

1 [Supporting the Historic Marcus Books-Jimbo’s Bop City Building]

2 **Resolution supporting the preservation of the historic Marcus Books-Jimbo’s Bop City**
3 **building on Fillmore Street and urging its current owners to sell it to an owner who will**
4 **uphold the building’s community serving purposes.**
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6 WHEREAS, Marcus Books and the Marcus Books-Jimbo’s Bop City building (Building)
7 built in 1893 and now located at 1712-16 Fillmore Street in San Francisco are important
8 cultural and historical resources; and

9 WHEREAS, Marcus Books, founded by Drs. Julian and Raye Richardson in 1960, is
10 the oldest Black-owned and Black-themed bookstore in the nation; and

11 WHEREAS, Marcus Books has been and continues to be a center for Black
12 intellectualism, empowerment and activism, and a meeting place for community activists and
13 organizations including: Westside Community Services, the Fillmore Community Development
14 Association, the Black Panthers, and the 1968 African-American strikers at San Francisco
15 State College (now University); and

16 WHEREAS, Over the years Marcus Books has hosted thousands of notable writers
17 and other personalities, including Rosa Parks, James Baldwin, Eldridge Cleaver, Maya
18 Angelou, Malcolm X, and Oprah Winfrey, and has been a resource for community members,
19 scholars, and political activists; and

20 WHEREAS, from 1950-1965, the Building, then located at 1690 Post Street, was the
21 home of Jimbo’s Bop City, a world-renowned jazz club whose after-hours jam sessions
22 attracted stellar musicians such as Duke Ellington, Louis Armstrong, Ella Fitzgerald, John
23 Coltrane, Billie Holiday, Charlie Parker and Miles Davis, and welcomed women and people of
24 all races under its roof and on its stage; and
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1 WHEREAS, Jimbo’s Bop City was integral to establishing the reputation and identity of
2 the Fillmore as the “Harlem of the West” and promoting both traditional performers and those
3 pioneering the emerging “bop” sound; and

4 WHEREAS, the Marcus Books-Jimbo’s Bop City building is one of the few Victorian
5 buildings to survive the devastation wrought by the San Francisco Redevelopment Agency
6 upon the Fillmore and Japantown communities, and was saved from destruction through the
7 efforts of many San Franciscans, including members of the African American and Japanese
8 American communities and the pioneers of the City’s historic preservation movement, by
9 being lifted from its foundation, placed on a truck and physically moved from Post Street in the
10 heart of Japantown to its present site on Fillmore Street; and

11 WHEREAS, in light of its past and present history and use, the Marcus Books-Jimbo’s
12 Bop City building is an important historical and cultural resource for Japantown and the
13 Western Addition and to all residents and visitors of San Francisco; and

14 WHEREAS, the Marcus Books-Jimbo’s Bop City building is a symbol of and witness to
15 the struggles of the communities of the Western Addition and holds special significance for
16 the African American and Japanese American communities because of the notable
17 businesses, persons, and events associated with the Building, and its continued survival as
18 living part of these communities; and

19 WHEREAS, the Marcus Books-Jimbo’s Bop City building is located within a significant
20 commercial neighborhood under the jurisdiction of the pending Fillmore Neighborhood
21 Commercial District and the existing Japantown Special Use District; and

22 WHEREAS, Nishan and Suhaila Sweis, real estate investors, have demanded \$3.2
23 million for the Building which they purchased for \$1.59 million at a foreclosure sale in April
24 2013; and

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1 WHEREAS, Westside Community Services, a non-profit organization that uses the
2 Marcus Books-Jimbo's Bop City building to serve its clients, is sincerely attempting to
3 purchase the property to assure that it is preserved and continues to be accessible to the
4 communities it has historically served; now, therefore, be it

5 RESOLVED, that in light of the historical, cultural and social importance of the Marcus
6 Books-Jimbo's Bop City building, the Board of Supervisors directs all City agencies dealing
7 with issues related to the Building give substantial weight to community concerns, issues and
8 needs; and apply careful scrutiny and deliberation on any matter, especially with regard to use
9 or alterations, affecting the Building; and, be it

10 FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Board of Supervisors strongly urges the Sweis family
11 to enter into meaningful negotiations with representatives of the Mayor's office or other body
12 dedicated to assuring the Building's community serving purposes, in order to sell the Marcus
13 Books-Jimbo's Bop City building to an owner who will assure that it will be preserved and
14 perpetuated for the benefit of all San Franciscans and all those whose lives have been
15 touched by the cultural, historical, and social legacy of the Marcus Books-Jimbos' Bop City
16 building.

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