese community in San Francisco throughout the decades. In 1999, to commemorate Japan Video and Media’s 15 year anniversary, the store became involved in community events such as the Cherry Blossom Festival and Summer Festival, where they helped organize the now-famous Anime Costume Parade, a crucial step in modernizing the festivals and bringing in a new generation of Japanese media fans. Through such efforts, Japan Video and Media has proven itself to be an invaluable resource for connecting younger generations of anime fans with the established Japanese community and classical Japanese culture in San Francisco.

I am extremely proud to nominate a small business as involved and dedicated to serving its community as Japan Video and Media for the Legacy Business Registry.

Sincerely,

Dean Preston, District 5 Supervisor
Legacy Business Registry  Application

Section One:
Business / Applicant Information. Provide the following information:

- The name, mailing address, and other contact information of the business;
- The name of the person who owns the business. For businesses with multiple owners, identify the person(s) with the highest ownership stake in the business;
- The name, title, and contact information of the applicant;
- The business’s San Francisco Business Account Number and entity number with the Secretary of State, if applicable.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>NAME OF BUSINESS:</th>
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<tr>
<td>Japan Video and Media</td>
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<th>BUSINESS OWNER(S) (identify the person(s) with the highest ownership stake in the business)</th>
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<tr>
<td>1737 post st. #305</td>
<td>(415) 563-5220</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>San Francisco, CA 94115</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<th>WEBSITE:</th>
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<th>YELP PAGE</th>
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<td>Japanvideo.com</td>
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<tr>
<td>Takeshi Onishi</td>
<td>president</td>
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[Official Use: Completed by OSB Staff]

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<tr>
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Section Two:

Business Location(s).

List the business address of the original San Francisco location, the start date of business, and the dates of operation at the original location. Check the box indicating whether the original location of the business in San Francisco is the founding location of the business. If the business moved from its original location and has had additional addresses in San Francisco, identify all other addresses and the dates of operation at each address. For businesses with more than one location, list the additional locations in section three of the narrative.

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<tr>
<td>1730 Bush St, #305, San Francisco, CA</td>
<td>94117</td>
<td>Sep. 1984</td>
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IS THIS LOCATION THE FOUNDING LOCATION OF THE BUSINESS? Yes

DATES OF OPERATION AT THIS LOCATION: Sep. 1984

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<th>ZIP CODE:</th>
<th>DATES OF OPERATION:</th>
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| 1739 Post St, #305, San Francisco, CA | 94117 | Start: Feb. 1989
End: Present |

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<th>DATES OF OPERATION:</th>
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Legacy Business Registry | Application

Section Three:
Disclosure Statement.
San Francisco Taxes, Business Registration, Licenses, Labor Laws and Public
Information Release.
This section is verification that all San Francisco taxes, business registration, and licenses are
current and complete, and there are no current violations of San Francisco labor laws. This
information will be verified and a business deemed not current in with all San Francisco taxes,
business registration, and licenses, or has current violations of San Francisco labor laws, will not
be eligible to apply for the Business Assistance Grant.

In addition, we are required to inform you that all information provided in the application will become
subject to disclosure under the California Public Records Act.

Please read the following statements and check each to indicate that you agree with the
statement. Then sign below in the space provided.

☑ I am authorized to submit this application on behalf of the business.

☑ I attest that the business is current on all of its San Francisco tax obligations.

☑ I attest that the business’s business registration and any applicable regulatory license(s)
are current.

☑ I attest that the Office of Labor Standards and Enforcement (OLSE) has not determined
that the business is currently in violation of any of the City’s labor laws, and that the
business does not owe any outstanding penalties or payments ordered by the OLSE.

☑ I understand that documents submitted with this application may be made available to the
public for inspection and copying pursuant to the California Public Records Act and San
Francisco Sunshine Ordinance.

☑ I hereby acknowledge and authorize that all photographs and images submitted as part of
the application may be used by the City without compensation.

☑ I understand that the Small Business Commission may revoke the placement of the
business on the Registry if it finds that the business no longer qualifies, and that placement
on the Registry does not entitle the business to a grant of City funds.

Name (Print): Takeshi Onishi  Date: Dec. 05, 2019  Signature: [Signature]
JAPAN VIDEO AND MEDIA
Section 4: Written Historical Narrative

CRITERION 1

a. Provide a short history of the business from the date the business opened in San Francisco to the present day, including the ownership history. For businesses with multiple locations, include the history of the original location in San Francisco (including whether it was the business’s founding and or headquartered location) and the opening dates and locations of all other locations.

Japan Video and Media is a retail store located in the Japan Center West Mall in San Francisco’s Japantown. Japan Video and Media opened on September 1, 1984, by owner Takeshi Onishi with only a few hundred tapes in their inventory, and has since grown to become the number one source of Japanese and Korean TV shows and films, including anime, samurai films, Godzilla, and kaijyu movies.

Takeshi Onishi was born in Ashiro City, in the Tokushima Prefecture in Japan. In his senior year of college, Takeshi decided to go to the United States to attend Washington State University. After graduating from WSU, he decided to stay in the U.S. to practice his English in a real world environment.

After college in 1972, Takeshi decided to move to San Francisco. His first jobs in San Francisco included working at the Downtown Hilton Hotel, Nippon Express Travel Agency, and Tokyo TV (a Japanese TV broadcasting company). On the side, Takeshi also started his own wedding service business along with a tourist photography company. After being in the photography and video business for years, Takeshi decided to open up his own retail store – Japan Video and Media in 1984 in Japantown, and has run the store for the last 36 years! Initially, his clientele included individual customers along with public libraries and universities, which offered Japanese language and cultural programs across the states. Takeshi has experienced many ups and downs in the business; however, as the years have gone by he continually reimagined the store to keep it abreast of the times.

What keeps Takeshi going is the ability that his store brings to meet such a wide and diverse range of people. This he says is the best part of his job.

b. Describe any circumstances that required the business to cease operations in San Francisco for more than six months?

Other than mall closures due to the pandemic in 2020, Japan Video and Media has not ever ceased operations.

c. Is the business a family-owned business? If so, give the generational history of the business.

Takeshi Onishi has been the only owner of Japan Video and Media since 1984.
d. Describe the ownership history when the business ownership is not the original owner or a family-owned business.

The ownership history of Japan Video and Media is as follows:

1984 to Present: Takeshi Onishi

e. When the current ownership is not the original owner and has owned the business for less than 30 years, the applicant will need to provide documentation of the existence of the business prior to current ownership to verify it has been in operation for 30+ years. Please use the list of supplemental documents and/or materials as a guide to help demonstrate the existence of the business prior to current ownership.

Documentation of the existence of the business verifying it has been in operation for 30+ years is provided in this Legacy Business Registry application

f. Note any other special features of the business location, such as, if the property associated with the business is listed on a local, state, or federal historic resources registry.

The historic resource status of the Japan Center West Mall building at 1737 Post Street that houses Japan Video and Media, is classified by the Planning Department as Category B, Unknown / Age Eligible, with regard to the California Environmental Quality Act.

CRITERION 2

a. Describe the business's contribution to the history and/or identity of the neighborhood, community or San Francisco.

From the very start, Takeshi’s mission was to introduce and promote the Japanese culture. With that in mind, all of Japan Video and Media’s videos and DVDs had always come with English subtitles. Takeshi believes that many people, young and old, learn a language better when watching it in a foreign language, but with subtitles. And he says even with streaming available, people still come in to buy DVDs because they want a physical copy of their most favorite films.

In addition to the videos, Japan Video and Media carries a large collection of anime merchandise such as plush dolls, wall scrolls, bags, keychains, t-shirts, and much more. Japan Video and Media was the first store to carry an extensive anime collection in San Francisco.

In the 1980s and 1990s, Takeshi organized the Summer Festival in Japantown with the Obon Dance as the festival’s highlight. Obon is also known as "the Festival of Souls" and is celebrated to acknowledge gratitude to one's ancestors. It is a time of great joy as families get together for special meals and dancing in a festive atmosphere.

Takeshi also started the very first Anime Costume Parade in the country for the San Francisco Cherry Blossom Festival in 1999, which has since continued annually. The Anime Costume
Parade has had a big impact in keeping the Japanese Culture alive and has become an intangible cultural property. In addition, to rejuvenate Japantown, Takeshi organized the Japan Center Anime Fair 10 years ago. The fair has since been taken over by a younger generation to carry on each year, and has continued to grow in popularity, attracting an estimated 10,000 people to Japantown every year for the fair. Takeshi continues to work hard to show how much of an asset the Anime Costume Parade and Fair is to the Japantown community. The importance of the younger generation dressing up as their favorite anime character brings power because it encourages a broader aspect of Japanese culture. Anime serves as a gateway for people to get involved in many traditions, including food, language, ikebana, tea ceremony, and other aspects offered by the Japanese culture.

b. Is the business (or has been) associated with significant events in the neighborhood, the city, or the business industry?

In 1999, to commemorate the 15th anniversary of Japan Video and Media, and also to show appreciation for the support from the Japanese American community, Takeshi decided to become involved in community events such as the Cherry Blossom Festival and Summer Festival, and assisted with fundraising activities. One of the biggest problems the Cherry Blossom Festival faced back then was a clear lack of interest from the younger generation. To help bring out young people and have them participate in the festival, Takeshi organized the first Anime Costume Parade in the country. The popularity of anime like Sailor Moon Pokemon, Dragon Ball, and Naruto attracted a large number of people. Anime has added a touch of contemporary culture to a largely tradition-dominated festival. The Anime Costume Parade has been at every Cherry Blossom Festival in April since then, and has become one of the most popular events of the Cherry Blossom Festival today.

c. Has the business ever been referenced in an historical context? Such as in a business trade publication, media, or historical documents?

Following are publications, websites, and videos referencing Japan Video and Media:

- Great YELP reviews: https://www.yelp.com/biz/japan-video-and-media-san-francisco
- YouTube 2019 Anime Costume Parade: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qOGo9-nPPfM
- Nichi Bei Weekly, April 6, 2012, “Anime Contest”
- Nichi Bei Weekly, April 1, 2011, “Anime Costume Parade and Contest”
- BaySpo, April 13, 2018, “20th Anniversary Anime Costume Parade”
d. Is the business associated with a significant or historical person?

Up until his death, beloved actor and Bay Area resident Robin Williams was a regular customer at Japan Video and Media and would frequent the store about once a month for many years.

In 2006 for Japantown’s 100th anniversary at its current location, the Cherry Blossom Festival took on an added significance. Japan Video and Media invited popular singer and songwriter Mari Iijima to be a guest performer and celebrate the anniversary. With Mari’s help, a special concert took place along with an Anime Costume Contest Award Ceremony.

Another memorable year for Takeshi was 2018, which marked the 20th anniversary of his annual Anime Costume Parade. To commemorate this milestone, he invited a Japanese recording artist named Tia to the parade, who became famous for her theme song in Naruto. Tia was a big hit among the parade goers.

e. How does the business demonstrate its commitment to the community?

Every year, Japan Video and Media donates dolls, posters, and anime merchandise, as well as performances by anime characters, to the Japanese Cultural Community of Northern California for their annual Children’s Day Festival celebrations.

Takeshi also donates Japanese film DVDs to the San Francisco Buddhist Church’s Ginza Bazaar and Obon Festival each year.

f. Provide a description of the community the business serves.

Japan Video and Media serves a broad range of customers, from very young children to older adults. Takeshi’s anime films, as well as documentaries and other films, attract a wide range of people, both locals and tourists. Anime films also attract fans that travel a far distance from all over California as well as the country.

g. Is the business associated with a culturally significant building/structure/site/object/interior?

A big four-foot-tall Totoro plush doll has stood at the entrance of the Japan Video and Media store for many years. There are also some collector’s item anime posters hanging on the walls of the store.

h. How would the community be diminished if the business were to be sold, relocated, shut down, etc.?

If the business were to close, the Bay Area would no longer have a store dedicated to anime and Japanese films. Takeshi has found that many people still want and buy DVDs. He finds that people still want physical copies of their most favorite movies (such as Seven Samurai, Yojimbo, Totoro cartoons, Twilight Samurai, and more).
CRITERION 3

a. Describe the business and the essential features that define its character.

Japan Video and Media is the only video store in San Francisco with a wide range of Japanese, Korean, and anime films, as well as anime merchandise. One of Japan Video’s primary differentiators is that all of their DVDs come with English subtitles, whereas other retail stores don’t always have that.

b. How does the business demonstrate a commitment to maintaining the historical traditions that define the business, and which of these traditions should not be changed in order to retain the businesses historical character? (e.g., business model, goods and services, craft, culinary, or art forms)

Japan Video and Media is committed to maintaining its historical tradition as a Japanese and anime DVD film and merchandising retail store.

c. How has the business demonstrated a commitment to maintaining the special physical features that define the business? Describe any special exterior and interior physical characteristics of the space occupied by the business (e.g. signage, murals, architectural details, neon signs, etc.).

Japan Video and Media continues to hang, and is committed to maintaining, the collector’s item anime posters on its walls.

d. When the current ownership is not the original owner and has owned the business for less than 30 years; the applicant will need to provide documentation that demonstrates the current owner has maintained the physical features or traditions that define the business, including craft, culinary, or art forms. Please use the list of supplemental documents and/or materials as a guide to help demonstrate the existence of the business prior to current ownership.

Not applicable.
ANIME COSTUME PARADE
ORGANIZED BY
JAPAN VIDEO & MEDIA, INC.
World of Anime on Podcast to present Japan Video's Anime Top 10s

Jun 7th 2005
WORLD OF ANIME ON PODCAST TO PRESENT WEEKLY TOP 10 SALES & RENTALS LISTS

SAN FRANCISCO, CA (June 7, 2005) – Project 760 Productions' Internet podcast program World of Anime on Podcast, announces the presentation of weekly Top 10 listings for video sales and rentals to become part of its program programs beginning in mid-June 2005.

"Japan Video and Media is the top resource among the anime fans in Northern California and out-of-town visitors for its vast collection of anime available for sale and rental," says World of Anime on Podcast executive producer Ray Nagar. "Providing Japan Video's top ten lists in rentals and sales will give our nationwide listeners access to what's hot and what's not in a video store frequented by many anime fans the bay area."

"It’s a great idea," says Japan Video & Media owner Tak Onishi. "We have many visitors that rent and buy anime and we want to support the promotion of anime and
Japanese culture in any way we can.”

World of Anime on Podcast programs are available to Internet listeners by directing either their podcast software or Internet browser to http://feeds.feedburner.com/woapodcast. For more information about World of Anime, please visit the Project 760 Productions website at http://www.project760.com.

About Japan Video & Media Inc.
Located in the Kintetsu Mall of San Francisco's Japan Center, Japan Video & Media Inc. carries an extensive selection of animation, drama, and special interest movies from Japan and Asia. Japan Video & Media founded the Anime Costume Parade & Contest as part of the Northern California Cherry Blossom Festival and is active in causes related to the promotion of Japanese culture in America.

About Project 760 Productions
Project 760 Productions is a multimedia company, which produces television programs on local access television and Internet radio programs headquartered in San Francisco, California. Founded by Ray Nagar in 1997, the company emphasizes production of special interest programs and events that inform, educate and entertain audiences on a variety of topics catering to various age groups. The company has produces World of Anime on Podcast and is a major contributor to the JapanTown Anime Faire. Additional company information is available at www.project760.com.

bookmark/share with:  

Press Release homepage / archives
カイコの本場で研修

アニメ通じ文化紹介

日本町の警栄について熟心に聴く大西さん

アニメは日本の文化的な特徴とも言え、日本の文化を楽しむためには観賞することも重要だ。日本ではアニメの背景に含まれる文化が深く理解されることが求められている。

アニメ通じ文化紹介

アニメは日本の文化を楽しく学ぶための手段でもある。アニメを通じて日本の文化を学ぶことにより、より深く理解することができる。

アニメ通じ文化紹介

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アニメやゲームなどのキャラクターに扮するコスプレイヤーたちが集まるアニメ・コスチューム・パレードが今年桜祭りのグランドパレードに20回目の参加となる。マンガやアニメ、ゲームがきっかけとなって日本語や日本文化に興味を持ち、年々参加者が増加している。今年桜祭りでは、20回目を記念して様々な催しが予定されている。

アニメ・コスチューム・パレードのグループ代表
大西さんからのメッセージ
今年でアニメ・コスチューム・パレードがちょうど20回目を迎えることとなり、今では桜祭りの人気No.1のプログラムです。アニメは日本文化的の宝庫として大切に見ていこうといます。コスプレをきっかけに多くの人が日本文化に興味を持っていて、皆さんに喜んでいます。

サンフランシスコ日本町、和楽に来たからで決まり！
日本のアニメ、映画、テレビドラマなどを通じて日本文化の普及に携わっている。サンフランシスコ日本町のJapan Video & Mediaオーナーを務める大西丈さんのベネフィラの歴史を明らかにした。

大西 丈
Takeshi Ohnishi

日本町の存続、発展に寄与したい

大学に入学する頃、アメリカ留学の機会があったが、1969年に仙台に住むようになり、サンフランシスコ日本町に留学を楽しみにした。その後、サンフランシスコに定住したが、当地では、日本人が自らの文化を語り、伝えることができる場所がなじみをもたらした。

この頃、サンフランシスコ日本町は、日本人が自らの文化を語り、伝えることができる場所がなじみをもたらした。当時、日本町の存続を考えたとき、当時の日本人の生活を本物に感じ、自然に生きる姿勢を大切にしていた。そして、日本町の存続、発展に寄与したいと決意した。
January 28, 2020

Commissioners  Aaron Jon Hyland, President
                Diane Matsuda, Vice President
                Kate Black
                Chris Foley
                Richard S.E. Johns
                Jonathan Pearlman
                Lydia So
San Francisco Historic Preservation Commission
1650 Mission Street, Suite 400
San Francisco, CA  94103-2479

VIA EMAIL

Dear Commissioners,

On behalf of the Japantown Merchants Association, I am writing in support of Japan Video and Media (JVM), located at 1737 Post Street, San Francisco, CA  94115, for the legacy business program.

In 1984, JVM opened in the Japanese Cultural and Trade Center with only about a few hundred tapes in their inventory. Throughout the past 35 years, JVM faced many challenges and tough economic hardships. Amazingly, through their hard work and perseverance, they have grown to become one of the best resources of Japanese films that include dramas, anime, samurai films, Godzilla and kaiju movies. In addition, due to growing popularity, JVM started to include a large collection of anime merchandise. JVM is the first store in San Francisco to introduce and carry an extensive anime collection by adapting to demand changes.

In 1999, to commemorate the 15th anniversary and, to express sincere appreciation to the community, JVM became involved in community events such as the Northern California Cherry Blossom Festival, Summer Festival and Obon Odori. One of the biggest problems the Cherry Blossom Festival faced at that time was a clear lack of interest from the younger visitors.

Young people were not so much intrigued with traditional arts and culture of Japan. They felt a sense of disconnect to the modern day Japanese culture they are familiar with. To encourage their participation in the festival, JVM launched the first Anime Costume Parade in the country. The popularity of anime characters attracts a large number of costumed players (cosplay) and young visitors annually.

Anime has added a touch of modern Japanese pop culture to a largely traditional dominated festival. We believe that JVM contributed towards introducing this growing pop culture
phenomenon to America. This component has become very successful and is one of the more popular events of the Cherry Blossom Festival today.

JVM has improved the economic vitality of this community and deserves to be recognized for their contributions to the city.

Therefore, we sincerely request your support in approving Japan Video and Media as a legacy business.

Sincerely,

Richard Hashimoto
President

cc: Takeshi Onishi, Japan Video and Media
Japantown Task Force, Inc.
LEGACY BUSINESS REGISTRY
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

HEARING DATE: DECEMBER 2, 2020

Filing Date: November 4, 2020
Case No.: 2020-010198LBR
Business Name: Japan Video & Media
Business Address: 1737 Post Street #305
Zoning: NCD (Japantown) Zoning District
50-X Height and Bulk District
Block/Lot: 0700/009
Applicant: Takeshi Onishi
1737 Post Street #305
San Francisco, CA 94115
Nominated By: Supervisor Dean Preston
Located In: District 5
Staff Contact: Gretel Gunther – 628.652.7607
gretel.gunther@sfgov.org

Recommendation: Adopt a Resolution to Recommend Approval

Business Description

Japan Video & Media is a retail store selling Japanese and Korean TV shows and films and anime merchandise, opened originally by Japanese immigrant Takeshi Onishi at 1781 Buchanan Street in September 1984. At the time Japan Video & Media opened, there were no retail stores in San Francisco selling a comparable inventory of Japanese and Korean TV shows and films with English subtitles. Today, Japan Video & Media remains one of the top retailers of Japanese and Korean TV shows and films, with thousands of anime, samurai, Godzilla, and kaiju films in its collection, attracting enthusiasts from abroad and around the country. Japan Video & Media also has an extensive inventory of anime merchandise. Founder Takeshi Onishi also started the now-annual Anime Costume Parade in 1999 in order to bridge youth enthusiasm for anime with larger Japanese cultural celebrations, and ultimately helping to popularize anime in San Francisco. Japan Video & Media has been owned and operated by Onishi for the entirety of its 36 years in business.
Japan Video & Media first opened in 1984, close to its present location in the southeast corner of the Japan Center’s West Mall at 1737 Post Street #305, where it has been located since 1988. After completing college in the United States, Onishi wanted to open a store that introduced and promoted Japanese culture and allowed anyone the ability to learn the Japanese language. From the beginning, Onishi’s inventory of Japanese and Korean TV shows and films have offered English subtitles, honoring Onishi’s original intent of making Japanese culture accessible to Americans. Japan Video & Media has also been one of the top purveyors of anime merchandise since 1984. The store’s collection includes, and is not limited to, a wide variety of merchandise including t-shirts, scrolls, posters, keychains, bags, plush dolls, and other collector’s items.

Continuing his desire to introduce and promote Japanese culture in San Francisco, Onishi became involved in local Japanese cultural events, organizing the Summer Festival in Japantown through the 1980s and 1990s. After realizing the need to connect San Francisco’s youth to Japanese cultural events and recognizing the growing popularity of anime, Onishi organized the first Anime Costume Parade for the Cherry Blossom Festival in 1999, and the first Japan Center Anime Fair in 2010. At the time, this was the first anime parade in the country. Since then, the Anime Costume Parade and Fair has continued annually, attracting more than 10,000 visitors to Japantown each year.

Japan Video & Media has catered to the Japantown neighborhood since 1984, offering tv shows, films, and merchandise appealing to a wide array of individuals. Japan Video & Media’s customers come from all walks of life, places, and level of familiarity with Japanese culture. Onishi even recalls Robin Williams being a consistent patron of Japan Video & Media, frequenting the store nearly once a month.

Japan Video & Media continues to give back to the community it serves, donating large amounts of anime merchandise to the Japanese Cultural Community of Northern California’s Children’s Day Festival and Japanese film DVDs to the San Francisco Buddhist Church’s Ginza Bazaar and Obon Festival each year.

The business’s primary location at 1737 Post Street #305 is within the Japan Center Mall, a Category B (Unknown / Age Eligible) structure on the south side of Post Street between Buchanan and Webster Streets in the Japantown neighborhood. It is within the Japanton NCD (Neighborhood Commercial) Zoning District and a 50-X Height and Bulk District. It is also located within the Japantown and Fringe Financial Special Use Districts, the Japantown Planning Area, the Japantown Community Benefit District, and the Japantown Cultural Heritage District.

The businesses’ primary location, a suite located at 1737 Post Street #305, within the Japan Center Mall, is in a Category B (Unknown / Age Eligible) structure. It is included in the ongoing Neighborhood Commercial Corridors Historic Resource Survey.

**Staff Analysis**

**Review Criteria**

1. **When was business founded?**
   
   The business was founded in 1984.
2. **Does the business qualify for listing on the Legacy Business Registry? If so, how?**

   Yes. Japan Video & Media qualifies for listing on the Legacy Business Registry because it meets all of the eligibility Criteria:
   
   a. Japan Video & Media has operated continuously in San Francisco for 36 years.
   
   b. Japan Video & Media has contributed to the history and identity of the Japantown neighborhood and San Francisco.
   
   c. Japan Video & Media is committed to maintaining the physical features and traditions that define the organization.

3. **Is the business associated with a culturally significant art/craft/cuisine/tradition?**

   Yes. The business is associated with the Japanese and Korean genres of TV and film. The business is also associated with the Cherry Blossom and Summer Festivals, and the Anime Costume Parade and Fair, which are all significant annual cultural events for San Francisco’s Japanese American community.

4. **Is the business or its building associated with significant events, persons, and/or architecture?**

   Yes. Japan Video & Media is located within the Japan Center Mall, which is identified in *the San Francisco Modern Architecture and Landscape Design 1935-1970 Historic Context Statement* for its association with landscape architects Royston, Hanamoto, & Mayes, and for its association with architect Van Bourg Nakamura. The Japan Center Mall is also subject to the Japantown Special Area Design Guidelines, area-specific design guidelines that work in conjunction with the Planning Department’s Urban Design Guidelines.

5. **Is the property associated with the business listed on a local, state, or federal historic resource registry?**

   No.

6. **Is the business mentioned in a local historic context statement?**

   Yes. The Japan Center Mall, in which the subject business is located, is mentioned several times in the Japantown Cultural Heritage & Economic Sustainability Strategy (JCHESS), which was adopted by the Historic Preservation Commission, Planning Commission, and Board of Supervisors in 2013.

7. **Has the business been cited in published literature, newspapers, journals, etc.?**

   Yes. There have been a number of features and articles on Japan Video & Media and Onishi’s association with the Anime Costume Parade in online anime blogs and publications. Onishi and Japan Video & Media have also been written about several times in *Nichi Bei Weekly*, a Japanese American, community-focused, ethnic publication based in San Francisco.
Physical Features or Traditions that Define the Business

Location(s) associated with the business:

Current Locations:
- 1737 Post Street #305 (1988 – Present)

Previous (No Longer Extant) Locations:

Recommended by Applicant

- Collector item anime posters hanging inside store.
- Four-foot Totoro plush doll at entrance of store.

Additional Recommended by Staff

- Retail store with inventory of Japanese and Korean TV shows and films, including anime, samurai, Godzilla, and kaiju films, with English subtitles.
- Inventory of anime merchandise, including dolls, posters, bags, keychains, and t-shirts.
- Involvement in annual Anime Costume Parade and Fair at Cherry Blossom Festival.
- Window displays of anime merchandise.
- Physical store layout of merchandise and DVDs/videos.
- Location within Japan Center Mall.
Basis for Recommendation

The Department recommends the Historic Preservation Commission adopt a resolution recommending the business listed above be adopted by the Small Business Commission to the Legacy Business Registry.

ATTACHMENTS

Draft Resolution
Legacy Business Registry Application:
- Application Review Sheet
- Section 1 – Business / Applicant Information
- Section 2 – Business Location(s)
- Section 3 – Disclosure Statement
- Section 4 – Written Historical Narrative
  - Criterion 1 – History and Description of Business
  - Criterion 2 – Contribution to Local History
  - Criterion 3 – Business Characteristics
- Contextual Photographs and Background Documentation
ADOPTING FINDINGS RECOMMENDING TO THE SMALL BUSINESS COMMISSION APPROVAL OF THE LEGACY BUSINESS REGISTRY NOMINATION FOR JAPAN VIDEO & MEDIA CURRENTLY LOCATED AT 1737 POST STREET #305 BLOCK/LOT 0700/009

WHEREAS, in accordance with Administrative Code Section 2A.242, the Office of Small Business maintains a registry of Legacy Businesses in San Francisco (the "Registry") to recognize that longstanding, community-serving businesses can be valuable cultural assets of the City and to be a tool for providing educational and promotional assistance to Legacy Businesses to encourage their continued viability and success; and

WHEREAS, the subject business has operated in San Francisco for 30 or more years, with no break in San Francisco operations exceeding two years; and

WHEREAS, the subject business has contributed to the City's history and identity; and

WHEREAS, the subject business is committed to maintaining the traditions that define the business; and
WHEREAS, at a duly noticed public hearing held on December 2, 2020, the Historic Preservation Commission reviewed documents, correspondence and heard oral testimony on the Legacy Business Registry nomination.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Historic Preservation Commission hereby recommends that Japan Video & Media qualifies for the Legacy Business Registry under Administrative Code Section 2A.242(b)(2) as it has operated for 30 or more years and has continued to contribute to the community.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Historic Preservation Commission hereby recommends safeguarding of the below listed physical features and traditions for Japan Video & Media.

Location(s):

Current Locations:
- 1737 Post Street #305 (1988 – Present)

Previous (No Longer Extant) Locations:

Physical Features or Traditions that Define the Business:

- Retail store with inventory of Japanese and Korean TV shows and films, including anime, samurai, Godzilla, and kaiju films, with English subtitles.
- Inventory of anime merchandise, including dolls, posters, bags, keychains, and t-shirts.
- Involvement in annual Anime Costume Parade and Fair at Cherry Blossom Festival.
- Window displays of anime merchandise.
- Physical store layout of merchandise and DVDs/videos.
- Collector item anime posters hanging inside store.
- Four-foot Totoro plush doll at entrance of store.
- Location within Japan Center Mall.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Historic Preservation Commission’s findings and recommendations are made solely for the purpose of evaluating the subject business’s eligibility for the Legacy Business Registry, and the Historic Preservation Commission makes no finding that the subject property or any of its features constitutes a historical resource pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.5(a).

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Historic Preservation Commission hereby directs its Commission Secretary to transmit this Resolution and other pertinent materials in the case file 2020-010198LBR to the Office of Small Business December 2, 2020.
Jonas P. Ionin
Commission Secretary

AYES:

NOES:

ABSENT:

ADOPTED: