

Minutes of the Chinatown Working Group (CWG) Full Group Meeting
5:30pm – 7:00pm, Monday, October 1, 2012
American Legion L.T. Kimlau Post 1291

Voting members present: American Legion Post 1291 (Gabe Mui); Asian American Arts Centre (Robert Lee); Bowery Alliance of Neighbors (Mitchell Grubler); Chinese Progressive Association (Mae Lee); Chinese Staff and Workers Association (Wendy Cheung); Committee Against Anti Asian Violence (Esther Wang, Billie Zhu); Community Board 1 (Michael Levine); Community Board 2 (Ed Ma, Antony Wong); Community Board 3 (John Leo); Lower Manhattan GOP (Jimmy Chue); National Mobilization Against Sweat Shops (David Tieu, Louise Velez); Two Bridges Neighborhood Council (Wilson Soo).

Elected Officials: Manhattan Borough President (David Czyzyk for Scott Stringer).

Media: Ed Litvak (Lo-down); Sing Tao (Bonnie Li); World Journal (Yichen Tu).

Also present: Rob Hollander (Lower East Side Residents for Responsible Development); Irving Lee (Property Tax Payers); Tommy Wu (Tenement Museum).

Meeting called to order at 5:50pm, CWG co-Chairs Wilson Soo and Antony Wong facilitating .

1. Introductions.

2. Agenda:

>>**No objections, agenda approved**

3. June minutes approval.

>>**No objections, minutes approved by all present.**

3. Update on the RFP for a consultant, Wilson Soo and Antony Wong, presenting:

Antony Wong: The Lower Manhattan Development Corporation has approved our fiscal conduit for our RFP for a consultant. But first University Settlement and LMDC must review the contract with their respective legal teams. This will delay the hiring process a couple of months which might not begin until December.

Wilson Soo: The documents are being negotiated between the legal departments of LMDC and University Settlement. It then must return to Empire State Corporation for final approval.

Michael Levine: Do we as CWG have to sign anything or do they do it for us?

Wilson Soo: We are working with USNY on the documents.

Antony Wong: The contracts mention that USNY is receiving \$150,000 on behalf of CWG, so no further document is necessary.

Michael Levine: Then they will deal with insurance not we. When will the bidding notice be posted?

Wilson Soo: We will hear from Phil Klotch when it is ready for posting.

Michael Levine: Do we need to form the committee that will review the bids?

Antony Wong: The Coordinating Committee can address that in its upcoming meeting on the 16th of this month.

Ed Ma: Can CWG write a letter or memo to LMDC to firm up and clarify their commitment, the schedule and our intentions?

Michael Levine: Let's bring that to the Coordinating Committee.

An announcement from Esther Wang:

Esther Wang: Pathmark is being closed and replaced by a large residential complex with no mention of affordable housing. Two Bridges Neighborhood Council has gotten involved in it already, but CWG might want to weigh in as well.

Letter to CB3 to ask that CWG have representation on the Seward Park Urban Renewal Area Task Force.
Wendy Cheung presenting:

Wendy Cheng: Because this has been discussed before, I asked that this be placed on the agenda for resolution. Following the City Council's approval of the SPURA ULURP next week, CB3 will form a task force on the process of the realization. It's important for CWG to ask CB3 to give CWG a seat on the task force since we represent such a wide spectrum of the community and so many groups.

David Tieu: 6,000 have signed a petition calling for 100% affordable housing. Ben Wong, owner of Wok and Roll chain, has offered to build 100% affordable housing. CWG is the most representative group in Chinatown. This is an opportunity for CWG to speak for a wide community. The vast majority of our community is low income, but the plan provides only for 20% low income.

Irving Lee: Is this a motion?

Antony Wong: We do not have a quorum for a vote. We have only 12. We need 15 yeas to pass a resolution.

Irving Lee: What is the timeline for the Task Force?

David Tieu: It may be formed within the next few weeks.

Mae Lee: Is anyone here applying for a seat on the Task Force?

Jimmy Chue: I am. Lower Manhattan GOP.

Mae Lee: Do we know whether any member of CWG not present today has applied for a seat?

Michael Levine: For a vote we'd need time for us to bring a motion to our community boards. What is the purpose of the task force -- does it continue past the council vote?

Antony Wong: It will be created following the council approval.

David Czyzyk: Its purpose is to oversee the creation, scheduling and financing of the development.

Rob Hollander: Can CWG notify CB3 that CWG has an interest in having a seat on the task force, but hasn't had the time to vote on it yet?

Michael Levine: We could do that.

John Leo: I can certainly relay that message to the chair of Community Board 3.

Irving Lee: Does the task force have final decision-making authority?

David Tieu: Yes, they make the choice on developer and what is built.

Irving Lee: And the composition?

John Leo: Five CB members, 2 local community organizations.

Mae Lee: Can we ask who else is being considered?

Rob Hollander: Anyone know when the task force will be appointed?

John Leo: No one knows exactly, but sometime after the City Council's vote. I believe that the appointment of the members is at the discretion of the chair.

Michael Levine: I don't think we can change the ratio of affordable housing once it has been voted on by the City Council.

David Tieu: The exact ratio is not final. It depends on what is available.

Michael Levine: Then the 20% is a minimum that could be expanded?

David Tieu: Yes.

Community Announcements:

Wilson Soo: Two Bridges Neighborhood Council is hosting the 4th Annual Marco Polo, the 16th, 18th and the 20th. The 16th there will be a history colloquium at Museum of Chinese in America to discuss Chinese and Italian immigrant history. The 18th is a fundraising dinner. The 20th is the street event including Chinese and Italian cultural performances. If you'd like to come, please contact Elisa Espiritu to RSVP. In the coming weeks we will work with local tenants to address concerns about the Pathmark closure. I will keep you posted.

Michael Levine: Next meeting?

Wilson Soo: Monday November 5th, 4pm.

David Tieu: Will a vote on the SPURA task force request be on the agenda?

Antony Wong: It will require two votes: whether to write a letter and content of the letter. Both resolutions will have to be circulated to CBs 1, 2 and 3 for approval before a CWG vote.

Michael Levine: The Coordinating Committee meeting will be held when?

Antony Wong: October 16, 4pm at Community Board 1 on Chambers Street.

Robert Lee: There will be an important conference at MOCA on October 4 looking at many community issues. It will include a discussion of the underfunding of ethnic minority non profits. Also the Asian American Arts Alliance just concluded the "Locating the Sacred" Festival bringing many cultures with significance for the entire city.

Antony Wong: Wednesday, 5:30pm, October 3 at the south side of Union Square Park, the Organization of Chinese Americans will hold a one-year anniversary vigil of Private Danny Chen's death.

Tommy Wu: The Tenement Museum is holding an open house at the Museum's Visitors Center. We are collecting oral histories. 103 Orchard Street. 6:30-8:30pm, between Orchard Street and Delancey Street.

Mae Lee: The Chinese Progressive Association is participating in a committee to outreach to undocumented immigrants who may be eligible for work papers under Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals. Several CWG organizations are already participating. Borough President Stringer has attended as well as the office of Assembly Speaker Silver and the office of Councilmember Chin. Anyone interested should contact me and I will add you to the email list. The committee is planning an event in November at which people can attend and get information and legal consultation. The next meeting of the committee will be held at Chinatown Manpower at 10am tomorrow.

Meeting adjourned, 6:26pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Rob Hollander, CWG Secretary