

**Minutes of the Chinatown Working Group (CWG)
4pm to 6pm, Monday, March 9, 2009*
American Legion L.T. Kimlau Post 1291**

(*The full CWG's March monthly meeting was postponed from March 2 to March 9 due to a snowstorm.)

ORGANIZATIONS (Representatives): American Legion Post 1291 (Gabe Mui); Asian American Arts Center (Robert Lee); Asian American/Asian Research Institute-CUNY (Anthony Wong); Asian Americans for Equality (Chris Kui, Thomas Yu, Richard Lee, Brian Cho); Asian American Legal Defense and Education Fund (Mabel Tso); Bowery Alliance of Neighbors (Mitchell Gruber); CAAAV (Helena Wong, Jenny Ye); CB2 Cert (Jerry Chan); Chatham Green (Triple Edwards); Chatham Towers (John Lee); CCBA (Wee K. Wong); Chinatown Partnership (Wellington Chen); Chinese American Medical Society (Jamie Seto); Chinese Progressive Association (Mae Lee); Continental Garment Manufacturers Association (Sherman Ng, Raymond Wonh); CREATE in Chinatown (Amy Chin); Greater Chinatown Community Association (Kendra Lee); Hester Street Collaborative (Anne Frederick); Hotel Chinese Association (Steven W. Wong); LES BID (Roberto Ragone); LES Residents for Responsible Development (Rob Hollander); MFY Legal Services (Donna Chiu); Organization of Chinese Americans-NY (Jerry Cheng); Two Bridges (Victor Papa); 250 Canal Street Property Owner (Keith Lipstein); Holly Lam

PUBLIC OFFICIALS (Representatives): Assembly Speaker Silver (Karen He); Mayor's Community Affairs Unit (Pauline Yu, Claudia Filomena); City Comptroller Thompson (Sandra Ung); MBP Stringer (Jen Hong); State Senator Squadron (Jasmin Sanchez); Assembly Member Glick (Matt Borden); Council Member Gerson (Vivian Xie, Chow Xie)

COMMUNITY BOARD (Representatives): CB#1 (Michael Levine, Kasey LaFlam); CB#2 (Zella Jones, Edward Ma, James Solomon, Shannon Chang); CB#3 (John Leo)

MEDIA (Representatives): *The Epoch Times* (Sally Sun); *Sing Tao Daily* (Lotus Chau); *World Journal* (Luna Liu)

I CWG Acting Chair's Report

Acting Chair Jim Solomon welcomed new attendees and thanked everyone for accommodating the change in meeting date as a result of the March 2nd snowstorm. Attendees are advised to check the CWG website prior to future meetings for any updates or changes. A calendar of upcoming meetings was distributed.

All CWG meetings are open to the public. The current list of voting members is on the website as well as printed on the bottom of the currently distributed agenda. CWG urges all current members to assist with outreach to other community stakeholders who care and want to have a role in planning discussions about Chinatown. It is key is that Chinatown stakeholders be the drivers of this process and it is incumbent upon them to participate. The recent tragic tenement fire and traffic fatalities in Chinatown are sad reminders that time is of the essence in this process. It is imperative that CWG work quickly and thoughtfully.

To date, 33 organizations including all 3 community boards encompassing Chinatown (CB#1, 2 & 3) have signed on as CWG voting members. The 8 CWG working teams formed at the previous CWG meeting have convened and their meeting notes are posted on the CWG website.

Zella Jones was gratefully acknowledged for her generous work on the CWG website which now contains CWG's calendar, meeting minutes, working team minutes, and contact information. Zella gave a brief overview of other possibilities CWG might want to consider in the further development of the website.

II Election of CWG Co-Chairs (Amy Chin chaired this portion of the meeting)

Biographies were distributed for Jim Solomon and Thomas Yu, the two candidates nominated at the February 2, 2009 meeting for the positions of CWG Co-chairs.

Voting procedures as established by the Steering Committee and through discussion by the CWG membership were reviewed:

- Only CWG voting members may cast a vote.
- Each voting member is entitled to one vote
- A voting member must be present at the meeting to cast the vote. (Proxy votes are not allowable)
- CWG voting members must fulfill four criteria as established by the CWG Steering Committee (see February 11, 2009 CWG Steering Committee meeting minutes)
- Votes will be cast by paper ballot which will be open to public review

Continental Garment Manufacturers Association and the Lower East Side BID signed on as new CWG voting members bringing the voting membership total to 35.

The floor was opened for discussion:

- Concern was expressed that both nominees are community board members. This had been raised at a previous meeting and it was agreed that though both are community board members, Thomas Yu, if elected, participates and serves as a representative of Asian Americans for Equality and not as an official representative of Community Board 3. It was also reiterated that the position of Co-Chair is strictly an administrative function. Co-Chairs have no greater policy-making powers or other powers unequal to those of any other voting member (as per CWG Governance By-laws)

- It was further emphasized that CWG is constructing an open, transparent and democratic process and it is important for CWG members to choose to participate. As CWG's work progresses beyond the preparatory stages, there will inevitably be disagreements or controversy, but ultimately it is the firm commitment to and defense of transparency and democracy that forms the foundation for any work that we do in the future.

Ballots were distributed to 22 CWG voting members present. Votes were cast and ballots were tallied by Amy Chin and Rob Hollander. Both candidates were elected by a majority vote to one year terms as CWG Co-Chairs. Results of the election were:

Jim Solomon: 22 votes
Thomas Yu: 18 votes

Amy Chin was elected CWG Secretary by acclamation.

III Establish CWG Steering Committee

CWG voting members were asked to volunteer to be regular members of the Steering Committee. While meetings are open to all, it is important to have a core of regular members who can attend consistently to provide continuity as well as help formulate agendas and carry out administrative functions. The following 11 organizations volunteered:

Community Boards 1, 2, and 3; Asian Americans for Equality; Chinese American Medical Society; Chatham Green; Chatham Towers; Committee Against Asian American Violence; Community Emergency Response Team, CB2; Bowery Alliance of Neighbors; Chinese Progressive Association, Two Bridges Neighborhood Council

IV Report on CWG Working Teams

Thanks to the acting chairs, CWG's working teams have convened their first meetings. Greater participation is needed in the Immigration working team (interested members should contact Mae Lee at MLee@cpanyc.org).

Each of the acting chairs provided a brief summary of their meetings. (See CWG Website for full meeting notes for each working team meeting)

A commonly expressed sentiment was the need to know what other planning or studies have been conducted in each team's respective topic areas. At the next full CWG meeting, AAARI will present a compiled matrix of recent studies on Chinatown planning.

Most working groups did not feel ready to establish guiding principles and instead used the first meeting to collect a broad list of issues and concerns.

Working teams also expressed a desire to interact with one another and to know what other teams are discussing or contemplating.

Teleconferencing capability should be introduced for each working team meeting. Danny Chen facilitated this at some meetings. Interested acting chairs can contact Jim Solomon or Danny for details.

For the next set of meetings, it was recommended that the teams try to outreach to more stakeholders and other individuals or experts that may provide expertise needed in each of the teams. The offices of elected officials offered assistance in getting necessary experts to the working team meetings.

In the future CWG's website may be equipped to solicit and collect feedback. Zella will consider the pros and cons of this option.

Sing Tao newspaper was commended for attending all working team meetings and for their comprehensive coverage of CWG's work.

V Update on CWG Funding/Staffing

Susan Stetzer followed up on the status of potential funding for CWG as reported by CM Alan Gerson. CWG was asked to submit a proposed scope of services for the City's consideration. The Steering Committee will compile a request for staffing / consultant and discuss at their next meeting.

VI Community Announcements

Robert Lee reported that a major exhibition of Asian American art dating back to 1850 from the west coast will not be coming to the Noguchi Museum as scheduled. He requested assistance in finding a means for getting this exhibition to the east coast. Contact RLee@artspiral.org.

The next CWG meeting will be chaired by Thomas Yu.

NEXT CWG Steering Committee Meeting:

Wednesday, March 11, 4-5:30pm
Community Board 1, Rm 709, 49-51 Chambers Street

NEXT Full CWG Meeting:

Monday, April 6, 4-6pm
American Legion L.T. Kimlau Post 1291, 191-193 Canal St., 2nd Floor

(CWG Secretary Amy Chin compiled the minutes of this March 9, 2009 meeting.)