

Minutes of the Chinatown Working Group (CWG) Full Group Meeting
5:00pm-6:00pm, Monday, May 18, 2015
Two Bridges Senior Apartments, 80 Rutgers Slip

Voting members present: Chinatown Business and Property Owners Group (Douglas Woodward); Chinese Progressive Association (Mae Lee); Chinese Staff and Workers Association (Wendy Cheung, Wah Lee, Ray Ruan); Committee Against Anti-Asian Violence (Naved Husain); Community Board 1 (Michael Levine); Community Board 2 (Antony Wong); Good Old lower East Side (Katrina Cortés, Mayzabeth Ginger Lopez); Lower East Side Mujeres & Hombres Luchadores (Louise Velez); National Mobilization Against Sweatshops (David Tieu); NoHo-Bowery Stakeholders Incorporated (Zella Jones); Two Bridges Neighborhood Council (Victor Papa, Wilson Soo); 11 Allen Street Tenants Union (Wai Yee Poon); 61 Delancey Street Tenants Union (Zhi Qing Zheng); 318 Restaurant Workers Union (Xin Yun Gao).

Elected Officials: Manhattan District Attorney Office (Ina Chen).

Also present: Rob Hollander.

Media: Sing Tao (Lotus Chao).

Meeting called to order by Wilson Soo and Antony Wong at 5:22pm.

Agenda: Agenda approved without objection

Minutes: April minutes approved without objection

Nominations for CWG co-chairs

Antony Wong: Nominations for community board representative co-Chair are open.

Douglas Woodward: I nominate Antony Wong.

Victor Papa: I second the nomination.

Antony Wong: Are there any other nominations for community board representative co-Chair? Seeing no further nominations for community board representative co-Chair, nominations for community organization representative co-Chair are open.

Zella Jones: I nominate Wilson Soo.

Douglas Woodward: I second.

Antony Wong: Are there any further nominations?

Katrina Cortés: I nominate Wai Yee Poon of CAAAV.

Antony Wong: So next meeting we'll have one nominee for community board representative and two nominees for community organization representative.

Quorum change

Antony Wong: Currently CWG has 46 members, but we have trouble achieving a quorum of half-plus-one which would be 24 members. Instead, we have been using a 15-yes-vote requirement for passage of motions, a requirement devised when there were more members. We are now trying to amend that requirement either

to 11 or 14 in order to accommodate the smaller size of our current membership. We will hold a roll-call vote along with seven proxies submitted.

Wilson Soo: Wai Yee Poon will be voting on behalf of 11 Allen Street Tenants Union and 197 Madison Street Tenants Union.

Wai Yee Poon: Both tenants unions vote for 11.

Xin Yun Gao: 11 for 318 Restaurant Workers Union.

Zhi Qing Zhen: 11 for 61 Delancey Street.

Wilson Soo: Asian American Arts Centre votes by proxy for 14. Asian American Legal Defense and Education Fund votes by proxy for 11.

Douglas Woodward: Chinatown Business and Property Owners vote for 14.

Wilson Soo: Chinatown Partnership Local Development Corporation votes by proxy for 14.

Mae Lee: Chinese Progressive Association votes for 14.

Wendy Cheung: Chinese Staff and Workers Association votes for 11.

Wilson Soo: Chinatown Manpower votes by proxy for 11.

Naved Hussain: Committee Against Anti-Asian Violence votes for 11.

Michael Levine: Community Board 1 votes for 14.

Antony Wong: Community Board 2 votes for 14.

Wilson Soo: Community Board 3 votes by proxy for 14.

Katrina Cortés: Good Old Lower East Side abstains.

Wilson Soo: Immigrant Social Services votes by proxy for 11. International Chinese Transportation Professionals Association votes by proxy for 14.

Louise Velez: Lower East Side Mujeres & Hombres Luchadores vote for 11.

Zella Jones: NoHo-Bowery Stakeholders Incorporated vote for 14.

Victor Papa: Two Bridges Neighborhood Council votes for 14.

Wilson Soo: 11 votes for 11, 10 votes for 14.

Rob Hollander: Under current rules, if quorum is not achieved, 15 votes in favor are required to pass a motion.

Michael Levine: So it's still not working because we don't have the minimum requirement?

Mae Lee: Because we don't have a quorum.

Michael Levine: Because we don't have the bigger quorum...

Antony Wong: The next meeting will have more members for the co-Chair election...

Michael Levine: The motion can be re-introduced at the next meeting when there are more members. The record should show that no motion carried but there is a recommendation to re-introduce the motions at the next meeting.

Implementation team

Michael Levine: We feel that while not every team's proposals have been adopted by CWG, there are sufficient recommendations for the creation of an implementation task force to promote those recommendations outside the CWG. The task force would be voluntary. Members would serve to begin to work with community boards, city agencies and other organizations to implement the recommendations. I call this an implementation task force but it could be called a working group -- it doesn't matter what it is called. It would not be necessary for all the members of the task force to work on all of the recommendations. It can divide its work among those most interested. But it is time for us to act. Did I leave anything out?

Wendy Cheung: It is ridiculous to push past the quorum problem to implement a plan that we have not yet approved.

Rob Hollander: This does not require a vote of the CWG. The method of the Chinatown Working Group has been that once a team has had its recommendations approved by CWG, that team automatically became an implementation team for those proposals.

Mea Lee: Yes. The teams might not have addressed every city agency, but we did address agencies with our priorities.

Michael Levine: Did anything happen?

Rob Hollander: What happened was that CWG focused on hiring a planner for CAPZ. We are now at the point at which CAPZ should be the implementation team for those plans. But there has been a proposal to expand the CAPZ implementation team to become a general implementation team. That expansion would require some change in CWG method.

Victor Papa & Michael Levine: CAPZ has been dissolved.

Rob Hollander: It could only be dissolved by CWG. Again, the method of CWG has always been -- and this must be recorded in past minutes -- that the working teams are implementation teams as soon as their recommendations are approved by CWG. One of the CAPZ co-chairs has now invited volunteers to join the implementation of those CAPZ proposals that CWG has approved. The teams have always been public and publicly posted on the website.

Michael Levine: I still feel that some proposals of other teams have not been implemented. So it's important to have a comprehensive implementation task force.

Rob Hollander: The short story is, there's a CAPZ implementation team, anyone can join it, and there's a remaining question as to its scope -- should it be expanded? The scope is something that CWG can deal with at any point. At the moment there's no need to vote on having an implementation team.

Mae Lee: Just to clarify -- some of the proposals were long-term, others short term. It has been a number of years since those implementation teams did their work. Some of their proposals were implemented, others not. We now have new administration. It's a long haul.

Zella Jones: CWG should also have emissaries to find out whom to talk to in the city administration and find out what is on their agenda. That way we'd have a much better sense of what is possible, what kinds of budgets are available, what plans are coming our way. This is valuable information to report back to the CWG.

David Tieu: We haven't voted on several essential proposals from the Pratt plan because of our crazy voting structure. We have approved only two out of the six proposals within the Pratt plan, even though there was consensus among the community organizations on all of them.

Mae Lee: But we have approved some of these plans, so we can begin to implement those. The proposals that have not been approved should not prevent our work on the ones that we have approved. Even the immigration team did not address all of its approved proposals all at once.

Rob Hollander: Would the co-chairs now call for volunteers for a CAPZ implementation team? Maybe when they come together they can discuss the scope of the team, since they will be the only implementation team active currently in CWG. You might call back the other implementation teams or widen the scope of the CAPZ implementation team. But if there is going to be a change, then it has to gain 15 votes under the current voting structure.

Michael Levine: The co-chairs of CAPZ ask that they be relieved of their office now that they have accomplished their charge as co-chairs. We will not serve as co-chairs of the implementation team, however we want to see those proposals implemented.

Wilson Soo: Any implementation team would elect their own co-chairs. We will inform the members that at the next meeting we will be accepting volunteers for an implementation team. We can start now. Who is interested? The name of the team can be decided later.

Wendy Cheung: I don't understand what we're asking to volunteer for.

Wilson Soo: Then we will call for volunteers at the next meeting.

New business

Rob Hollander: I attended CB3 Land Use Committee. They stated that they had approved areas A and B, but not areas C, D and E, although E had been approved years ago in effect. I got the impression that their support for preserving the Bowery no longer counts since the Bowery has changed in the interim. I'm also worried that DCP will negotiate with CB3 without CWG involved.

Zella Jones: You've got to get your shit together...

Rob Hollander: You've got to get your shit together and be active, and you have the opportunity to be active in this implementation team.

Michael Levine: Put that in the minutes about, "getting your shit together."

Rob Hollander: It will be there.

Community announcements

Antony Wong: From Bob Lee -- the Asian American Arts Centre will participate in the New Museum's Ideas City along with the Cultural Equity Group (CEG) at May 30.

Meeting adjourned, 6:08pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Rob Hollander, sec'y CWG 6-8-15