

**Chinatown Working Group  
Full Group Meeting Minutes  
September 20, 2010**

**Location:** 191-193 Canal Street, American Legion

**Attendees:** Community Board 3 (John Leo); CREATE, Inc (Amy Chin); Chinatown Business & Property Owners (Doug Woodward); Bowery Alliance of Neighbors (Mitchell Grubler; David Mulkins); Chinatown Youth Initiatives (CK Chung, Elisa Espiritu); NMASS (Michael Lalan, David Tien); Chatham Green (Danny Chen); Community Board 2 (Antony Wong, Jim Solomon, Ed Ma); Chatham Towers (Jeanie Chin); LES BID (Bo Zuckerman, Tim Laughlin); Hamilton Madison House (Mark Handleman); AAFE (Douglas Le); Friends of Columbus Park (Pail Gong); Lin Sing Association (Patricia Tsai); CCBA (Meng Lao); Manhattan Borough President's Office (Lin Zeng, Alec Schierenbeck); Chinese American Medical Association (Jamie Seto); ISS (Lillian Moy); Cherry Street Tenants Association (Ricky Leung); Two Bridges (Wilson Soo; Victor Papa); Community Board 1 (Yume Kitasei); Chinese Progressive Association (Mae Lee); American Legion (Gabe Mui); Chinese American Planning Council (Allen Cohen, David Chen); CAAAV (Esther Wang); Hester Street Collaborative (Anne Frederick); CSWA (Josephine Lee); 318 RWU (Tony Tsai); NY Downtown Hospital (Chui Man Lai); M'Finda Kalunga Community Garden (K Webster); Indochina Sino American Community Center (Cain Lee); CPC (David Chen) Chinatown Partnership (Wellington Chen, Charles Lai); AALDEF (Mabel Tso); NoHo Manhattan (Zella Jones); CCRCC (Jan Lee); Our Streets Our Lives (Ellen Peterson Lewis); LESRRD (Rob Hollander); EMASS (Yolanda Donat, Merle Daz); Seward Park Housing Coop (Deborah Finston, Paul Sobal); CERT Social Services (Elizabeth Adam); Grand St Guild Tenant Association (H. Colarusso); Office of Senator Squadron (John Raskin); Manhattan District Attorney's Office (Teresa Ye); Assemblymen Sheldon Silver's Office (Liana Jourdan, Karen He); DNA Info (Patrick Hedlund); World Journal (Luna Lui); The LoDown (Ed Litvak); Sing Tao (Lotus Chao, Bonnie Li); Department of City Planning (Sarah Goldman, Sarah Whitham); Soho Alliance (Sean Sweeney)

**Co-Chair Report**

Jim Solomon first invited everyone to introduce themselves. Jim pointed out that co-chair Thomas Yu is still on his honeymoon otherwise he'd chair this meeting. Jim then gave a brief description of the current governance structure of the Chinatown Working Group in the context of the group's history. The original intent of this meeting was to nominate new co-chairs, as Thomas'/Jim's one-year terms (extended by the full CWG last April) expire end of September.

Jim reviewed the discussions conducted at the last Steering Committee meeting and enumerated the following issues that still needed to be resolved by the Full CWG and its leadership. **(See attached "CWG Slides 9.20.10 which includes powerpoint presentation of "7 Pending Items TBD by Full CWG and its Leadership"):**

1. Timetable - *When will CWG's talk planning turn into results? Does CWG still plan to submit 197a Plan to Dept of City Planning? If so, when?*

2. *Priorities - How to move forward where there is consensus and how to resolve disagreements without undermining whole process.*
3. *Planning consultant - FCNY is being seriously considered as a potential fiscal conduit, but no decisions will be made until new leadership takes over. How does CWG reconcile its expansive proposed "scope of services with its limited resources? What should be the process to select a planning consultant?*
4. *Study area - Is there a more effective and harmonious way to plan for both Chinatown and Lower East Side than all through the CWG?*
5. *Outreach - How does CWG further increase its outreach so the "stakeholders" most impacted by its recommendations participate in the decision-making?*
6. *Funding - Currently, there is no money to pay for administrative costs. Jim has already advanced \$15,000 of his own money to cover administrative costs up until this point. However, the funds secured by Senator Squadron have not yet been released. Two grants have been applied for and one has been rejected. How will we raise money - via members' dues or a fundraising event?*
7. *Governance - New elections are supposed to be held, but changes to the governance structure are also under discussion.*

#### **CWG Governance Discussion:**

Danny Chen / Michael Lalan began discussions by outlining their proposal for a "rotating chair." Danny distributed a one-page handout describing certain technological tools that could be used to open discussions to those who cannot make meetings during the day. (**See attached "Danny Chen's Summary of Enabling Technologies"**). He said he felt that the weight of the chair position was too great for one person and that the leadership of the CWG needs to be spread among multiple people. He further questioned whether the steering committee was performing as it should be. He acknowledged that the process has been open, but that it has operated imperfectly. Later in the discussion, he worried that the CWG suffered from "key man dependence" in the sense that the loss of one or two people would halt all CWG work.

Some agreed that new structure was needed and objected to the current process as not being open or democratic. They argued that a new structure could share the work among more people. Jeanie Chin said that she believed a democratic process was more important than developing a final plan according to a timetable. Josephine Lee said she felt that the steering committee was not functional because decisions were still carried out by the co-chairs.

Others said that there was a need for more outreach, but no need for a change in process and questioned whether a "rotational chair" structure would actually increase democracy. Some suggested that the co-chair structure should be retained, but the role and responsibilities of the steering committee should be altered. Victor Papa said that he believed even if a "rotating

chair” were adopted, and power were decentralized, that the process would devolve back into the current structure anyway, because of the natural need for a spokesperson to interface with other organizations.

There was a dispute about whether invitations had been sufficiently extended to certain groups and members of the public. However, others said that they hadn’t been personally invited but were able to come anyway, and that official personal invitations were not evidence for or against how democratic the process had been.

Jim Solomon was commended for the amount of work that he has put into the CWG as the current chair; some expressed the desire to see him continue his leadership. It was pointed out that the CWG has survived remarkably long, despite having been built from relatively little.

At the request of the steering committee, Jim described the roles and tasks of the co-chairs in order to illustrate what the current process actually involved. **(See attached “CWG Co-Chair Duties 2009-2010”)**. He questioned the practicality of rotating the chair position based on the sheer amount of work involved, but Esther said that the presentation confirmed that the burden needed to be shared.

The practicality of relying on technology was also discussed. A few members were concerned that relying on advanced communication tools such as those proposed by Danny might pose a barrier to important constituencies. Groups in the community may not have access to a computer at home, and if technology is an important part of the discussions, they will be cut out from those parts of discussions. Others responded that day-time meetings were also a barrier, and that technology would expand access to discussions.

Zella Jones reported that the website she manages and finances herself for the CWG received 2000 visitors a month with an average of 3 pages per visitor. She said that 477 people are on the listserv to receive the newsletter, but that only 32% are opened of the emails sent approximately 4 times a month. Danny objected to this measure as inaccurate since some email servers block receipts. Zella said that she had originally proposed use of a blog and a Google calendar, both of which were rejected because people thought it was too difficult to use.

Jim Solomon said that the website was an 8<sup>th</sup> issue to be resolved

It was agreed that the proposal would not be voted on until a more detailed proposal was developed. Danny volunteered to help develop a more detailed proposal with the steering committee, and suggested that some of the tools he was recommending be applied in this discussion to illustrate how they might improve discussions in the future. It was agreed that a more detailed proposal would be brought to the meeting on October 4, 2010.

### **Presentation of Working Teams’ proposed “final” Preliminary Action Plans & Study Areas**

Postponed until a future meeting.

## **Adjournment**

Matt Viggiano introduced himself as the new Director of Land Use & Planning for Council Member Margaret Chin's Office.

Jim Solomon thanked Elisa Espiritu for all her hard work and presented her with a gift on behalf of the CWG.

[Many thanks to Yume Kitasei & Elisa Espiritu for compiling these minutes.]

**The Chinatown Working Group  
CWG Full Meeting  
September 20, 2010  
4-6pm  
American Legion Post 1291**

**Agenda**

- 1. CWG Co-chairs Report: 7 Pending CWG Items TBD**
- 2. CWG Governance**
  - a) Proposals RE. “Rotating Co-Chairs” and “Proportional Representation”**
  - b) Nominate CWG Co-chairs?**
- 3. Presentation of WTs’ proposed “final” Preliminary Action Plans & Study Areas**
  - a) Parking, Transportation, Circulation & Security Working Team**
  - b) Economic Development & Revitalization Working Team**
- 4. Community Announcements**

# **The Chinatown Working Group**

## **Schedule of Upcoming Full Meetings**

**(all meetings will take place at  
the American Legion 1291)**

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**Monday, October 4<sup>th</sup>  
6-8pm**

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**Monday, November 1<sup>st</sup>  
4-6pm**

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## **CWG Co-chairs Report:**

**7 PENDING CWG ITEMS TO BE DETERMINED  
(AND/OR CONSIDERED) BY THE FULL CWG AND  
ITS LEADERSHIP**

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**1. CWG TIMETABLE -- The CWG was formed in 2008 over pressing concerns about the future of Chinatown and surrounding areas. When will talk turn to action?**

- Does the CWG still intend to submit a proposed comprehensive, community-based 197a Plan to the Department of City Planning? If so, when?

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**2. CWG PRIORITIES – The majority of CWG Working Teams (WT) have reached a consensus on their proposed “final” recommendations – while CAPZ has not.**

- How to move forward where there is consensus?
  - (Education; Immigrant Affairs, Parks, Transportation)
- How to resolve disagreements without undermining whole process?
  - (Land Use)

### **3. CWG PLANNING CONSULTANT –**

**The process for selecting a CWG Planning Consultant is currently on hold:**

- Who will sub-recipient of the LMDC grant?
  - No “memo of understanding” between CWG and FCNY.
    - Awaiting new leadership and proposed terms.
- How to reconcile expansive “Scope of Services” with limited resources?
- What will be the selection process for hiring the Planning Consultant?

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#### **4. CWG STUDY AREA –**

- **Is the burden on the CWG to plan for both Chinatown and LES too much? Is there a way to plan for both areas more effectively and harmoniously?**

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**5. CWG OUTREACH – How can the CWG further ensure those stakeholders most impacted by its recommendation participate in the decision-making?**

- How does the CWG ensure there is diversity of opinion?
- How does the CWG ensure it is civil as well as open, democratic and transparent?

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**6. CWG FUNDING – The CWG currently has no funding for administrative expenses (town halls, translation services, administrator, etc.). How can CWG raise funds for administrative costs without compromising its principles?**

• CWG has not yet received Sen. Squadron's approved Legislative Grant (15k)

• Jim Solomon has now advanced this \$15k in full to the CWG.

• CWG Administrator's (Elisa Espirtu) contract ends today.

• Fundraising –

• Foundation – Letters of Intent submitted (for grants w/ rolling deadlines)

• Members' Dues?

• Fundraising event?

## **7. CWG GOVERNANCE – What should be the governance structure of the CWG?**

- Last April. CWG votes to extend one-year terms of current Co-chairs (Jim Solomon & Thomas Yu) until end of September 2010.
- Current CWG by-laws: Two co-chairs – one from a member community-based organization and one from a member community board. Both are elected to a one-year term by a majority of the CWG full members.
- At September 7th Steering Committee meeting, a few members propose CWG have rotating chairpersons instead. Also recommend revising current criteria for voting membership to achieve “proportional representation”.

Fellow Chinatown Working Group Members,

An effective model for open and transparent collaboration and decision making has developed around the open source software development community. Many of the tools that have sprung up around online collaborative software development have found applications in other collaborative efforts. These tools can help to decentralize the work of the CWG. This in turn can make for a more democratic process (for both the spreading of work and the making of decisions). Below, I provide a cursory survey of some enabling technologies.

### Communication

- Bulletin boards
  - Google groups
  - Yahoo groups
- Wikis
  - Wikipedia
  - Ourproject.org
  - Wikia (supports translation of wiki pages to multiple languages)
- On line meetings
  - Conference calls
  - Web conferencing and desktop sharing (webex)

### Calendars and Scheduling

- Google calendar
- Yahoo calendar

### Project Management and Issue Tracking

- Bugzilla
- JIRA
- Smartsheet
- Trac

This is by no means an exhaustive list of possibilities. The point is that there is no shortage of good, effective tools to help groups to collaborate and manage projects in a distributed fashion. Not all are free of cost but many have a nominal cost for the hosted service (especially for community organizations).

In summary, open source software development has had to solve the problems of many people collaborating on a problem in a decentralized manner. The “continuity” of open source development projects is not maintained in the heads and minds of one (or a few) people. It lies in the open record and dialog and information that resides on the Internet.

Danny Chen

## The “Duties” of a CWG Co-chairperson

### AN EXAMPLE OF TASKS: MAY 2010 CWG MEETING WITH U.S. TRANSPORTATION SECRETARY LAHOOD on PARK ROW

- Fielded inquiry from White House.
- Checked with full CWG, Transportation Chair, CBS before responding
- Worked with Chatham Sq. residents to bring Secretary to Park Row
- Arranged two conference calls to ensure input from stakeholders.
- Helped draft letter to Secretary w/ Transportation Chair w/ input from many
- Liaised with USDOT, Secret Service, CBs, electeds, press leading up to event
- Drafted background materials on CWG for press and attendees.
- Helped facilitate discussion so it would be led by Chatham resident.
- Fielded and Directed press inquiries afterwards to residents of Chatham Sq. Enormous attention brought to issue of Park Row closure.

### “DUTIES” INCLUDE:

#### MEETINGS

- Help to coordinate prep for Full CWG meetings - schedule, location, posting on website, planning agenda
- Email reminders to community regarding upcoming CWG meetings
- Help to ensure quorum at Full CWG by contacting voting members directly before monthly meetings encouraging them to attend.
- Help to set up meeting room.
- Help to ensure meetings are consistent with CWG principles (open, transparent and democratic)
- Moderate discussion at Full CWG Meetings. Attempt to maintain civility.
- Help to ensure key decisions are made with the participation of the full CWG
- Help to ensure attendance is taken.
- Ensure there is follow-up between meetings. (very important!)
- Help to ensure minutes are taken at Full CWG meetings.
- Review minutes of Full CWG and post on website.

#### MATERIALS

- Help to coordinate sufficient copies are made, attendance is taken, votes are registered....
- Help to ensure presentations are accessible.
- Create, update stationary for CWG

#### OUTREACH

- Draft regular progress reports sent to the full CWG
- Help to ensure membership is a cross-section of community (not just like-minded)
- Meet in-person with interested parties
- Draft letters of introduction, call interested parties
- Help to address inquiries about membership in accordance with CWG guidelines.



## MILESTONES

- Help to ensure full CWG and its Working Teams meet agreed upon deadlines.
- Help to ensure community at large is aware of deadlines and planning process.

## WORKING TEAMS

- Help to coordinate among and facilitate between Working Teams' Chairs.
- Help to ensure all Working Team meetings are posted.
- Help to address Working Teams' questions at the meetings themselves.

## THREE COMMUNITY BOARDS (co-sponsor of 197a Plan)

- Help to ensure active participation by all three CBs in CWG planning process.
- Coordinate among 3 CBS, dozen CB Committees and 5 CWG Working Teams

## ELECTEDS / GOVERNMENT AGENCIES

- Help to liaise between CWG and Govt. Agencies (DCP, EDC, etc)
- Help to liaise between CWG and electeds.

## MEDIA

- On-call 24/7 to address media questions.
- CWG is a new entity. Confusion about its process is very common.
- Prepare materials to keep public informed about CWG process (e.g. FAQs)

## FUNDRAISING

- Work with CWG Finance Committee to develop and implement fundraising strategies.
- Help to identify fiscal sponsor given CWG is not 501c3.
- Arrange for Finance Committee and Full CWG to interview candidate.
- Liaise between CWG and fiscal conduit
- Identify potential foundations and deadlines.
- Draft Letters of Intent for Grants.

## PLANNING CONSULTANT

- Repeatedly badgered city and LMDC for 18 months to obtain "promised" \$150k for CWG Planning Consultant
- Liaise on behalf of CWG with sub-recipient of LMDC grant
- Convened and helped to facilitate CWG Planning Consultant Committee's deliberations (re. "scope of services", "scoring matrix", selection process)
- Report to Full CWG on recommendations of Planning Consultant Committee for feedback and/or endorsement

## TOWN HALL

- Help to coordinate all aspects of organizing town hall
- Identify and secure location
- Identify, secure and (pay) for translation services
- Coordinate outreach (designing fliers, copying materials, postings, press inquiries...) e.g. Confucius Plaza
- Coordinate purchase refreshments, lotto tickets.
- Help prepare presentations (powerpoints, charrettes etc)
- Help to moderate discussion

- Available to address media questions
- Help coordinate follow-up

MORALE / APPRECIATION: Express gratitude in public and private for everyone's participation / contributions to our community. (Never take it for granted.)