

Minutes of the Chinatown Working Group (CWG) Full Group Meeting
5:30pm to 7pm, Monday, February 4, 2013
American Legion L.T. Kimlau Post 1291

Voting members present: American Legion Post 1291 (Gabe Mui); Bowery Alliance of Neighbors (Mitchell Grubler); Chinese Progressive Association (Mae Lee); Chinese Staff and Workers Association (Wendy Cheung, Josephine Lee); Committee Against Anti Asian Violence (Billie Zhu); Community Board 1 (Michael Levine); Community Board 2 (Antony Wong); Community Board 3 (My Phuong Chung); National Mobilization Against Sweatshops (Louise Velez); Two Bridges Neighborhood Council (Wilson Soo).

Consulting firms: BFJ Urbanomics (Regina Armstrong, Xiangiu -Shawn- Li); Collective for Community Planning and the Environment (Jocelyn Chait, Mercedes Narciso); GMJanes (George Janes); Larisa Ortiz Associates (Kristen Wilke); L. Saltzman Architects Historic Preservation (Meisha Hunter); Pratt Center for Community Development (Paula Crespo); Public Works Partners (Mark Foggen); Urban Matrix (Shachi Pandey, Christopher Steinon); WXY Studio (Paul Solana);

Also present: Rob Hollander (Lower East Side Residents for Responsible Development); Frank Yee (Yee Family Association); Susan Yung (Gathering of the Tribe).

Press: Bonnie Lee (Sing Tao Daily News); Clement Lee (World Journal).

Meeting called to order at 5:50pm, Wilson Soo and Antony Wong presiding.

Michael Levine: Thanks to all the prospective applicants for attending.

1. Introductions

2. Agenda

>>Agenda approved by all voting members present.

3. Minutes

>>Minutes approved by all voting members present.

4. Cultural and Historic Preservation Team proposal for the New Museum

Antony Wong: Since we do not have quorum, we will table this item to next month.

5. Presentation of the scope of work for the RFP for a consultant, Wilson Soo presenting

Wilson Soo: [Reads the Scope of Work (see attached)]

George Janes (GMJanes): In April 2010 LMDC gave CWG permission to do this. That was three years ago. Is there anything that we should know about the process in the meantime?

Antony Wong: There was a question as to who the fiscal conduit would be.

Shachi Pandey (Urban Matrix): A lot of data may already exist. How much fresh data do you require and do you expect us to review existing data?

Antony Wong: Existing data are five to ten years old. We would like to gather the newest data possible: who lives here, zoning in the area, what vacancies there are, what is used..

Michael Levine: ... and we hope the consultant will tell us what is still relevant among existing studies.

Jocelyn Chait (Collective for Community Planning and the Environment and Pratt Center): What access will there be to data already gathered by committees? Will we be able to get in contact with the committees members?

Wilson Soo: We prefer that the committee members work with you closely.

Antony Wong: We will give old data to you, but we are looking for new data.

Rob Hollander: The committees will make clear what they are looking for.

Antony Wong: You will have communication with the committees after you have taken a look at their preliminary action plans. You may clarify any questions you have with the co-chairs or with the working teams.

Michael Levine: You will be functioning not with the individual committee chairs but with the management team that the co-chairs will appoint. Any questions will go to the management team. We know that our time and your time are valuable and billable, so we want to work most efficiently. Let the management team know whom you need to meet with and they will set up a series of meetings.

Josephine Lee: In 2010 we were thinking of a 197a, but now we are looking more towards a 197c.

Michael Levine: We'd like to see your advice on historic districts and other incentives to preserve housing and local small businesses and what measures we can take to create housing affordable to the Chinatown community. These are elements of a 197a. Zoning, historic preservation,

cultural preservation, economic development and affordable housing are not a 197a but the components of a 197a plan.

Jocelyn Chait (Collective for Community Planning and the Environment): Do you expect us to review all of your committee recommendations or just those related to those components?

Antony Wong: The selected consultant should look at all the recommendations, to become familiar with the overall expectations, but the scope of work includes only those components.

Rob Hollander: Those other committee recommendations are only a few pages each.

Paul Solana (WXY Studio): What are the borders and the outside areas mentioned in the RFP?

Wilson Soo: (see map)

Michael Levine: This is a draft boundary. We ask for your advice on whether we have we gone too far or left things out. Where are the common issues where are the residents, where the businesses, opportunities for affordable housing, small business preservation? CB1, CB2 and CB3 are all within the boundaries. I hope you will tell us how accurate this map is and we ask you for any recommendations on any changes in what we consider to be issues we want to address in what we consider as Chinatown.

Bethany Li: The RFP includes Chinatown and its surrounding neighborhoods the most obvious of which is the Lower East Side. So if you address your recommendations to that area it would be helpful.

Susan Yung: The map also includes the Hispanic community in the Lower East Side and other minority groups within the area.

Rob Hollander: Not all the research requirements apply to each of these distinct neighborhoods. CWG has already endorsed the Bowery Alliance of Neighbors plan for the east side of the Bowery, which has already done much of the relevant research, although the consultant should consider the viability of the BAN plan. Or, for example, some of the research requirements will not apply at all to the NYCHA housing by the waterfront. The specific reasons for the inclusion of each of the distinct areas will become apparent as the consultant works with the management team and the committee members.

Shachi Pandey (Urban Matrix): Which areas would require a fresh look and which not?

Michael Levine: We will try to give you an answer before the bids are due.

George Janes (GMJanes): You are focusing on a 197c...

Michael Levine: Let's not look at a 197c as a product. You tell us what we should aim for. Do we have enough for 197a, 197c, what additional affordable housing measures, a historic district? You tell us -- that's what we're hiring you to do.

Mercedes Narciso (Collective for Community Planning and the Environment): Regarding the deliverables, is your goal a single final report or several interim reports submitted to the community as we go along?

Wilson Soo: Our goal is one final report. But there will be preliminary meetings and an interim report with the ultimate goal of a final report.

Mercedes Narciso (Collective for Community Planning and the Environment): Regarding translations at meetings, do you expect the final report to be translated and into how many languages?

Wilson Soo: We do not expect translation for the final report, but for the materials for the interim meetings

Meisha Hunter (L.Saltzman Historic Preservation): As preservationists, we are fascinated by the RFP. When will you be sending the names of who attended?

Michael Levine: We will try to have it to you tomorrow afternoon.

Meisha Hunter (L.Saltzman Historic Preservation): When will we receive your further clarifications that you have mentioned here?

Michael Levine: Also tomorrow too.

[Unidentified voice, Regina or Kristen or Paula]: What is the time frame of the final report's forecasts?

Michael Levine: We haven't decided. We'd rely on what makes sense to you.

[unidentified voice, distinct from previous, Regina or Kristen or Paula]: The RFP asks about neighborhood projects that have received funding. How do you define such a neighborhood project?

Michael Levine: Anything that has received government funding.

Antony Wong: Any further questions? Since there are none, we conclude this item. Are there any community announcements?

Rob Hollander: 7-Eleven has targeted Manhattan for 100 new stores in the next four years. The projected 7-Eleven on Avenue A and 11th Street has provoked a community resistance. The community is asking for a zoning amendment like the one that San Francisco implemented. This is an issue of community say in community land use. Please go to our Facebook page and our Twitter hashtag. Corporate commerce threatens local commerce in New York as corporations oversaturate the neighborhood in order to choke out competition. We have been featured by BBC, also ABC, Times and Crains.

Mae Lee: Since Obama announced comprehensive immigration reform the US Senate has submitted their proposal. Now is the time for New York to propose real immigration reform. There will be an Asian Pacific American meeting this Friday 9:30am at the Murphy Institute at 25 West 43rd Street on the 18th floor. If you want an email notice please ask me.

Antony Wong: Meeting adjourned. Happy Lunar New Year.

Meeting adjourned at 6:35pm.