

Minutes of the Chinatown Working Group (CWG) Full Group Meeting  
5:00pm - 6:30pm, Monday, January 5, 2015  
Two Bridges Senior Apartments, 80 Rutgers Slip

Voting members present: Asian American Arts Centre (Robert Lee); Asian American Legal Defense and Education Fund (Margaret Fung); Bowery Alliance of Neighbors (Mitchell Grubler); Chinatown Business and Property Owners Group (Douglas Woodward); Chinese Progressive Association (Mae Lee); Chinese Staff and Workers Association (Vincent Cao, Yu Jin Chan, Lian Qiong Chan, Wendy Cheung, Wah Lee, Lai Jia Li, Yao Zhu Liang, Zao LiZhen, Guo Quan Yan, Liu Run); Committee Against Anti- Asian Violence (Anj Chaudhry, Kyla Cheung; Amany Mahfouz); Community Board 2 (Edward Ma, Antony Wong); Community Board 3 (MyPhuong Chung); Hester Street Collaborative (Dylan House); Immigrant Social Services (Charles Lai); Good Old Lower East Side (M. Ginger Lopez); Lower East Side Mujeres & Hombres Luchadores (Yolanda Donato); National Mobilization Against Sweatshops (Amelia ??; Carlos R., David Tieu; Louise Velez); NoHo-Bowery Stakeholders Inc. (Zella Jones); Two Bridges Neighborhood Council (Victor Papa, Wilson Soo); 61 Delancey Street Tenants Association (Zhi Qin Zheng); 197 Madison Street (?? Li); 318 Restaurant Workers Union (John Chen, Mi Liang Chen).

Also present: Fun Mae Eng; Trever Holland (Two Bridges Tower Association); Rob Hollander.

Media: Sing Tao Daily (April Xu); The Lo-Down (Ed Litvak)

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Meeting called to order, 5:15pm, Wilson Soo and Antony Wong presiding.

1. Introductions
2. Agenda approved by all present without objection
3. Minutes approved by all present without objection
4. Vote on subdistricts B, D, E1 and E2. Antony Wong presenting.

Antony Wong: We distributed the CAPZ minutes and subdistrict proposals by email to all the members. The community boards will be abstaining from these votes since Community Board 3 has not yet voted on these proposals. CAPZ has voted in favor of Subdistrict B, Option 2 for all sites within the study area and Option 1 for all sites outside the study area.

Douglas Woodward: What are the options?

Wilson Soo: [Recites the text of the Pratt proposals].

Rob Hollander: Could one of the CAPZ members explain their choice and the significant differences between the options?

Anj Chaudhry: I can explain. Subdistrict B is a preservation district for the NYCHA housing. There were two similar options: new construction would have to be affordable at the same rents as currently in public housing, and any new construction would have to go through a community review process in which residents would have a voice, and the scale of any new housing would have to match current housing. There are also some environmental protections in light of Hurricane Sandy. Option 1 would “map” each development

individually. Option 2 would “map” them all together, but mapping them all together would leave some out, so we voted to combine the options so that all the NYCHA developments be included.

Wilson Soo: To be accurate, the plan does not specify “affordable housing” but instead requires that no development drastically alter the current mix of income groups presently living there or reduce the number of units. Eva said that smaller buildings can’t be included.

Douglas Woodward: They must be at least 1.5 acres.

Wilson Soo: [Calls the roll.]

**Subdistrict B, Option 2 within Study Area, and Option 1 outside of Study Area**

16 in favor:

Asian American Arts Centre;  
Asian American Legal Defense and Education Fund;  
Bowery Alliance of Neighbors;  
Chinese Progressive Association;  
Chinese Staff and Workers Association;  
Committee Against Anti- Asian Violence;  
Hester Street Collaborative;  
Immigrant Social Services;  
Good Old Lower East Side;  
Lower East Side Mujeres & Hombres Luchadores;  
National Mobilization Against Sweatshops;  
NoHo-Bowery Stakeholders Inc.;  
Two Bridges Neighborhood Council;  
61 Delancey Street Tenants Association;  
197 Madison Street;  
318 Restaurant Workers Union.

None opposed.

3 abstentions.

Chinatown Business and Property Owners Group;  
Community Board 2;  
Community Board 3.

Does that pass?

Rob Hollander: 15 yes votes suffice to pass a motion here with or without a majority quorum.

Antony Wong: We are going to consider subdistrict D now since CAPZ has not decided on subdistrict C. Anj, would you summarize?

Anj Chaudhry: There are two options for the waterfront. There are two main sites that are being developed. Option 1 would rezone the sites to 350 feet with a FAR of 10 and 55% affordable housing. That was for the Edison Properties site. Most of the other areas remained the same. Option 2 was to retain the manufacturing zoning including the Edison Properties and the Extell site. The difference is that Option 1 would allow residential development on the Edison site.

Trevor Holland: On subdistrict D: how many residential buildings are in subdistrict D?

Anj Chaudhry: Just two sites.

Trevor: There are only four residential buildings there and they have not been notified. Also there's no mention of the development site behind us. A 47-story luxury building is planned -- over 350 feet. That site needs to be looked at. Subdistrict D needs more work since it is missing crucial sites.

Anj Chaudhry: CAAAV thought 350 feet was too high. Option 2 will keep it as is and not allow building so high. Even at 55% affordable housing, there would be too much luxury development.

Trevor Holland: How would it affect these other sites?

Victor Papa: The vote would apply to whatever sites are on the board. So it doesn't matter.

Trevor Holland: I'm just asking since you are distinguishing two properties.

Anj Chaudhry: Should we revisit subdistrict D?

Trevor Holland: I proposed that three months ago. I'm just trying understand since you're not considering the site right behind us.

Victor Papa: Doesn't the option consider any possible development.

Trevor Holland: So what's the difference between the options. Anj mentioned specifically the Edison property.

Wendy Cheung: The two options have the same heights except that M1-6 would be retained in option 2. CSWA wants to see the height limited and would like to move the process forward.

Trevor Holland: We are also concerned about the commercial overnight parking that remains available in the area.

Victor Papa: Can that be handled by other means outside zoning.

Trevor Holland: Maybe, but we're talking about zoning now, so we would like to see what tools are available.

Victor Papa: Why not go to the community board with your complaint?

Trevor Holland: We are.

Zella Jones: It is not a zoning issue. You have to go to the Department of Traffic. They can handle it regardless of the zoning.

Trevor: Okay, but we want to avoid having to fight against a new zoning.

David Tieu: The site behind us is in subdistrict D?

Trevor Holland: Yes. 47 stories.

Anj Chaudhry: That site would be included under the 350 foot limit.

Wilson: I will call the roll. [Calls the roll.]

**Subdistrict D, Option 2**

13 yes:

Asian American Arts Centre;  
Asian American Legal Defense and Education Fund;  
Chinese Progressive Association;  
Chinese Staff and Workers Association;  
Committee Against Anti- Asian Violence;  
Hester Street Collaborative;  
Immigrant Social Services;  
Good Old Lower East Side;  
Lower East Side Mujeres & Hombres Luchadores;  
National Mobilization Against Sweatshops;  
61 Delancey Street Tenants Association;  
197 Madison Street;  
318 Restaurant Workers Union.

None opposed.

6 abstentions:

Bowery Alliance of Neighbors;  
Chinatown Business and Property Owners Group;  
Community Board 2;  
Community Board 3;  
NoHo-Bowery Stakeholders Inc.;  
Two Bridges Neighborhood Council.

The motion fails.

Antony Wong: We will now consider subdistricts E1 and E2.

Rob Hollander: If the community boards had voted, the motion would have passed. So the community board members should bring this vote to the community boards with that understanding.

Antony Wong: Anj do you want to summarize E1 and E2?

Rob Hollander: I think you should let Mitchell explain it.

Mitchell Grubler: E1 is the east side of Bowery from Hester to Bleecker. E2 Bleecker to 9th street. Essentially the proposals are the same. They both include an 85 foot height cap.

Wilson Soo: Option 1 would have extended the Special Little Italy District, which would require both Community Boards 3 and 2 to be the applicants whereas in Option 2, Community Board 3 would be the only applicant.

Rob Hollander: Any discussion?

Wilson Soo: [Calls the roll].

**Subdistrict E1 & E2, Option 2**

16 yes:

Asian American Arts Centre;  
Asian American Legal Defense and Education Fund;  
Bowery Alliance of Neighbors;  
Chinese Progressive Association;  
Chinese Staff and Workers Association;  
Committee Against Anti- Asian Violence;  
Hester Street Collaborative;  
Immigrant Social Services;  
Good Old Lower East Side;  
Lower East Side Mujeres & Hombres Luchadores;  
National Mobilization Against Sweatshops;  
NoHo-Bowery Stakeholders Inc.;  
Two Bridges Neighborhood Council;  
61 Delancey Street Tenants Association;  
197 Madison Street;  
318 Restaurant Workers Union.

None opposed.

3 abstentions.

Chinatown Business and Property Owners Group;  
Community Board 2;  
Community Board 3.

Motion approved.

Antony Wong: Victor will update us on CAPZ' discussion on subdistrict C.

Victor Papa: We are not ready to give that report. We are researching it further.

Antony Wong: When is the next CAPZ meeting?

Victor Papa: I will try to arrange one before this meeting adjourns.

Antony Wong: We will now open the floor to ten minutes of discussion on CWG action on the Extell development.

Wendy Cheung: I have a question about subdistrict D. Were there any proxy votes for that motion?

Antony Wong: No

Wendy Cheung: How will we deal with subdistrict D then?

Antony Wong: The vote we just took is not an absolute no vote. The results will go back to the Land Use Committee of Community Board 3. We will see if the Committee will take our majority vote in favor into consideration.

Wendy Cheung: Is CB3 discussing this?

MyPhuong Chung: It is not on the current agenda. It would have to be placed on the agenda for February.

Antony Wong: This month they are considering subdistrict B. They have not gotten up to subdistrict D yet.

MyPhuong: I can give the committee an overall update at the January meeting.

Wendy Cheung: The Extell development will have a huge impact on the community. The Pathmark supermarket was a staple in the neighborhood and the 68-story development is far out of scale of the rest of the neighborhood. Maybe we can send a letter to the community board, along with our majority vote on subdistrict D, a letter expressing what we would like to see on the Extell site.

Zella Jones: A letter from us would have no teeth especially since we don't have a definitive vote. It would be nothing more than 25 signatures.

David Tieu: We have enough already in the Pratt plan to express our desires. Also in light of the tax subsidies of public funds that Extell is getting for this development, the community should have voice to obtain more affordable housing, community benefits and community services. We should not just send a letter to Extell, but to the city asking them to hold Extell accountable for the government money that is being used to subsidize luxury development.

Wah Lee: [Translated] Regarding the former Pathmark site, residents of the Lower East Side are concerned about the height of the projected building. It will change the character of the Lower East Side. The Government hasn't built affordable housing for many years and now they are allowing a luxury building twice the size of Confucius Plaza which will overwhelm the entire community. Even though we haven't passed a motion on subdistrict D, after working so hard and so long for this CWG initiative, we should fight for more equitable position.

Mae Lee: I agree the 68-story building is alarming, but the process of this group is important. We have worked hard to protect the process of the group and this is not the time to stop. I don't know what window there is left to make a difference. For both reasons -- the lack of any window and to protect our process -- we shouldn't write the letter now, but mainly I am concerned about preserving our process.

Anj Chaudhry: I don't know why we can't vote on take a position on the affordable housing, the height and the supermarket. After all, CB3 took a position on the poor-door. So I don't see why we can't take a position. It's important to the community.

Rob Hollander: I've heard several proposals: send a letter to Extell, prior to our decision on subdistrict D; also David suggests writing a letter or bringing this issue to the city. There are other possibilities as well including communicating or negotiating with Extell. If there were some attention from the city, there might be leverage on such a negotiation. I think any decision today on action would be premature. We should create a committee to draw up recommendations on a plan that would maximize CWG's leverage on Extell and future developments.

Victor Papa: It's a significant building. It will change the neighborhood. Two Bridges wants to mitigate that as much as possible. The individual member organizations can advocate for a supermarket. That's within their purview. The tower is going to happen. CWG must be taken seriously by the mayor and city council. The supermarket issue could be addressed by the member organizations.

Antony Wong: Is there a second for Rob's motion?

Mae Lee: I second.

Rob Hollander: Maybe we can just ask who would be interested in participating.

Douglas Woodward: It shouldn't be a smaller committee, but a group that is representative of the group at the start. Why not have CAPZ handle it?

Victor Papa: I don't see how this task complements CAPZ' mission.

Zella Jones: I suggest you see how far those interested can go with such a recommendation and bring it back to the CWG. Then CAPZ can decide whether it can take it up and guide the process.

Rob Hollander: I see Anj, Wendy, Ginger, David and Dylan are interested.

Douglas Woodward: I suggested that a non ideological group deal with this, like CAPZ.

Rob Hollander: Zella suggested that a preliminary group draw up a recommendation to bring to CWG and then see if CAPZ is interested in working on it.

Zella Jones: The group can tell CWG whether it's considering street signs, height caps, parking, more affordable housing. Get your ducks in a row first, get the priorities set up, then it can be handed to CAPZ.

Douglas Woodward: I'm suggesting that the recommendations be dealt with at CAPZ.

Zella Jones: It will, if the proposals are of interest to CAPZ.

Mae Lee: Are you going to announce the date of the meeting of this group so that anyone can go to the meeting?

Antony Wong: Yes, there will be a public meeting. It will be emailed out.

Community announcements.

Bob Lee: The city is preparing a cultural plan for equity for communities. Big institutions get 80% of the funds and a thousand organizations compete for about 15%. We think that the plan will be put off until 2016. We are planning a town hall about it March 14. We'll tell you more about that. It will address artist living spaces and educational programs for children. The Department of Cultural Affairs will deal with all of these.

Antony Wong: New Museum is doing its Ideas City Festival. Members of the Cultural and Historic Preservation working team produced an event last time at the NY Chinese Cultural Center presenting several films. The deadline for proposals is January 16. You can go to the New Museum's website.

Meeting adjourned, 6:25pm

Respectfully submitted,  
Rob Hollander, CWG Secretary