

**Zoning Working Team  
Chinatown Working Group  
March 10, 2009**

**Meeting Minutes**

Location: 49 Chambers Street, Room 709

Time: 11:00am to 12:30pm

In Attendance: Two Bridges Neighborhood Council (Victor Papa), CB#1 (Michael Levine, Kasey LaFlam) CB#2 (Edward Ma), ABS Partners (Keith Lipstein, Jay Caseley), Asian Americans For Equality (Brian Cho), LESRRD (Rob Hollander), AALDEF (Bethany Li), Bowery Alliance of Neighbors (Mitchell Grubler), CAAAV (Helena Wong), CB#3 (John Leo)

Elected Officials/Representatives in Attendance: Assembly Speaker Sheldon Silver (Karen He), State Senator Daniel Squadron (Jasmin Sanchez), NYC Comptroller Thompson (Sandra Ung)

Media: Sing Tao Daily (Jacky Wong, Lotus Chan)

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**1. Co-Chairs' Report**

Co-chair Michael Levine welcomed everyone and opened the meeting with a discussion to confirm Tuesdays at 11am as an appropriate time for the group to meet. There was consensus and the next meeting was set for Tuesday, April 14<sup>th</sup> at 11am.

**2. Discussion of Guiding Principles**

Chairs Victor Papa and Michael Levine opened discussion on the 5 Guiding Principles drafted at the previous month's meeting:

Five General Principles regarding the Zoning Working Team:

1. To promote commercial stability and preservation; to encourage balanced economic growth appropriate to the neighborhood, in particular to small businesses; and to counter involuntary displacement of existing small businesses
2. To preserve the historical and cultural character of the neighborhood
3. To provide opportunity for new housing as well as preservation of existing housing, both rental and homeownership, affordable to current residents in the neighborhood, while recognizing a variety of income levels; to counter displacement of existing residents
4. To base Zoning Working Team recommendations on existing and new detailed research, in-depth fact finding, and community plans

5. To acknowledge that zoning alone will not guarantee the preservation of neighborhood character; that the Zoning Team will work closely with all other working teams on different issues, to coordinate and incorporate their input into future recommendations

#### Summary of Concerns/Comments Raised

- Use of the language “recognizing a variety of income levels” could lead to more market rate than low-income or affordable housing
- Defining term “affordable,” affordable to *whom*
- Determining the location of where to create affordable zones ensuring that it is done appropriately and with regard to other uses
- Inclusion of affordable home-ownership options

It was acknowledged that the issue of defining affordability was not something to be solely determined by the Zoning Working Team, but rather needed to be in collaboration with other working teams. Out of the guiding principles Michael Levine recommended that the team establish liaisons to the other teams working on similar issues. Teams and liaisons were established as follows:

*Affordability Team:* Rob Hollander, Brian Cho, and Jacky Wong

*Economic Development:* Rob Hollander, Jay Caseley

*Historic & Cultural Preservation:* Rob Hollander, Jay Caseley, Mitchell Grubler

It was agreed the liaisons would report back to the Zoning WT on 4/14 what was discussed at the meetings and if there was overlap between the different goals/guiding principles of each team.

### **3. Next Steps and Further Research**

The group will wait to see the research matrix compiled by Joyce Moy at the next full CWG meeting. From there it will determine what gaps need to be filled in.

Co-chair Victor Papa requested that the working team have another, more detailed, presentation on the zoning of Chinatown and the Lower East Side before it continues on with further research. Co-chair Michael Levine offered to present the zoning analysis completed by CB#1 Urban Planning Fellow Kasey LaFlam at the next meeting.

### **4. Identifying Missing Stakeholders**

It was recommended that outreach be done to identify stakeholders that represent all sectors that would be impacted by rezoning, in particular business and manufacturing. The team discussed stakeholders and community participants that were missing from the table. Co-chair Victor Papa recommended that outreach be completed with a letter from the committee followed by a phone call. Below is a list of names/places suggested by the meeting participants and in parentheses the name(s) for those responsible for completing the outreach.

- Houses of Worship (Victor Papa)
- Settlement Houses (Victor Papa, Rob Hollander)
- Chinese Staff (Victor Papa, Ed Ma)
- Jimmy Chang
- 2325 United Workers (Ed Ma)
- MOCA
- Garment industry
- New Museum
- SoHo Partnership
- SoHo Alliance

Sandra Ung recommended that the CWG conduct quarterly community meetings that could serve as a way to allow the public to hear first hand what the CWG is working on and to ask questions. The team agreed that this was a viable idea and Michael Levine offered to mention it at the next steering committee meeting.

### **5. Identifying Experts for Assistance**

The team discussed various experts that it was interested in having present at the next meetings to help direct the scope of research and direction of goals. Below is a list of the names/organizations that were recommended and in parentheses those responsible for contacting.

- NYC Dept. of City Planning: 197-a and LES zoning (Michael Levine)
- Baruch College: Lower Manhattan Study
- Municipal Art Society: Community Planning
- Cathy Newman – Rutgers: LES Study (Rob Hollander)
- Tom Angotti – Hunter: LES Report

Keith Lipstein suggested that the team set an appropriate time frame for completing goals and objectives. Michael Levine agreed and offered the agenda of 2-3 meetings for gathering and sharing information, and 7-8 meetings for establishing recommendations.

Meeting was adjourned at 12:15pm.