

Chinatown Working Group Full Meeting
Monday, January 10th, 2011 6pm
American Legion Post 1291, 191-193 Canal St. 2nd Fl.

Meeting started at 6:15 pm

Present: Two Bridges Neighborhood Council (Victor Papa, Wilson Soo), Friends of Columbus Park (Paul Gong), Kimlau Post 1291 (Mimi Wong), Port Authority (Bill Young), M'Finda Kalunga Garden (Kay Webster), AAFE (Douglas Le), Indochina Sino American Community Center (Gin Lee), NMASS (Michael Lelan), Chatham Green (Danny Chen), NoHo Manhattan (Zella Jones), Community Board 2 (Anthony Wong), Immigrant Social Services (Lillan Moy), Hester Street Collaborative (Anne Frederick), Chinatown Youth Initiative (Elisa Espiritu), The Educational Alliance (Dana Weisserman), Chinatown Business & Property Owners (Douglas Woodward), Community Board 3 (John Leo, Gigi Li), Community Board 1 (Yume Kitasei), AALDEF (Bethany Li), CSWA (Wendy Cheung), CB 2 CERT (Elizabeth Adam), Chinese Progressive Association (Mae Lee)

Introductions

Gigi Li called the meeting to order.

Mae Lee introduced special guest from the NY Metropolitan Transportation Council (NYMTC) who would give presentation on Canal Area Transportation Study (CATS)

Steering Committee Report from John Leo
John stated that there were 3 things to report:

- 1) Governance committee discussions (Governance committee to give a more detailed report separately)
- 2) Extension of Acting Co-Chairs' terms - the terms of the Acting Co-chairs have expired. There is a need to extend the terms due to the fact that the governance committee has not finished its discussions about a governance structure
- 3) The rationale for extending Co-Chairs terms

Mae reminded people that steering committee meetings are usually a week before the full meeting.

CATS Study

Gerry Bogasz from the NYMTC gave a presentation on the CATS. The final results of the CATS was recently released. He told CWG members that NYMTC is ha series of public meetings including meetings at Community Board 3. In addition, a public meeting is being held on Jan 19, 2011 at PS 130. Transportation is part of CWG plan, many people around table interested. Presentation gives chance for CWG members to hear about study and ask questions.

Gerry Bogasz announced the dates of the NYMTC public hearings. He stated that feedback from the hearings will go back to their steering committee. Materials include a power point, executive

summary, and a factsheet about who NYCMTC is. The reason why they are involved in Canal Street is because of its unique nature as a regional link and a local place street for several communities.

Gerry Bogasz started the presentation.

Question and Answer after CATS presentation

Danny Chen asks question #1 about parking. One of more contentious items in transportation PAP - need to restore parking. One of things came up was need to alleviate parking reduction due to 9/11 – perceived impact of family visiting, multi-generational accessibility. There is a notion that restoring parking spaces will lead to an increase in vehicular traffic – did the study look at park-and-ride as an possible alternative? Answer: Yes, study looked extensively at parking from midtown (down) post 9/11, has shared with DOT. Supplemental information is available on the NYMTC website – parking management plan. Follow-up question from Danny Chen about simulation of one-way fare plan. Answer: not enough east-bound capacity, issues with left turn movements on side streets, the impact of one way fare was looked at closely because it could have been a major method of gaining sidewalk space.

Question 2 – K. Webster asks question if NYMTC made recommendations for Federal government on this particular project due to tight knit community and proximity to schools and school playgrounds. Answer: restrictions in Holland tunnel have mitigated some traffic, but NYMTC did not feel comfortable making recommendation to the federal government, however the results of CATS can be used in discussions

Question 3 – Norma Ramirez asks question about subway tunnel and Second Avenue subway. Answer: Second Ave. subway plan will not be affecting this area until phase four, which will not be happening for the next year or so. There is nothing about a tunnel, or impact of tunneling that will affect Canal St down here.

Question 4 – Debbie Finston asks whether the study recommended moving vendors since she felt they help foot traffic/business. Answer: Can't legally move or take away street vendors. Can give them incentives to move to a better place, like a marketplace, off the sidewalk. This is not a study of street vendors, but there is an impact on vendors and pedestrian traffic.

Mae Lee requested timeline on next steps for the study. Interaction with City Planning, DOT, MTA, Port Authority, and NYPD. Those discussions will still take place in meetings throughout the City. Reconstruction would begin in 2015. Environmental work still needs to be done. Everyone needs to work together, and get federal government cooperation.

John Leo – comment on utilities preparation before construction work starts

Gerry Bogasz' last comment: diversion of traffic to Brooklyn Battery Tunnel, travel time sign so that drivers can decide between Manhattan Bridge and Brooklyn Battery Tunnel. Condition information may allows drives to choose whether to trade off time for money, instruments would need to be set up to track traffic conditions on Canal Street, but is a fairly straight forward way to

affect traffic conditions on Canal St. Timeage signs are being used on Long Island.

Roll Call of Voting Members

Gigi Li announces quorum has been reached. Roll-call of organizations with a voting representative present is held.

Michael Lalan questions Norma Ramirez' right to vote as representative of Action by Lower East Side, questions language used in PAPs and membership of CWG. Discussion follows around why decision has not been made, why Chinatown and the surrounding communities language has not been changed in the PAPs being voted on today.

Decision: vote on PAPs with the understanding that language will be revised in all three PAPs to read "Chinatown and the surrounding communities," where appropriate

Wendy Cheung commented on tabling of Norma Ramirez' voting status, while moving ahead with vote on PAPs. Danny Chen suggested that the CWG general body resolve Norma's voting situation, (and per recommendation from Margaret Chin's office), indicate each vote with name so that if votes or membership status come into in question, we have a clear record of each organization and their vote. He also stated that unless there is a good reason to exclude an organization that has been attending meetings from voting, let them vote, and accompanying issues can be resolved later.

Zella Jones made comment regarding CWG being without a secretary, which is being addressed in Governance discussions. She stated that it is a manpower issue not a deliberate action. Issues of membership criteria started earlier this year. Governance was tasked to come forward with a new membership structure, in January that would be fair and equal, agreed and voted upon. She stated that until there is agreement, it is unfair to change the rules for any particular party. She stated that since there are three PAPs before the CWG they should be universally accepted, without controversy on any of the three plans. She felt that no decisions regarding voting should be made until there is agreement and clarity on who a CWG member is

There were further discussion of voting status and paperwork submitted by both Action by the Lower East Side and Seward Park Shareholders Coalition. Elisa Espiritu clarified that the only application submitted was from Action by Lower East Side. Michael Lalan made comments regarding discouragement of application by Seward Park Shareholders Coalition because of membership criteria

Decision: allow Norma Ramirez (Action by LES) to vote today, pending review of application before next vote.

Gigi Li and Mae Lee explain the voting procedure. Members have three options: yes, no, abstain. If there is a conflict of interest, you can vote to abstain, and state reasoning as conflict of interest. Roll call vote is called alphabetically by name of organization.

Vote on approval of October 4, 2010 full CWG Minutes.

Mae Lee stated that corrections were made regarding attendance, and clarification of individual who submitted the minutes.

Tally: 23 yes, 5 abstain

Vote on approval of three preliminary action plans: 1) Education & Schools, 2) Immigrant Affairs and Social Services, 3) Parks & Open Space

Friendly amendment by Michael Lalan to include language of “Chinatown and the surrounding communities” in all three PAPs. There was also a comment from Michael Lalan regarding list of items where changes have not been made.

Suggestion and move to vote from Victor Papa that we vote on PAPs with the understanding that “Chinatown and surrounding community” can be and should be inserted, so should it be.

Motion seconded by John Leo.

Friendly amendment passed by voice vote.

Bethany Li asked regarding whether there will be discussion around the PAPs being voted on today. She also asked why the PAPs were brought before the community board before CWG voted on it. Mae Lee said that community boards must discuss the PAP's before their CWG representatives can vote on it. Danny Chen said he goes through a similar process with his board. He presents the information to his board, so there is no misunderstanding, if a CWG member is presenting it, that it's an official CWG presentation.

Mae Lee said that if CWG members want a work team chair to present PAPs or CWG proposals to their respective organizations, it could be arranged. But that if members felt they could do it themselves that was also okay. Community boards have felt they needed it and requested it.

Bethany Li asked about a question about Immigration/Social Services plan.- What does the local employment center, public/private partnership model mean? Comment from Mae Lee that the language in the PAP is what it means. Mae Lee and Gigi Li, as the Immigrant Affairs & Social Services working team chairs said that it was a suggestion from a working team member.

Zella Jones said that an example of private/public employment center is Partnership for NYC. It's a model that is a non-profit, and may be funded privately. Private partnership helps because you can get funding a little faster. Mae Lee stated that the thinking of the workteam was that there is so much burden on non-profits, and community groups, and that private resources should also be utilized.

Bethany Li asked whether there have been economic studies done in Chinatown, and if so, that those studies be included in the PAPs. Zella Jones stated that the economic team hopes that there will be more. There have been studies done within the past five years regarding what is here in terms of industries, and which industries have grown. Examples that have grown include medical services, medical facilities, and workers within the sectors have grown substantially

since 2003. Mae Lee suggested that language be added regarding where studies have been done.

Bethany Li asked for clarification regarding Immigration/Social services plan provision around affordability - "replace all of the affordable units lost" Is that a direct replacement. Does it include secondary replacement? Mae Lee responded that it has yet to be defined. Most Immigration/Social Services work team members are not experts on housing or zoning. However, they saw a need and felt the idea was important and that it could be developed by the experts in the Economic Development and CAPZ work teams

Michael Lalan commented that there should be differentiation between the listing of the government agencies and elected officials responsible for implementing these changes and non-profit or private agencies. He stated that it is important distinction to make.

K. Webster makes comment to move vote along, that these issues could have been raised earlier, that members can vote in whatever way they see fit. Victor Papa calls the question/

Michael Lalan stated that since he is accountable to his organization, he understood that changes can still be made, and that all opportunities for questions should be used. K. Webster stated that she read the plans, brought them back, did her homework, and was ready to vote.

Wendy Cheung stated that she had serious concerns about the immigrant affairs/social services plan because it's focus on immigrant rights and skill building. She stated that her organization wanted to protect Chinatown, and the Lower East Side from gentrification, and that issue was how to protect the local economy by protecting local jobs.

Gigi Li said that there are three response to the question. 1- the question presented is currently being addressed in in the CAPZ and economic development work teams. The issues are not isolated. They are interconnected issues which can be addressed in several teams. 2) as one of the co-chairs of the immigrant affairs and social services working team, this is a plan that we've been working on for a year, maybe a year and a half, and that this might not be the best time to address this issue since some had to leave and we need to keep quorum. 3) Lastly, some concerns, such as the language around surrounding communities, have been addressed a friendly amendment. If there are members that are uncomfortable with this document, they can vote to abstain or not approve

Mae Lee also stated there while the immigration plan doesn't have a comprehensive workers rights plan, there is is language about protecting workers rights in the plan, as well as as well as skills building There needs to be an understanding that in the end, all the plans will be one plan. John Leo added that this is only preliminary.

Gigi Li stated the vote will decide whether these three working teams can start interacting with government agencies and elected officials to see what is or isn't doable. We still don't have the economic development or the CAPZ plan yet. When we have those, we have to put it all together into a final 197a plan.

Wendy Cheung stated that she didn't see how she could vote on the plan. Mae Lee reminded

everyone that all are free to vote as they see fit.

Ricky Leung stated that if there is a question, raise it up. But, the PAPs that are being voted on have been worked on for quite some time. He stated that those with questions should not have waited until today since there were many opportunities before in the past weeks and months.

Danny Chen stated that CWG meetings only happen once a month, so there is a limited time that to bring these issues up. He stated that he was ready to vote, but the process has not allowed extensive time for discussion. The plans are inter-related, but we need the time to see the relationship between the plans. We're voting on individual plans without the big picture. So, it seems like we're putting the cart before the horse. Without the entire plan, we're going to find that we're contradicting each other. Gigi Li reminded members this is a preliminary approval to move to the next stage. She stated that since the 6 plans were moving at different paces, we can't wait until all six plans are done, look at them together and approve them all together.

Victor Papa stated that those who authored the three plans want them to advance. The second reason is that CWG wants to show progress, and get by the phase it has been stuck in. Elisa Espiritu reminded members that CWG voted as a group to take this vote. Danny Chen clarified he's not saying we shouldn't vote. He just wanted to clarify that we need the big picture.

Vote on approval of three preliminary action plans: 1) Education & Schools, 2) Immigrant Affairs and Social Services, 3) Parks & Open Space.

Tally: Immigrant Affairs & Social Services: 17 yes, 2 no, 8 abstain
Parks & Open Space: 19 yes, 8 abstain
Education & Schools: 19 yes, 8 abstain

Vote on extending Co-Chairs terms through April 2010

Victor Papa stated that the reason for this vote is that we need to sustain leadership while we have Governance discussions, and the question on the table is to extend the terms until governance is resolved. As a resolution, it is now coming the full group for voting. Danny Chen asked what would happen if the terms were not extended. Zella Jones asked whether there needs to be a date given, because Governance has now been extended several times until March. John Leo stated that there should be a timeline. Friendly amendment by Zella Jones and John Leo that April should be used as a co-chair term end date. Seconded by Victor Papa.

Voice vote: all approved, amendment carries.

Roll-call vote on extending Co-Chairs terms through April 2010 by John Leo.

Tally: 27 Yes, 0 no, 0 abstain

CWG Governance Committee Update

Victor Papa reported that the committee is dealing with some fundamental questions, we came to the issue of chair, co-chair, or no chair. There was no consensus. We also talked about the terms of officer-ships, and we came to the terms of one year.

Michael Lalan said that there was discussion amenable to a co-chair like structure, but questions were about defining role and responsibilities.

Comment by Victor Papa distributing and offering his proposal supporting the co-chair model. The document provides two main reasons, one being that CWG counterparts, (groups that do planning), have chairs – and this would put CWG on equal footing. Rob Hollander questioned the delivering of a Governance update or presentation of a proposal. Michael Lalan stated that the proposal is not on the agenda. Gigi Li stated the proposal could be further discussed at the next Governance Committee. Victor Papa said that the issue has been exhausted at the Governance Committee, and that he's bringing it up for the full group. Jeannie Chen asked that those who had not been to governance discussions, should have an explanation as to know what's going on. Someone stated that the meetings have been recorded and can be downloaded. Danny Chen, stated that since the proposal was not on the agenda as a debate, not enough time for people to prepare for discussion or prepare documents offering alternatives.

Michael Lalan stated that at the Governance meeting, there has been agreement on need for stronger coordinating committee and that a document put together by Gigi outlines it, and it represents a lot of change, and good for CWG. Victor Papa agreed with Michael.

Gigi Li suggested to table this proposal. Governance will meet to discuss. If an agreement is not reached, the issue will be raised again at next full group, and clearly indicated on the agenda which is emailed out about a week in advance of each full board meeting.

Michael Lalan asked for clarification on where governance documents/proposals can be found. Zella Jones answered that all governance documents are on CWG website and also through on-line googledocs. There is also an option for individuals to submit comments through the CWG website if they are uncomfortable or unfamiliar with googledocs.

Rob Hollander stated that if people are asked to consider these proposal, they should go back to the Governance Committee. He also gave a clarification of role between archivist and secretary as discussed in Governance Committee.

Michael Lalan said that the Governance Committee could use more participation because its dealing with three issues: leadership structure, voting, and membership guidelines/participation.

Douglas Woodward asked for clarification on timeline and when a final decision could be expected. A timeline was provided by co-chairs and Zella Jones, aiming for co-chair elections by April:

- February - proposal from governance committee
- March - vote on governance
- April - co-chair elections

Paul Gong stated that Governance discussions should be brought before the full group so that everyone can part of this discussion. Zella Jones stated that all committee meetings should be treated as full CWG meetings. An email will be sent out.

Gigi Li announced vote tallies of all three votes. Working team updates and community announcements postponed.

The meeting adjourned.

