

December 5, 2021

Dear Wakasa Memorial Committee:

It was good to meet many of you in Delta last week over dinner to be able to link faces with names. We were very moved by the ceremony honoring Mr. Wakasa and the monument in his memory and to observe the possible elements that could be incorporated into the ceremony in April 2023, the 80th anniversary of Mr. Wakasa's tragic death.

As we await the results of the National Park Services (NPS) evaluation due in the latter part of January 2022, we would like to begin looking ahead to planning the April 2023 ceremony. We invite your three Wakasa Memorial Committee (WMC) representatives to join our three Topaz Museum representatives for a Zoom meeting in January so we can start discussions on how to include other Topaz descendants and stakeholders in the planning phase. We are tentatively suggesting the week of January 24 to schedule our first meeting.

We believe it is important to include viewpoints from your committee as well as from others. However, we are unable to enter into a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) with the Wakasa Memorial Committee. As we have indicated in previous correspondence, as a non-profit corporation operating under the laws of Utah, our board members are required to retain ultimate policy and decision-making authority and we are not allowed to delegate those legally mandated duties to non-board members. Furthermore, no matter how well-intentioned, an MOA with the Wakasa Memorial Committee would set a precedent for other groups to request their own MOAs which likewise would usurp the decision-making responsibility that the board is required to solely retain. Very few non-profit organizations would have their board of directors agree to an MOA that would allow an outside entity to set policy.

Nevertheless, we want to emphasize that the Topaz Museum Board remains committed to working with the Wakasa Memorial Committee, other Topaz stakeholders, and the broader community to receive their input in creating a permanent display plan for the Wakasa Monument and to plan for the April 2023 commemoration. After the NPS evaluation last week, we hope we can move forward to collaborate together with the greater Japanese American community.

In the aftermath of the NPS evaluation of the Wakasa Monument and the site at Topaz, we have not changed our stance regarding your demand that we turn over video to you. Board members noted that WMC's negative portrayals of the Topaz Museum continued during the November 30 and December 1st ceremonies at both the museum and the Topaz site despite our multiple requests that in the interest of conciliation, that such condemnatory statements cease. Although we understand the sensibilities involved in your decision to express grievances,

it reinforced concerns among board members that video can be edited out of context or misinterpreted and we want to avoid the possibility of that happening.

We look forward to your response regarding a Zoom meeting in January.

Sincerely,
Topaz Museum Board of Directors
Jane Beckwith, President
Lance Atkinson
Scott Bassett
Lorelei Draper
Mark Nelson
Rick Okabe
Hisashi Bill Sugaya
Teresa Thompson

cc:

Mike Reynolds, Regional Director, Interior Regions 6,7,8, National Park Service
Lisa P. Davidson, Acting Program Manager, National Historic Landmarks Program, National Park Service
Justin Henderson, Heritage Partnerships Program, Intermountain Region, NPS
Robert Nieweg, National Trust for Historic Preservation
Michelle Magalong, Asian and Pacific Islander Americans in Historic Preservation
Jennifer Ortiz, Director, Utah Division of State History
Chris Merritt, Utah State Historic Preservation Office
Carol Kawase, District Governor NCWNP, JAACL
David Inoue, Executive Director, JAACL
Jani Iwamoto, Utah State Senator, 4th District

WMC Advisors:

Tetsuden Kashima, Professor Emeritus, University of Washington
Masako Takahashi, Takahashi Family Foundation
Satsuki Ina, Professor Emeritus California State University Sacramento, filmmaker
Dr. Karen Korematsu, Executive Director Fred T. Korematsu Institute
Stacey Camp, Director of the Campus Archaeology Program, Michigan State University
Roger Daniels, Charles Phelps Taft Professor Emeritus of History, University of Cincinnati
Art Hansen, Professor Emeritus History, Asian American Studies, California State University, Fullerton
Donald Teruo Hata, , Professor Emeritus of History, CSU Dominguez Hills
Tom Ikeda, Denso Founding Executive Director
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Michelle G. Magalong, University of Maryland Presidential Postdoctoral Fellow in Historic Preservation,
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Karen Umemoto, UCLA Professor of Asian American Studies and Urban Planning
Mary Urashima, Historian
Duncan Ryūken Williams, Buddhist priest