

Minutes of the Chinatown Working Group (CWG) Full Group Meeting  
5:30pm-7pm, Monday, July 1, 2013  
American Legion L.T. Kimlau Post 1291

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Voting members present: American Legion Post 1291 (Gabe Mui); Asian American Arts Centre (Robert Lee); Asian American Legal Defense and Education Fund (Bethany Li); Bowery Alliance of Neighbors (Mitchell Grubler); Chinese Progressive Association (Mae Lee); Chinese Staff and Workers Association (Sarah Ahn, Wendy Cheng); Committee Against Anti Asian Violence (Helena Wong, Billie Zhu); Community Board 1 (Michael Levine); Community Board 2 (Edward Ma, Antony Wong); Community Board 3 (MyPhuong Chung, Gigi Li); Create in Chinatown (Amy Chin); National Mobilization Against Sweatshops (Gwen Simpson, David Tieu, Louise Velez, Gui Yang); Two Bridges Neighborhood Council (Victor Papa, Wilson Soo).

Planning consultant: Jocelyne Chait, Paula Crespo, Natasha Dwyer, Eva Hanhardt, Charles Lai, Mercedes Narciso, Mandu Sen, Lacey Tauber.

Also present: Rob Hollander (Lower East Side Residents for Responsible Development); Frank Yee (Yee Fong Toy Association of New York).

Media: Sing Tao Daily News (Lotus Chau, Bonnie Lee); World Journal (Vicky Law).

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Meeting called to order at 5:45pm, Wilson Soo and Antony Wong presiding.

1. Introductions

2. Agenda: approved by all present

3. Minutes, June: approved by all present

4. Update on the June CWG town hall, Jocelyne Chait, presenting

Antony Wong: If you missed the town hall, the powerpoint presentation is available at the front. English, Chinese and Spanish version will be posted on the website. There were roughly 100 participants not including Pratt staffers. We hope to have even more participation for the next town halls in August and September.

Jocelyne Chait: All the notes are being transcribed and summarized for your availability. The location was accessible. Outreach seemed to be primarily from member organizations, but also through our students' efforts. We intend to outreach further for the next town halls. The event began late, which rushed our schedule. Handouts were available. 36 survey forms were submitted: 16 in Chinese, 20 in English. Most of the discussion focused on affordability, but also small businesses and maintaining the

culture were raised. We will report to the co-Chairs about the breakout groups and that report will be on the website.

Wendy Cheng: There were problems with the outreach materials. Members did not see notices in the news. The breakout method was confusing. 100% affordability was left out of the handouts. Why? We'd like to have an oversight committee so that this doesn't happen again.

Louise Velez: The Lower East Side was not well addressed. We felt this was lacking. As a member from the Lower East Side, I'd like to be part of an oversight committee.

David Tieu: The residents were not sufficiently represented. The CWG concrete proposals were not presented, included the 100% affordability on city land. One of our members felt excluded by the boundary. CWG agreed that we would return to the area from Grand Street to Delancey Street, east of the Bowery. What kind of message are we sending to the Latinos and African Americans of the Lower East Side? Are we going to replicate the exclusion of the 2008 rezoning? How can we build upon the work we've already done? We will have no choice but to expose the regression of the CWG.

Louise Velez: There was no mention of the NYCHA infill proposal. We need to address that. Latinos also must be included in those considerations and plans for the NYCHA properties.

Antony Wong: Our boundary is Chinatown and surrounding areas. Regarding a committee, those materials were vetted through CSWA and CAAAV informally as a kind of oversight committee when the consultant met with those groups prior to the town hall.

Wendy Cheng: We need to create an oversight committee process so that we can be more inclusive of the NYCHA properties and the area north to Delancey Street.

Antony Wong: We will do better next time to be sure that the town hall will be more inclusive.

Rob Hollander: The boundaries were a compromise to accommodate CB3. CWG can return to those areas and some members already have -- AALDEF has published a study that includes that area. Because we do not have quorum to create a new committee, the Coordinating Committee, which is open to everyone, should now be the oversight committee and should meet as needed to ensure an inclusive process for the next town hall. Pratt met with different groups separately, rather than all together. That can be remedied by having the Coordinating Committee be the place for coordination.

Jocelyne Chait: Our meetings were not to plan the town hall. They were meetings to discuss Chinatown issues with all the members. The meetings with CAAAV, CSWA, Irving and Rob, were specifically about the town hall coordination. We are very much aware of the boundary issues. The next town hall should be held in a place that will be more accessible to residents in those areas. In terms of research of demographics, land use and zoning, we will certainly look at the areas all the way up to 14th Street. We have not made a determination of boundaries. We need more research for those determinations.

Helena Wong: CAAAV brought about a quarter of the attendees. There was space created for experiences with landlord harassment. Building upon our work, we need to move more toward the concrete. Outreach needs to be out there every day in the news. We need to be more visible and present in our outreach. 6-8:30 is dinner time, and we thought there would be dinner. But it did provide a good space for people to talk.

David Tieu: Talk is cheap. We want to see this done, especially affordability. Calling it "Chinatown Working Group and *surrounding areas*" is patronizing. Instead of listening, a lot of the plans were imposed upon us -- leaving out 100% affordable housing and leaving out Grand to Delancey -- we feel it was not an inclusive process.

Gwen Simpson: People need to be better informed. People in our area really don't know about it.

Victor Papa: Important to remember that this was a five year process. Originally it was about only Chinatown, but we fought to expand it to be more inclusive. We had to compromise because CB3 already had a process on Seward Park. Yes, NYCHA is an issue and it must be put on the agenda because of what is happening there. We have to be constructive. We have limited resources. We have Pratt -- their esteem is based on affordable housing. Pratt is doing a good job, the community boards are doing a good job too.

Rob Hollander: NYCHA properties are in the boundary so we are required to address them. Pratt has heard that clearly. Excluding Grand to Delancey is not the fault of CWG. Our hands were tied. You have to complain to the CB3 Committee on Land Use, not to us.

Lotus Chao: Where was NMASS during the long process of CWG?

Ed Ma: We have always included the surrounding areas.

David Tieu: We have 10,000 signatures on a petition. Those people are being excluded.

Michael Levine: I move to adjourn the meeting. CB1 will withdraw from the process. I move the agenda.

Antony Wong: The consultant will take all the feedback they've heard. We will be more inclusive.

Wendy Cheng: We need to discuss an oversight committee.

Rob Hollander: The Coordinating Committee should commit to holding open meetings inviting all the members of CWG to participate in the planning of the town halls.

Victor Papa: A NYCHA official could be invited. Would Pratt be willing to meet with open Coordinating Committee meetings?

Jocelyne Chait: We'd be interested but since we don't have the budget to attend all meetings, we all need to select who should attend which meetings. The Coordinating Committee and members also need to meet among themselves.

Michael Levine: Maybe we should add an additional Coordinating Committee meeting with the consultant.

Antony Wong: The Coordinating Committee will meet next Tuesday, July 16, 4pm at CB1, 7th floor. We will be determining the next town hall date, time, place, some of the materials to present and outreach.

#### 5. Presentation on the research so far, Paula Crespo, presenting

Paula Crespo: [see attached powerpoint presentation: demographics; comparison with Sunset Park and Flushing; sales leakage analysis -- Chinatown and Flushing have a commercial surplus; zoning (R7 and C6 and peripheral M zones); no inclusionary housing; few variances; land use mostly residential and commercial; open space is increased by the waterfront; 23% are nonconforming (overbuilt); 89% conform to land use zoning -- parking lots in R7 are non conforming; Con Ed is non conforming; sample analysis of three lots; Chinatown is a renters community; high rent burden especially in the core of Chinatown; housing prices rising; many rent stabilized units; lost 9,000 rent regulated units; 5,500 increase in stabilized units, possibly subsidized housing conversions; increase in number of businesses, but the size of the businesses declined, possibly from loss of manufacturing; employment range; walk-to-work; unusually strong presence of banks; banks must invest in the community, but "the community" is defined over the entirety of the city, not local to the neighborhood; historic places; FAR of all buildings.]

Michael Levine: Historic districts?

Eva Hanhardt: Would the distinctive signage be lost in a historic district?

Lacey Tauber: The owner has to deal with regulations for signage. Zoning is more flexible.

Eva Hanhardt: We are clearly looking beyond the study area to the entire context. We see a low-income and immigrant context. The town hall will be important for making the case for anti-harassment measures in a special district.

MyPhuong Chung: How did you determine use conformance? I know there are many who are living in non residential buildings or without the appropriate certificate of occupancy.

[Consultant team member]: Lack of C/O doesn't affect zoning use conformance.

Rob Hollander: Was the source of the data PLUTO?

Eva Hanhardt: Yes, PLUTO.

Jocelyne Chait: For Task 3 we will gather additional research, build on CWG recommendations to come up with others that will work with them in a special district in an integrated way. A second public meeting will be held in August and a third in September. We'll have an update July 16 for the Coordinating Committee. The report on the town hall will be posted on the website.

Gigi Li: Can we have copies for our members in three languages? The members need time for turn around, so it would be useful to have the survey results soon.

6. Community announcements:

Antony Wong: The New Museum is holding its breakfast, July 20. I will send the invitation to you all.  
Meeting adjourned 7:27.