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Chinatown Working Group Immigrant Affairs/Social Services Work Team Meeting Minutes

Date: May 14, 2009

Time: 4:30 pm

Place: Community Board 1, 49-51 Chambers Street , Room 709

Present:

Lotus Chau (Sing Tao Daily News), Mae Lee (Chinese Progressive Association), Gigi Li (Community Board 3), Jacky Wong (Sing Tao Daily News), Jenny Ye (CAA AV)

Overview/Recap of last meeting

Mae and Gigi gave a recap of the last meeting and brief overview of the work team was given.

Issues/Concerns

The draft of the CWG's Guiding Principles for each workteam was distributed. It was explained that these principles were not ones that had been officially adopted but were points taken from minutes of previous meetings.

All members reviewed the draft principles for Immigrant Affairs work team. Additions and suggestions were made:

The first principle about workers rights was discussed. It was decided that this should include protecting the rights of all immigrant workers, regardless of their status. Mae Lee raised the possibility of including a more specific issue such as workers earning the living wage. There was no consensus as to whether or not it should be included so it wasn't. All agreed that the sentence should read: "Help to protect all immigrant and workers rights by fostering increased education and outreach among employees and employers about workers rights and employment discrimination.

Jacky stated that the fourth principle about affordable housing should include affordable homeownership and well as affordable rental housing. He also mentioned that many new immigrants who need affordable housing were of moderate income according to government guidelines. It was decided that the sentence should read: "Ensure that truly affordable housing (for tenants or homeowners) is available in the community for new immigrants with low/moderate incomes and limited resources.

Members reviewed the fifth working principle regarding family issues. Gigi Li suggested that there were many other family issues besides domestic violence. They included need for parent education, child abuse prevention, support for senior citizens and youth. Gigi and Jenny stated the need to support programs that empower immigrant youth. Gigi also said that more social services and attention needed to be provided to school age youth who were not in school. It was decided that the fifth principle should read "Address family issues including domestic violence prevention, child abuse prevention, support for

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senior citizens and youth, parent education and support.”

Mae stated the need for more education for immigrants and new citizens about civic participation and getting involved. Lotus reminded members that the 2010 Census is approaching and the importance of urging community residents especially immigrants unfamiliar with the census to participate. A sixth principle was added “Encourage civic participation and engagement among immigrants and new citizens.”

June 1 town hall meeting

The first point discussed was community participation in the town hall meeting. Jenny stated that it is important to make the June 1 town hall meeting a place where young people can participate as equals. Gigi stated that the senior citizens are also another group that should be part of the working group. It was decided that this work team would recommend that special attention should be given to encouraging participation from these sectors of the community.

The work team had also been asked to define a single question to be raised for discussed at the town hall. Initial suggestions included “Is Chinatown an immigrant friendly community?” After some discussion, it was decided that although Chinatown is an immigrant community, the immigration issue is at times divisive, at times unifying. To have a more unifying and forward looking discussion at the town hall, it was decided that the following question would be posed at the town hall: “Immigrants are an asset. How can Chinatown foster the strength of immigrant?”

Gigi announced that publicity flyers for the town hall would be available in English and Chinese, and that translation in Mandarin or Cantonese would be provided. She reminded everyone to distribute flyers and make announcements.

Additional co-chair

Mae expressed the need for a second co-chair for the workteam so that responsibilities can be shared between two people. Gigi volunteered for the position. It was agreed that she would be a good candidate since she is knowledgeable about social services, is member of Community Board 3 ealth Human Services, Disability, Seniors, Youth & Education committee, and is already attending the Steering Committee meetings as well. Mae will check with the CWG Chairs to about the process for selection of another work team co-chair.

Next Meeting

The next meeting was set for Thursday, June 11 at 4:30 pm.