

Minutes of the Chinatown Working Group (CWG) Full Group Meeting  
5:00pm-6:30pm, Monday, March 16, 2015  
Two Bridges Senior Apartments, 80 Rutgers Slip

Voting members present: Asian American Legal Defense and Education Fund (Margaret Fung); Bowery Alliance of Neighbors (Mitchell Grubler); Chinatown Business and Property Owners Group (Douglas Woodward); Chinese Progressive Association (Mae Lee); Chinese Staff and Workers Association (Wendy Cheung, Wah Lee); Committee Against Anti-Asian Violence (Cindy Li, Ediwin Zheng); Community Board 1 (Michael Levine); Community Board 2 (Antony Wong); Community Board 3 (Gigi Li); Lower East Side Mujeres & Hombres Luchadores (Louise Velez); National Mobilization Against Sweatshops (David Tieu); NoHo-Bowery Stakeholders Inc. (Zella Jones); Two Bridges Neighborhood Council (Dan Ping He, Victor Papa, Wilson Soo); 11 Allen Street Tenants Union (Wai Yee Poon); 61 Delancey Street Tenants Association (Zhi Qin Zheng); 197 Madison Street (Fuko Poon).

Also present: Trevor Holland, Rob Hollander, Jenny Ye, Frank Yee

Press: Lotus Chao and [unknown] (Sing Tao).

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1. Introductions

2. Agenda: approved by all present.

3. February minutes

Antony Wong: The members will review the February minutes and vote on approving them at the next meeting in April. Are there any objections? [No objections.]

4. CAPZ recommendations on Subdistrict C. Wilson Soo presenting.

Wilson Soo: CAPZ recommends Pratt's proposals except the transfer of air rights and the change from the M1-5 zone.

Mitchell Grubler: What about special permits for hotels?

Douglas Woodward: In the last four rezonings, the city has required special permits for hotels. I assume they'd want to do that here.

Michael Levine: ...by the city's own initiative, not necessarily at our behest.

Woodward: Exactly.

Michael Levine: CAPZ is presenting exactly what the planning consultant recommended except that CAPZ chose to preserve the manufacturing zone rather than allow a higher density commercial zone. Also CAPZ rejected Pratt's transfer of air rights proposal.

Mitchell Grubler: The plan limited special permits for hotels, big box stores, bars and clubs.

Rob Hollander: Why not include that?

Wilson Soo: We will add to the motion special permits for hotels, bars, clubs and big box stores.  
[Calls the roll on the motion to approve the CAPZ recommendation for subdistrict C as amended.]

Yes: 197 Madison Street Tenants Association.  
Yes: 61 Delancey Street Tenants Association  
Yes: [by proxy] Asian American Arts Centre  
Yes: Asian American Legal Defense and Education Fund  
Yes: Bowery Alliance of Neighbors  
Abstain: Chinatown Business and Property Owners Group  
Yes: Chinese Progressive Association  
Yes: Committee Against Anti-Asian Violence  
Abstain: Community Boards 1,2,3  
Yes: Create in Chinatown  
Yes: Hamilton-Madison House  
Yes: NoHo-Bowery Stakeholders Inc.  
Yes: Two Bridges Neighborhood Council

11 yes, 4 abstentions.

Antony Wong: Community Board 3 rep will convey the results of the vote to the relevant committee members.

[Chinese Staff and Workers Association, National Mobilization Against Sweatshops arrive. See addendum.]

#### 5. CAPZ report on an implementation working group. Victor Papa reporting.

Wilson Soo: We're working on a summary of all the CAPZ actions and their route through CWG to the community boards. We will email the summary out upon completion.

Rob Hollander: How will the proposals be represented?

Michael Levine: It will include a brief description of each proposal that was approved.

Rob Hollander: Who in CAPZ will approve the document? Recall that CAAAV was concerned that the meetings were being misrepresented in your reports. Because of those concerns, CAAAV actually asked me to take independent minutes of the CAPZ meetings.

Victor Papa: All the CAPZ meeting minutes were distributed and approved at each meeting.

Rob Hollander: That's just false. CAPZ minutes were never approved at meetings.

Antony Wong: Douglas Woodward helped put together a summary draft.

Rob Hollander: I think the CAPZ group should look at it. Is it just a summary of what CAPZ did or what CWG did?

Douglas Woodward: This is a summary of what CAPZ reported to CWG.

Antony Wong: The summary is what CWG voted on, not what CAPZ voted on.

Douglas Woodward: No, this is a report of what CAPZ recommended to CWG.

Rob Hollander: If there's no agreement on what the summary will include, then I think the document ought to have more oversight.

David Tieu: It would be better to have Pratt work with us. Douglas represents a developer's group.

Douglas Woodward: I simply wrote down what the Pratt document had. You can verify the work by simply comparing it with the Pratt document. The city will not pay Pratt for this work.

Michael Levine: I guarantee that every member of CAPZ automatically and every member of CWG upon request will see the summary before it goes on line.

Rob Hollander: Will CAPZ be able to meet again if any questions arise regarding the summary?

Michael Levine: We recommend that CAPZ be disbanded, and an implementation group be created. I guarantee that any comments or recommendations regarding the summary will be reviewed by me and Victor and every member of CAPZ. If discussion is necessary, I would see it going to CWG, not CAPZ. The CAPZ chairs' goal is not to meet again, so I can't comment on your question. We recommend that the CWG co-Chairs appoint chairs of an implementation working group who could address any issues about the summary.

Wendy Cheung: CAPZ has been able to achieve a lot because of the wide participation from the community which has committed itself to CAPZ and which highly values CAPZ. The city has sent Community Board 3 a letter indicating that the city is not willing to accept our proposals. CAPZ needs to address this along with the recent city-wide upzoning. For those reasons, now would be an inopportune moment to dismantle CAPZ. The work of CAPZ is not finished, in light of these developments.

David Tieu: I agree. I don't see how a committee can be dissolved simply because the co-chairs say so, especially when its members themselves want to continue. How can we talk about implementation when the city has already rebuffed us and is pursuing its own plans contrary to everything we have done. So CAPZ still has a lot to discuss.

Zella Jones: I suggest that the team be a strategic team that would not be just a rubber stamp but could take up the duties of CAPZ and include members with zoning experience as well as community experience and a variety of other things.

Victor Papa: I like that.

Antony Wong: Gigi will present the city's letter.

Gigi Li: We received a letter from Carl Weisbrod of the Department of City Planning in response to the entire CWG plan. It indicates that a plan on such a scale is not feasible at this time, although City Planning shares many goals with it. He looks forward to working with us in the future. This letter combined with the phone call in January that I had with the Manhattan planning team and with Joel the liaison and Edith, the Manhattan Director, reinforced that DCP is most interested in subdistrict A or find those proposals most attractive. City Planning is interested in preservation but development is a significant component of other plans, so he'd like to see a more balanced approach. They are also interested in the empty lots in subdistrict A. They thought the Pratt affordable unit numbers were inflated. They'd be interested in seeing more opportunities for development. In May, the Land Use Committee will begin monthly discussions on next steps for continuing to work with DCP and the community looking at what additional possibilities might be.

Michael Levine: The mayor has said that we have to accept larger buildings in order to provide the incentive to create more affordable housing in many areas of the city. Chinatown is not currently one of those areas he is looking at, although DCP is interested in subdistrict A. Are there any other areas that DCP might want to work on?

Gigi Li: Joel could not identify any other areas on behalf of DCP at the Land Use meeting. We mentioned that we'd look at subdistrict D and Canal Street. Canal Street is little more complicated because it involves all three community boards. I think DCP is receptive to our discussions.

Wah Lee: At Chinese Staff we are concerned about gentrification. When we heard that CAPZ would be dissolved, we held an emergency meeting. We think that there is a lot yet for CAPZ to do around land use, and it should continue to meet. Because it has been working on these issues for so many years, CAPZ is best suited to implementing its proposals. Please consider not dissolving CAPZ.

Wilson Soo: The implementation task force will take on work beyond CAPZ. There were other working teams that finalized their plans.

Michael Levine: We need to take another look at the mission statements of the tasks.

Zella Jones: It's on the website.

Mitchell Grubler: The mayor wants to create 200,000 units of affordable in ten years. But then he qualified that 120,000 would be maintenance of existing units. That should be our strategy for our subdistricts. Our proposals are about maintenance.

Gigi Li: That was raised to Joel. He acknowledged it but he stressed that DCP would entertain a more balanced proposal.

Douglas Woodward: There is an opportunity in the letter to get something done or at least within this administration to start something. [Quoting the letter:] "We believe that there are targeted areas of opportunity within the boundaries of your proposal that can further your hard work and help advance the mayor's overarching goal of making New York a more equitable city." That tells you that City Planning is willing to consider a rezoning of a smaller targeted area closer to the Chinatown core and will not consider the larger boundaries that they were given. If we want to accomplish anything from our years of work, we should start work on Canal Street and subdistrict A.

Antony Wong: The discussion of an implementation team will not be finished today. Let's digest this and talk about it again next month.

Rob Hollander: It's important for CWG to work closely with the community board. There are differences in strategy between community groups and the community board, but there should never be any strife between them. They should strategize together and divide the tasks appropriately.

David Tieu: I think we need another CAPZ meeting to discuss what to do about it. CAPZ should take the lead.

Victor Papa: The strategies will be more effective if it is the CWG as a whole speaks, not a committee of it.

Michael Levine: Come to the next meeting with ideas for strategies and the mission of the strategic team.

Antony Wong: We need to work together with CB3. The letter went to CB3, not to us.

#### 6. Voting and quorum proposals, Rob Hollander presenting.

Rob Hollander: The size of the CWG membership has decreased, so we are considering new voting or quorum requirements. [Summarizes attached chart.]

Mitchell Grubler: What about proxies? I didn't know they were allowed.

Antony Wong: When we announce a meeting at which there is a vote on the agenda, we specifically ask that a member who cannot attend but wishes to vote send the vote to me prior to the meeting. Also, when a vote is taken late in a meeting and a member had to leave, on occasion a member would submit a vote on paper prior to leaving.

Mitchell Grubler: The proposals being presented do not take into account proxies.

Antony Wong: The averages were calculated on the vote sheets, so the proxies were included. There were only one or two individuals who submitted proxies as I recall. Look this over for next meeting. The main item next meeting will be about an implementation team.

Margaret Fung: Have you dissolved CAPZ?

Antony Wong: No, we will discuss it further next meeting.

Margaret Fung: Then CAPZ still exists. This seems to me to be a mere matter of names. Whether we call it an implementation team or a strategic plan, we still don't have a comprehensive plan and the mayor's new proposals require more thinking about zoning. You can call it a Zoning Committee, and it will have work to do.

Mae Lee: I was CWG co-chair during a tempestuous time of structural transition. It was important for us then to understand that the entire body should be more important than any committee of the body. The members of the entire body were also experts in their own experience and their areas. Please remember that.

#### Community Announcements

Amy Chin: The NY Historical Society's Chinese exclusion/inclusion exhibit closes April 19.

Mae Lee: Lower East Side Ready, March 26.

Gigi Li: March 18, CB3 will consider setting up a permanent a Municipal ID office.

Meeting adjourned, 6:30pm

#### Addendum

Immediately following the meeting, Wendy Cheung, David Tieu and Louise Velez asked that their votes and a proxy vote they were holding from the Restaurant Workers Union be included in the subdistrict C vote because the vote was taken unusually early in the meeting before they arrived. The co-chairs pointed out that votes cannot be included retroactively. The three then asked the secretary to record their votes. The secretary explained that the minutes are a record only of what transpires during the meeting. However, the secretary agreed to add an addendum to the minutes to record their intended four votes in favor of the motion and agreed to convey their intentions to the Community Board 3 Chair.