

Minutes of the Chinatown Working Group (CWG) Full Group Meeting
5:00pm - 6:30pm, Monday, February 9, 2015
Two Bridges Senior Apartments, 80 Rutgers Slip

Voting members present: 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 (Wendy Cheung, Wah Lee); Committee Against Anti-Asian Violence (Anj Chaudhry, Ediwin Zheng); Community Board 1 (Michael Levine); Community Board 2 (Antony Wong); Community Board 3 (Gigi Li); Hester Street Collaborative (Shelma); Good Old Lower East Side (Katrina Cortés); Lower East Side Mujeres & Hombres Luchadores (Yolanda Donato; Louise Velez); National Mobilization Against Sweatshops (Amelia Aviles; Carlos R., Gwen Simpson; Aleida Talentino, David Tieu); Two Bridges Neighborhood Council (Dan Ping He, Victor Papa, Wilson Soo); 11 Allen Street Tenants Union (Wai Yee Poon); 61 Delancey Street Tenants Association (Zhi Qin Zheng); 197 Madison Street (Fuko Poon); 318 Restaurant Workers Union (John Chen).

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

Media: Sing Tao Daily (Fan Chen); World Journal (Mengzi Ciao).

Meeting called to order, 5:13pm, Wilson Soo and Antony Wong presiding.

1. Introductions.
2. Agenda approved by all present without objection.
3. Minutes approved as amended by Antony Wong (to clearly indicate the motions that were voted on).

4. Quorum discussion for CWG

Antony Wong: In June 2011, CWG came up with a method of voting since the group was not achieving quorum which was then 26 of the 50 members. The group decided that if 15 members, the average number of members attending, voted in favor of a motion, that would suffice to pass the motion even if quorum had not been achieved. 15 members represented 30% of the membership. We have been following that method for three years. Last month the vote on Subdistrict D failed with 13 votes in favor and no votes against out of 19 voting members.

Wendy Cheung: How many members are there in CWG today?

Antony Wong: 46.

Wendy Cheung: Since the membership has declined, we should adjust the method to reflect the smaller membership.

Antony Wong: 30% of 46 is 14.

Rob Hollander: This method was suggested by Gabe Mui, who is no longer a member. We don't know his justification for his number. The average number of voters was often only 12 members and although there were only 50 actual voting members, the website showed 56. It was my understanding that 15 was the

equivalent of a majority vote of a least quorum of 50% plus one of the membership. In any case, the voting method should reflect the change of membership size.

Douglas Woodward: Why not simply take a number that we reliably get at meetings, and treat that as our new quorum.

Anj Chaudhry: I agree with Doug. Since I've been here we've rarely had fifteen members in attendance. Fifteen votes amounts to consensus and a cumbersome method. Why not have the fifteen be the quorum allowing a majority of those to pass a motion?

Antony Wong: I suggest we maintain the 30% requirement. Applied to the current membership of 46, 30% of which would be 13.8, so a vote of 14 members would suffice to pass a motion.

Margaret Fong: What are the rules on proxies?

Antony Wong: I emailed the membership inviting proxies in case the organization could not send a representative.

Margaret Fong: The proxy must be submitted prior to the meeting?

Antony Wong: Yes.

Anj Chaudhry: We are talking about future votes, not past votes. Shouldn't we find out the facts of how many members typically attend?

Antony Wong: We will do that research.

Anj Chaudhry: We could base the quorum on active members.

Margaret Fong: Quorum is just the number of members in order to conduct business of the group. It does not require consensus of all those present.

Antony Wong: The 15-yes vote requirement was less than the quorum. It was only 30% of the full membership of the whole organization.

Margaret Fong: That 15-yes vote implies that for many meetings consensus is required. That is an extremely high bar. A group can adjust its quorum to its reliable attendance and then require a passing vote for its motions be more than a majority of the attendees. Currently, we require 15 members in favor when quorum has not been achieved, but only 13 members in favor if there is quorum.

Rob Hollander: The current rule was supposed to be "15 members in favor or a majority of quorum in favor, whichever is greater." But that rule no longer applies, since the membership is smaller.

Antony Wong: We will bring you the historical numbers.

Wendy Cheung: We should deal with this now. This came up because of the vote last meeting. Regardless of what Community Board 3 decides about the waterfront, CWG's votes and positions make a big difference in the discussion. Delaying would be a disservice to the community.

Antony Wong: We'd have to hold a vote to change the rules, and then revisit Subdistrict D.

Wendy Cheung: Proxies were submitted on that vote which raise the vote to a pass.

Antony Wong: They were submitted after the meeting. If we revisit, those proxies would of course count towards a revote.

Victor Papa: The quorum discussion is timely, but we need an analysis of the attendance rates.

David Tieu: We are also accountable to the community. How ridiculous it must seem to the community when thirteen members vote in favor and none opposed, yet the motion fails. Doesn't this feed into the criticism the CWG is inefficient?

Victor Papa: Would you want to tell your membership that CWG respects its process or that it doesn't respect its own process?

Rob Hollander: It's important to separate the quorum discussion from the subdistrict D discussion because Trevor raised concerns about Subdistrict D that we still haven't addressed. I suggest that the discussion of Subdistrict D be placed on the agenda for next meeting. We should also discuss the community board abstentions.

Antony Wong: For Subdistrict D, we need to find out tomorrow night what CB3 wants at its Land Use meeting. And if we voted on quorum, the community boards would have to abstain, and the motion would fail.

Gigi Li: It is unlikely that the Land Use Committee will take decisive action tomorrow since this is their first exposure to it. Voting tonight on the subdistrict will probably not change the community board's debate dramatically.

Rob Hollander: It is not appropriate to vote on Subdistrict D when it is not on the agenda. It's unfair to members who might wanted to have been here. Quorum is on the agenda, so you could vote on it.

Antony Wong: It's on the agenda only for discussion, not for a vote.

Gigi Li: In the past we've let the representatives to consult with their membership before voting. I suggest we move the agenda and announce a vote for next month, including the options.

Margaret Fung: Do we have a quorum now?

Antony Wong: We have 16, so we can vote.

Margaret Wong: I move that we change the quorum to 25% of the membership. We can deal with the requirements for passing a motion separately.

Wendy Cheung: I second that.

Antony Wong: There is a motion on the floor to reduce the quorum to 25% (currently 12 members would then constitute quorum).

Victor Papa: Other members should be alerted to such a change in structure.

Antony Wong: Doug has left so we have only 15.

Rob Hollander: I think allowing 7 votes to pass a motion undermines the legitimacy of the CWG in view of the public. On the other hand, India's Parliament has a 10% quorum.

Mae Lee: I move to table the vote to next meeting.

Mitchell Grubler: I second the motion to table.

Michael Levine: The item will then be first on the agenda for the next meeting.

Wilson Soo: [Calling the roll on the motion to table]
5 yes, 11 no, 1 abstaining. Motion to table fails.

[Calls the roll on the motion to reduce quorum to 25% of the full membership]
10 yes, 5 no, 1 abstaining.

Mitchell Grubler: I was not aware that proxies are allowed. You announce that?

Antony Wong: Yes, it's announced.

Rob Hollander: Allowing proxies will result in a smaller group and shorter discussions.

Antony Wong: Next meeting we will do an update on Community Board 3's decisions on Subdistrict D. Minutes of Community Board 3 are here. They passed Subdistrict B, option 2 inside the study area option 1 outside the study area with minor word changes.

5. CAPZ update on Subdistrict C, Victor Papa reporting.

Victor Papa: We discussed M1-5 in Subdistrict C, affirming to keep the M1-5 zoning and all its protections. There was a proposal to require 50% affordable housing for the area. Then areas 1 and 2 were discussed. We agreed on anti-harassment and anti-demolition protections for those. I suggested that given CAPZ had considered nearly all the sub districts, CWG should disband CAPZ and work on implementation by creating an action team to oversee the CWG work with city agencies, otherwise there would be no accountability.

Michael Levine: CWG has not yet adopted all the recommendations of the CAPZ group. We need to have on the agenda for the next meeting the recommendations on [Subdistrict C], which are not the full recommendations of the consultant but the anti-harassment and anti-demolition measures. We will not be recommending a change in the manufacturing zoning to commercial zoning because there was too much sentiment that it might lead to transformation of the neighborhood and eviction of existing uses. Once CWG has voted on those recommendations, CAPZ has no more work to do, therefore Victor and I ask that CWG disband CAPZ after CWG has voted on those last recommendations. CWG should create a new implementation task force to work with Community Board 3, the City Planning Commission, and other agencies responsible for implementing the proposals that we have adopted.

Anj Chaudhry: Will we vote on area 2?

Michael Levine: Area 2 was not part of CAPZ's mandate, but it should be added to the CWG agenda for next meeting to enable a wider discussion. Could Wilson write up a summary of the proposals?

Victor Papa: We'll discuss it at CAPZ.

Michael Levine: We'll need one more CAPZ meeting for that.

Wendy Cheung: The disbanding of CAPZ is a separate issue that we need to discuss separately.

David Tieu: CAPZ members have the expertise to pursue zoning, so they should continue to follow through.

Mae Lee: Not everything will be implemented. We will have to prioritize and consolidate.

Anj Chaudhry: Who will be on the task force and who will be the leadership of it?

Victor Papa: Let's not make those choices tonight.

Michael Levine: Personnel recommendations should be made to the [CWG] Co-Chairs.

6. Community announcements

Antony Wong: The Department of Homeless is doing its Hope Survey tonight at 10pm. You can go to their website and sign up for a slot. February 19 is the Lunar Year ceremony at SDR Park at 11am. Feb 22 the Lunar New Year Parade begins down Mott Street, around Kim Lau Square, down Division and Eldridge Streets to SDR Park beginning at 1pm.

Meeting adjourned, 6:30pm

Respectfully submitted,
Rob Hollander, CWG Secretary