

DRAFT: Not for distribution
Minutes of the Chinatown Working Group (CWG) Full Group Meetings for November
4:30pm-6:30pm, Monday, December 9, 2013
American Legion L.T. Kimlau Post 1291

Voting members present: American Legion Post 1291 (Mimi Wong); Asian American Arts Centre (Robert Lee); Bowery Alliance of Neighbors (Mitchell Grubler, Gilda Pervin); Chinese Progressive Association (Mae Lee); Chinese Staff and Workers Association (Wendy Cheng, Wah Lee); Committee Against Anti Asian Violence (Jason Chan, Anj Choudhry, Cathy Deng, Li Phan Jiang, Helena Wong, Nicole Wong, Chen Xiukang, Zheng Jian Yong, Yia Zang Zheng, Zhi Qin Zheng, Billie Zhu, Mike ???); Community Board 2 (Ed Ma, Antony Wong); Community Board 3 (My Phuong Chung); Create in Chinatown (Amy Chin); Good Old Lower East Side (Julian Morales); National Mobilization Against Sweatshops (David Tieu); Property Tax Payers Association (Elaine Eng, Dean Fong, Henry Fong, Danny Kung, Ken Lam, Irving Lee, Kevin Leung); Two Bridges Neighborhood Council (Wilson Soo, Victor Papa); 61 Delancey Street Tenants Association (Zhi Qin Zheng).

Planning consultant: Eve Baron, Jen Becker, Jocelyne Chait, Eva Hanhardt, Charles Lai, Mercedes Narcisso, Lacey Tauber.

Also present: Ken Guest (Baruch College); Rob Hollander (Lower East Side Residents for Responsible Development); Sam Stein (writer); Frank Yee (Yee Fong Toy Family Association); Susan Yung (artist).

Media: Sing Tao Daily News (Bonnie Li); World Journal (Yi Chen Tu).

Meeting called to order 4:15pm, Wilson Soo and Anthony Wong presiding.

Anthony Wong: Property tax owners are now a member. The roster will be updated accordingly.

1. Introductions

2. Agenda: approved by all present.

3. Minutes: Eve Baron was the unidentified speaker in the minutes. The minutes will be amended to add her name. Minutes approved by all present with the amendment.

4. Presentation of the consultant's final strategies and recommendations, Jacelyne Chait and Eva Hanhardt presenting.

Anthony Wong: The consultants concluded their work November 30 but they have graciously continued to follow up with meetings. Their report will be available on the website.

Irving Lee: Will we be able to ask questions?

Anthony Wong: Questions will be asked after the presentation.

Jocelyne Chait: This will be a summary of the presentation. Please note that areas in Community District 2 are still in the study area, but Community Board 2 has asked that Community District 2 be removed from our recommendations. [See presentation online, <http://is.gd/W1VDC0>]

Eva Hanhardt: The entire presentation will be available on the website.

Anthony Wong: We have to leave by 6:30, so only a few short questions, please.

Irving Lee: Is the area excluded by Community Board 2 the manufacturing zone? Can we make a C6-2G proposal about that area?

Eva Hanhardt: Only the area north of Canal Street is in Community District 2. We are proposing a C6-2 for the area in Community District 1 to the south of Canal Street.

Irving Lee: You made no final recommendation between the area A options. Why?

Eva Hanhardt: We recommended that the floor area be capped at 6 and the height, 85 feet. The options allow different commercial uses. Uses are important for a special district. Uses differ between C6 and C4.

Irving Lee: Which has more air rights?

Eva Hanhardt: Identical.

Irving Lee: You refer historical resources to a committee.

Jocelyne Chait: We recommend that CWG establish a committee with property owners represented.

Irving Lee: Will property owners have veto power over the committee's decisions?

Jocelyne Chait: That would be up to the CWG committee.

Irving Lee: How would I benefit by the proposed tax abatement? All my units are rent regulated.

Eve Baron: The abatement would be a reduction in the real estate taxes. We are referencing all the entities that CWG would have to work with to accomplish a tax alteration.

Irving Lee: Is that part of the 197c zoning or is it a different strategy?

Eve Baron: Not part of the 197c, which is just zoning.

Irving Lee: So there is no guarantee. Is there any language?

Eve Baron: We've spelled out some of the steps in the process that we know. The steps to a policy change are not as spelled out as a zoning proposal.

Eva Hanhardt: It is our understanding that there is a great deal of concern about the 421a and tax abatements as a whole. Existing housing usually doesn't get those abatements. But it will be part of the debate just as we are proposing that 421a affordability be permanent.

David Tieu: So it's not part of the zoning proposal.

Jocelyne Chait: It's part of the tax code, so it's a separate proposal and will require advocacy from CWG.

Wendy Cheung: We submitted our concerns in a letter. I'm submitting them here. Area A is the most protected. We need to expand the protection so that we not have a wall of development surrounding area A. The letter contains further concerns. Also we ask that the recommendations be put in simple terms in a brochure so the community can understand.

Eva Hanhardt: We've seen some of your concerns. We included new affordable units in the C and D areas. It is hard to generate new units without development opportunities. That will be your debate in CWG.

Cathy Deng: We haven't had time to talk as a group. The presentations are long, so there's been no time at these meetings for community input. In future, can we please have a fuller discussion? Also could you review the inclusionary housing percentages in the C and D areas.

Eva Hanhardt: In area C, 40-45% in the C6-2, but in the D area in the M1-5, 50%, and in C6-4, 50-55%.

Cathy Deng: And without the 421a abatement?

Eva Hanhardt: Same with or without 421a.

Helena Wong: This is great work. What happens now? What is the input, consensus and decision process?

Anthony Wong: That will be addressed in the next agenda item, the timeline.

David Tieu: Protections should be extended to all areas in the study, not just areas A and B and there should be 100% affordable on all public land not just on NYCHA.

5. Timeline, Anthony Wong presenting. (See appendix)

Anthony Wong: I have sketched a timeline from now to September 2014. The community board representatives will need time to consult with the community boards and the community boards themselves will need time to discuss and vote. The timeline projects 8 months of discussion including a public session around February. We ask that the planners give us a condensed version for public presentation. In April we can come to a basic consensus on a final draft to put forward to the community boards. This is just a draft timeline; the process may turn out to be shorter or longer. By July we project a final plan for the membership and in September a vote at which time we can put together action groups.

Irving Lee: When the committee on historic resources be created?

Anthony Wong: First we need to consider the plan before creating committees. Before coming to agreement on a plan, we will need additional funds, ideally from the community boards or LMDC or the new Borough President or council members.

Mae Lee: What kinds of additional funding and funding needs?

Eva Hanhardt: When you work with DCP, you will want expertise. to evaluate their changes to your proposals. Also you will need expertise with the tax issues. First you have to decide what to go with.

Cathy Deng: How do we vote? How do we come to consensus? It would be useful to have a policy on how to come to consensus.

Rob Hollander: Each member of CWG has one vote. If we wanted to make changes we would have to have a structure changing committee to change the governance. We could consider that at the next meeting.

Mae Lee: In this timeline there is a vote projected in September.

Anthony Wong: The goal will be to develop by September a consensus among all members.

Rob Hollander: Groups can also meet outside of CWG to meet and analyse and discuss the presentations.

Jocelyne Chait: I suggest that the action teams be formed earlier than later -- it will help provide a structure for moving forward and bring in people.

Eva Hanhardt: We've given you options and a defense for each option. Time is of the essence. Things are changing quickly. Choose parts of the plan and move forward with those immediately. Now is the time, especially with the out of the box ideas that might appeal to the new administration. Eight months might be too late.

Irving Lee: How much time do we have before it's too late?

Eva Hanhardt: Can't say.

6. Community announcements

Anthony Wong: The consultant will present this to CB3. Next meeting will be held on Jan 6, 5:30pm.

Bob Lee: Uncle Eng's book is now published. It is available on Amazon or get it from the Asian American Arts Centre at artspiral.org.

Anthony Wong: Meeting adjourned, 6:43pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Rob Hollander, Secretary

CWG Timeline (December 2013 to September 2014) – Draft

December 2013

CWG Full Group Meeting – Presentation of final recommendations/strategies by consultant.

CB3 Land Use Committee – Update presentation to committee on final recommendations/strategies by consultant for feedback to CB3 representative to bring back to CWG.

January 2014

CWG Full Group Meeting – Discussion regarding consultant recommendations/strategies.

CB3 Land Use Committee – CB3 representative provides update to committee on discussion had by CWG at full group meeting, and receives further feedback to bring back to CWG.

CB1 Land Use Committee – Schedule meetings for update presentations on final recommendations/strategies by consultant for feedback to CB1 representative to bring back to CWG, if necessary depending on area affected in report.

CB2 Land Use Committee – Schedule meetings for update presentations on final recommendations/strategies by consultant for feedback to CB2 representative to bring back to CWG, if necessary depending on area affected in report.

February 2014

CWG Full Group Meeting – In lieu of regular meeting, schedule public info session regarding consultant recommendation/strategies to inform residents, owners, businesses, etc, about what the CWG has been discussing til now.

March 2014

CWG Full Group Meeting – Discussion regarding consultant recommendations/strategies.

CB1/2/3 Land Use Committees – CB representative provides update to committee on discussion had and receives further feedback to bring back to CWG.

April 2014

CWG Full Group Meeting – Discussion regarding consultant recommendations/strategies. Begin to draft final plan from CWG based on general consensus.

CB1/2/3 Land Use Committees – CB representative provides update to committee on discussion had and receives further feedback to bring back to CWG.

May 2014

CWG Full Group Meeting – Nominations for CWG Co-Chairs, one from Community Board and one from non-Community Board. Continued discussion regarding draft final plan from CWG based on general consensus.

CB1/2/3 Land Use Committees – CB representative provides update to committee on discussion had and receives further feedback to bring back to CWG.

June 2014

CWG Full Group Meeting – Election of CWG Co-Chairs. Begin to finalize draft plan from CWG based on general consensus.

CB1/2/3 Land Use Committees – CB representative provides update to committee on discussion had and receives further feedback to bring back to CWG.

July 2014

CWG Full Group Meeting – Finalize draft plan from CWG based on general consensus so that member groups are able to take it back to their respective leadership/members in order to know how to vote in September at CWG.

CB1/2/3 Land Use Committees – Final draft plan presented to committee for a vote, and then later voted on by the full board, so that CB representative knows how to vote in September at CWG.

August 2014

No Full Group Meeting Scheduled. Community Boards do not meet in August.

September 2014

CWG Full Group Meeting - Vote on final CWG plan to move forward with through reconvened CAPZ/Economic Development Action Group who will communicate and work with city agencies, elected officials, etc, to promote specific actions and ensure implementation of zoning and other recommendations. Discussion on the need to obtain additional funding for technical assistance in regards to City Planning, ULURP process, and advancement of recommendations.

If vote is unsuccessful, future CWG Full Group Meetings will be scheduled accordingly for further discussion of finalized draft plan for another future vote.