

**Chinatown Working Group
Full Group Meeting Minutes
May 4, 2009**

Location: 191-193 Canal Street, American Legion

Voting Members In Attendance: AAFE (Richard Lee, Thomas Yu), American Legion Post 1291 (Gabe Mui, Mimi Wang), Bowery Alliance of Neighbors (Mitchell Grubler), CB1 (Kasey LaFlam, Michael Levine), CB2 (Jerry Chan, Ed Ma, Jim Solomon), CB3 (John Leo, Gigi Li), Chatham Green (Danny Chen, Triple Edwards), Chinatown Partnership (Wellington Chen), Chinatown YMCA (Glenn MacAfer), Chinese American Medical Society (Jamie Seto), Chinese Progressive Assoc (Mae Lee), Hester Street Collaborative (Anne Frederick), Hotel Chinese Assoc (Steven Wong), ICTPA (Jerry Cheng), M'Finda Kalunga (Bob Homber), PS 130 Parents' Assoc (K Webster),

Non-Voting Members: Center for Urban Pedagogy (John Mangia), Henry S. Jones (?), LESRRD (Rob Hollander), Leroy Street Studio (Shawn Watts), Noldo Manhattan (Zella Jones), St. Vincent's (Frances Wong), Way P. Moy

Elected Representatives: Assemblyman Silver (Karen He), Congressman Nadler (Erin Drinkwater), Councilman Gerson (Chow Xie, Vivian Xie), MBP Stringer (Greg Kirschenbaum), Mayor's CAU (Pauline Yu), NYC Comptroller (Sanelia Ug), Public Advocate (Tommy Lin), Senator Squadron (John Raskin, Jasmin Sanchez), Speaker Christine Quinn (Joseph Li)

Media: Epoch Times (Sally Sun), NTDTV (Salina Wang), SingTao Daily (Lotus Chan), World Journal (Luna S. Liu)

Co-Chairs Report

Jim Solomon and Thomas Yu reported that in the last Steering Committee meeting, the body proposed a date of June 1st, 2009 for the first public Town Hall meeting in lieu of the regular monthly full group meeting. The purpose of the Town Hall is expand outreach and gain feedback from the general public to guide the Working Group's planning.

Chairs also updated status of funding outlined in Deputy Mayor Lieber's MOU agreement with Councilmembers Alan Gerson and Rosie Mendez. Michael Levine completed a CWG cost scoping document with input from the Steering Committee for an executive assistant and a planning firm for consideration by Jed Howbert from the Deputy Mayor's office. The scoping documents were also submitted to Alan Gerson's office.

State Senator Daniel Squadron announced a \$15,000 funding allocation for CWG in the state's budget on top of the \$150,000 amount from the city MOU. Squadron's chief of staff John Raskin reported that the budget, barring unforeseen circumstances, was likely to be passed, and that the \$15,000 would be usable for reasonable CWG community outreach and mission related activities. LMDC is the proposed fiscal conduit.

Working Team Reports

Education – K Webster reported a well attended Education Working Team meeting with participants, primarily school principals, emphasizing the need to mutually reconnect and support each others program needs. The participants remarked that the CWG forum was a vehicle for greater district cohesion and coordination.

Affordability – Richard Lee reported the working team will move ahead to soon identify parameters of what “Affordability” means in the context of Chinatown. Richard invited John Mangin from the Center of Urban Pedagogy, who presented to the CWG a breakdown of incomes and rent levels in Chinatown. A guest speaker from the Comptroller's office will also present affordable homeownership programs in the next working team meeting.

Culture and Arts – Mitchell Grubler informed everyone that their meeting was canceled due to poor turnout, despite a guest speaker from the National Registry offering to make a presentation. Chairs encouraged the Culture and Arts working team to either find ways to do more outreach, or merge their group with another working team.

Parks – Anne Frederick reported the Parks working team will be reviewing an inventory of parks in Chinatown and existing reports to compile a current conditions assessment. Discussion also touched on the lack of affordable homeownership opportunities in Chinatown, and whether that had any relationship with park involvement. Committee will seek to invite Parks Borough Commissioner Castro to the next meeting.

Economic Development – Wellington Chen reported that the working team voted and adopted a set of guiding principles based on recommendations cited in an earlier Asian American Federation study. Other Working Group members commented that guiding principles should explicitly state a need for retention and creation of jobs for locals.

Immigrant Affairs – Mae Lee reported that a meeting was not held.

Zoning – Michael Levine provided a brief zoning overview, and indicated the working team will pursue a future planning charrette to determine existing conditions for review.

Town Hall Planning

Co-chairs requested working team chairs to call-in for the conference call to comment on Town Hall structure and outreach logistics. Gigi Li volunteered to coordinate flyer distribution. It was generally agreed that the Working Group should focus less on

presentation of guiding principles and devote more time for the general public to instruct the Working Group on where to focus its efforts.

Affordability Exercise

John Mangin from Center for Urban Pedagogy gave a brief interactive presentation on Chinatown's income levels and comparisons to HUD and other government program guidelines. Attendees for this portion of the meeting found it particularly useful and informative, and suggested having a second presentation again for more members of the Working Group.

Meeting was adjourned at 6:30pm.