

**Affordability Working Team
Chinatown Working Group
February 12, 2009**

Meeting Minutes

Location: 49 Chambers Street, Room 709

Time: 3:00pm to 4:30pm

In Attendance: Mabel Tso (Asian American Legal Defense and Education Fund); Mae Lee (Chinese Progressive Association); Brian Cho (Asian Americans for Equality); Jim Solomon (Community Board 2); Rob Hollander (Lower East Side Residents for Responsible Development); Richard Lee (Asian Americans for Equality)

Elected Officials/Representatives in Attendance: Mary Cooley (State Senator Daniel Squadron)

Media: Jacky Wong (Sing Tao Daily)

1. First Agenda Item – Acting Chair Richard Lee started the discussion of affordable housing by asking what other organizations in attendance have encountered. Discussions regarding improving quality of life lead directly to the topic of the loss of rent regulated housing, including the rise of tenant harassment. The importance of protecting tenants and educating the community of their rights was stated as well. Also discussed was the potential of looking at affordable home ownership options and programs.

With the limited number of people in attendance, the working team decided to, instead of stating Guiding Principles, state prospective principles of interest and questions to bring up in the next meeting. They are as follows:

- 1) How do we define affordability? Area Median Income, AMI, is not consistent with the local population. The AMI should reflect our community and a local AMI should be adopted.
- 2) How do we increase the rent regulated affordable housing stock?
- 3) How do we strengthen legislation and enforcement of tenant protection and anti-harassment provision?
- 4) How do we monitor legislation and education outreach.
- 5) Should we consider affordable home ownership within the context of this group?

6) Should Chinatown remain a gateway for immigrants? Is that an essential characteristic of this neighborhood we would like to preserve?

7) How do we create residential and commercial stability?

8) Senior housing options should be considered.

9) Should the group address Mitchell Lama and NYCHA housing?

The office of State Senator Dan Squadron has suggested having individuals within government, such as the Attorney General's office or DHCR, and the affordable housing industry to inform the group on housing issues and options.

2. Second Agenda Item - Due to the limited number of people in attendance, the election of the Co-Chairs of the Affordability Working Team has been postponed to the next committee meeting.

3. Third Agenda Item – The Affordability Working Team discussed conducting further outreach to ensure that a broader spectrum of Chinatown's stakeholders participate in the discussions of affordability, including experts in the field, both inside and outside the community. The next Affordability Working Team meeting will be held on March 12th, 2009, 3:00 pm- 4:30 pm. The meeting location is TBA. If any of the groups can host the meeting, please let Acing Co-Chair Richard Lee know via email at richard_lee@aaf.org. Until the next meeting, the team suggests participants brainstorm individuals and organizations to join discussions.

Meeting adjourned at 4:30 pm.