

Minutes of the Chinatown Working Group (CWG) Full Group Meeting
5:30pm – 7pm, Monday, July 9, 2012
American Legion L.T. Kimlau Post 1291

Voting members present: American Legion Post 1291 (Gabe Mui); Asian American Arts Centre (Robert Lee); Asian Americans for Equality (Douglas Le); Asian American Legal Defense and Education Fund (Bethany Li); Bowery Alliance of Neighbors (Mitchell Grubler, David Mulkins); Chinatown Partnership (Tony Wong); Chinatown Youth Initiatives (Elisa Espiritu); Chinese Progressive Association (Mae Lee); Chinese Staff and Workers Association (Wendy Cheng, Josephine Lee); Committee Against Anti Asian Violence (Esther Wong, Billie Zhu); Community Board 1 (Michael Levine); Community Board 2 (Antony Wong); Community Board 3 (Gigi Li); Create in Chinatown (Amy Chin); Immigrant Social Services (George Leung); International Chinese Transportation Professionals Association (Jerry Cheng); Lower East Side Business Improvement District (Tim Laughlin); Lower Manhattan GOP (Jimmy Chue); Two Bridges Neighborhood Council (Kerri Culhane, Christine Keefe, Victor Papa, Wilson Soo).

Also present: Rob Hollander (Lower East Side Residents for Responsible Development); Susan Yung (Bowery Poetry Club).

Meeting called to order at 5:50pm, CWG co-Chairs Mae Lee and Antony Wong facilitating

1. Introductions.

2. Agenda approval.

>>**No objections, agenda approved.**

3. June minutes approval.

>>**No objections, minutes approved by all present.**

4. Update on the RFP for a consultant, Wilson Soo, presenting

Wilson Soo: We met with Michael Zisser to review the RFP language. No substantive changes, only changed to make it flow better. We mentioned having an outside urban planner review the document. An urban planner has agreed to review it.

Michael Levine: Let's be sure that the final RFP is reviewed and prepared for the LMDC in August.

Gigi Li: It has been reviewed, we just have to look it over together.

Tim Laughlin: The CB3 Land Use Committee specifically wanted to review it again to see the changes in the map. Has all that been arranged in time?

Antony Wong: CB3's chair has arranged for committee review.

Gigi Li: It will come to CB3 in September.

Michael Levine: We can submit to LMDC and let CB3 review it in September before it is published.

Esther Wong: Will we have to wait for CB3's full board?

Michael Levine: This will not delay us. It may not be necessary to go to the full board. By the third week of September the RFP can be ready to act.

Esther Wong: How long before applicants respond?

Michael Levine: We planned two weeks. That can be extended. We have a lot of work to do to compile a list of candidates to send to.

Rob Hollander: CWG already sent the map changes to the CB3 committee.

Tim Laughlin: Did the entire committee review it?

Antony Wong: We did send it back to the committee.

Victor Papa: Let's let the CB3 committee see it again.

Antony Wong: The Chair of CB3 has indicated that the RFP should go back to the committee.

Gigi Li: It's on the calendar for September 4.

Esther Wong: While we are waiting for the process to unfold, are there other things we can do to communicate with the residents and small businesses and get them more engaged and involved.

Antony Wong: Our task forces will also be implementing our Action Plans by taking them to the respective city agencies.

5. CWG co-Chair elections.

Mae Lee: At our last full meeting in June, Antony Wong was nominated to fill the CB co-Chair position and Wilson Soo was nominated for the role of community-based organization co-Chair position. I will distribute ballots. I will call out the names of all the voting members. Call out if you don't hear your name. [Calls all 19 present the voting members.] Any voting members not called? [None.] Who will count the ballots?

Rob Hollander: I can.

6. Resolution thanking Mae Lee for her service as CWG co-Chair, Antony Wong presenting.

Antony Wong:

Resolution to thank Mae Lee for her services as Interim Co-Chair and Co-Chair of the Chinatown Working Group

Whereas Mae Lee, Executive Director of the Chinese Progressive Association, has volunteered her time and skills to serve as Interim Co-Chair and Co-Chair of the Chinatown Working Group (CWG), from November 2010 to July 2012, for one year and nine months; and

Whereas in her position as Interim Co-Chair, Mae Lee guided the CWG through its governance restructure process and the successful adoption of a new governing structure; and

Whereas, in her position as Co-Chair, Mae Lee oversaw the procurement of the CWG's first grant of \$150,000 from the Lower Manhattan Development Corporation through a successful adoption of a Request for Proposal for a Planning Consultant that will assist the Group in creating its community-based plan to protect and promote the primary stakeholders in Chinatown and its surrounding areas; and

Whereas, the CWG has no formal office and funding for the printing of materials, Mae Lee has graciously donated resources from the Chinese Progressive Association for the printing of materials distributed at CWG's meetings;

Therefore be it resolved that the Chinatown Working Group warmly expresses its deep gratitude and appreciation to Mae Lee for her services as Interim Co-Chair and Co-Chair of the Chinatown Working Group.

>>**Approved by acclamation [Warm applause.]**

Antony Wong: Thank you, Mae for your service. We look forward to your continuing with us.

Mae Lee: I am still chair of the CWG Immigration and Social Services Task Force, which was my original concern, so I will focus on those, continuing to be active with CWG and working with K and Annie. Thank you for your kind words. I want to give credit for the \$15,000 grant to Jim and Thomas for their political wherewithal and diplomacy to get it. So I thank you all for being cooperative and helpful throughout the past year and nine months. I am looking forward to the new co-Chairs who I expect will do a great job. [Applause]

>>**Election results: CB co-Chair: 19 votes for Antony Wong. Community-based Organizations co-Chair: 18 votes for Wilson Soo.**

7. Motion to send a letter of support for the Bowery Alliance of Neighbors' plan to the Department of City Planning.

Michael Levine presenting.

Michael Levine: The west side of the Bowery was given years ago height protections through the Special Little Italy District and the NoHo Historical Districts, but the east side of the Bowery has no such protection. CWG has voted to support the BAN plan to protect the east side of the Bowery with the same height restrictions as the west side of the Bowery. BAN is now asking CWG to add to a long list of letters in support of their plan. All three CB's have supported the BAN plan already.

[Mae Lee calls the roll of voting members.] 17 yea, 1 abstain (LES BID).

>>**Approved: CWG will send a letter of support for the Bowery Alliance of Neighbors' plan to the Department of City Planning.**

8. Announcements

Robert Lee: The New Museum is holding a community open house July 21. It's important for the Chinatown community to participate in the discussion of the relationship between the museum and Chinatown and Chinatown culture and artists. It's up to us to inform the museum of what the community wants.

Bethany Li: AALDEF is holding an open legal clinic on July 12 from 3-7pm. Call us to set up.

Esther Wong: Once again I'd like to recommend that we outreach to the community to inform and engage the Chinatown community.

Michael Levine: Would it be best before or after consultant selection?

Esther Wong: During the process. We haven't reached out to the community in quite a while. It would encourage a flow of ideas.

Rob Hollander: It might be useful to have all the community-based groups to come together under the CWG umbrella with tables, food, some kind of festival.

Douglas Le: AAFE has its annual festival August 5, Sunday. CWG could bring a table there.

Josephine Lee: It might be best to plan Esther's idea for September when people are around and things are happening.

Antony Wong: We would need space.

[Severally: Two Bridges?]

Esther Wong: Two Bridges has a large community room.

Antony Wong: The public schools are no longer donating their spaces for free, and we have no funds.

Michael Levine: Can we put this on the agenda for Victor. It might be useful to do it during the consultant process so the applicants get a chance to see us and the community.

Meeting adjourned, 6:28pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Rob Hollander, CWG Secretary

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**CHINATOWN
WORKING
GROUP**
Community Planning Its Future

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Co-Chairs: Antony Wong & Mae Lee
www.chinatownworkinggroup.org

July 16, 2012

Amanda M. Burden, Chair
City Planning Commission
New York City Department of City Planning
22 Reade Street
New York, NY 10007

Re: East Bowery Preservation Plan

Dear Chairwoman Burden,

On behalf of the Chinatown Working Group, we are writing to express our support for the Bowery Alliance of Neighbors' East Bowery Preservation Plan. Comprised of representatives from Manhattan Community Board 1, 2 and 3, and forty-six voting members from community organizations and stakeholders located in Chinatown and its surrounding areas, the Chinatown Working Group requests that the City Planning Commission conduct a study for the rezoning of the east side of Bowery to preserve and protect this historic neighborhood, as recommended in the East Bowery Preservation Plan

As one of New York City's oldest neighborhoods, the Bowery is an important part of Lower Manhattan's culture and history and is recognized as such by the National Register of Historic Places. However, due to the lack of appropriate zoning on the east side of Bowery, recent out-of-scale development has occurred. This has significantly changed the character of the area and threatens its existing stock of affordable housing units and the rare architecture of its buildings, some of which have been standing for over one hundred and seventy-five years.

The Chinatown Working Group urges the City Planning Commission to expedite a study of the east side of Bowery and to formulate a zoning plan that will preserve the historic character of this neighborhood, preserve the existing housing stock and allow for new low-rise and affordable housing development.

Sincerely,



Antony Wong
Co-Chair
Chinatown Working Group



Mae Lee
Co-Chair
Chinatown Working Group

VOTING MEMBERS: 11 Allen St. Tenants Association • 197 Madison St. Tenants Association • 318 Restaurant Workers Union • 61 Delancey St. Tenants Association • American Legion Post 1291 • Asian American Arts Centre • Asian Americans for Equality • Asian American Legal Defense & Education Fund • Bowery Alliance of Neighbors • Cherry Street Tenants Association • Chinatown Business & Property Owners Group • Chinatown Partnership • Chinatown Rotary Club • Chinatown Youth Initiatives • Chinese American Medical Society • Chinese American Planning Council • Chinese Chamber of Commerce of NY • Chinese Consolidated Benevolent Association • Chinese Progressive Association • Chinese Staff and Workers' Association • Committee Against Anti-Asian Violence • Community Board #1 Manhattan • Community Board #2 Manhattan • Community Board #3 Manhattan • Community Emergency Response Team, CB #2 • Confucius Plaza • Continental Garment Manufacturers Association • CREATE in Chinatown • Educational Alliance • Friends of Columbus Park • Good Old Lower East Side (GOLES) • Greater Chinatown Community Association • Hamilton-Madison House • Hester Street Collaborative • Hotel Chinese Association • Immigrant Social Services • Indochina Sino-American Community Center • International Chinese Transportation Professionals Association • Lin Sing Association • Lin Ze Xu Foundation of USA • Little Italy Merchants Association • Lower East Side Business Improvement District • Lower Manhattan GOP • MFinda Kalunga Community Garden • Museum of Chinese in America • National Mobilization Against Sweatshops • New York Downtown Hospital • PS 130M Parents' Association • The Pistol Club of Greater Chinatown • Two Bridges Neighborhood Council • United Fukinese American Association **FRIENDS:** Office of U.S. Congressman Jerrold Nadler (NY-08) • Office of State Senator Martin J. Golden • Office of State Senator Daniel Squadron • Office of State Assembly Speaker Sheldon Silver • Office of State Assembly Member Deborah J. Glick • Office of the Mayor, Community Affairs Unit • Office of City Comptroller John C. Liu • Office of the New York County District Attorney Cyrus R. Vance, Jr • Office of the Public Advocate Bill de Blasio • Office of Manhattan Borough President Scott M. Stringer • Office of City Council Speaker Christine C. Quinn • Office of Council Member Margaret Chin • 250 Canal Street (ABS Partners) • Asian American Arts Alliance • Chinatown YMCA • Lower East Side Residents for Responsible Development • NohoManhattan.org • Sanctuary for Families • Transportation Alternatives **SUPPORTERS:** Municipal Art Society Planning Center