

DRAFT Minutes
Chinatown Working Group Meeting
August 5, 2019, 6:30pm, Rutgers Park Playground (moved from 275 Cherry
Street Community Room)

Voting members present: Art Against Displacement (Francisca Benitez); Bowery Alliance of Neighbors (Mitchell Grubler); Chinese Staff and Workers Association (Vincent Cao, Zishun Ning); Lands End Residents Association (Mercer Jabull); National Mobilization Against Sweatshops (Francisca Benitez, Briar Winters); Youth Against Displacement (Caitlin Kelmar, Zishun Ning).

Also present: Andrew Hiller (Democratic Socialists of America); rob hollander (Lower East Side Residents for Responsible Development); Mark Wouters (Manta Wake); Susan Yung (artist).

Meeting called to order, 6:15pm, Zishun Ning (CSWA) facilitating.

AUGUST MINUTES

August minutes approved by all present

AGENDA

- Two Bridges lawsuits and press conference
- East River Park
- Henry Street
- Planning Events

Agenda approved without objection.

Mark Wouters (MantaWake): I'm a filmmaker, urban planner and architect. My films are about urban planning and how neighborhoods face challenges. I've filmed all over the city and I celebrate your efforts here. Let me know what you don't want me to film.

TWO BRIDGES LAWSUITS AND PRESS CONFERENCES

Briar Winters (NMASS): The judge on Thursday decided in favor of the City Council suit arguing for a ULURP. He asked that we withdraw our suit since our concerns might be dealt with through the ULURP. He hasn't yet made a decision on our lawsuit. The question is whether he would deny it now, in which case withdrawing would allow us to refile after the ULURP. Did we have press at our rally?

Zishun: Chinese press did cover.

Briar: Fran was quoted in the New York Times.

Mitchell Grubler (BAN): We are not happy with the ULURP process.

Briar: We can now go to the public advocate with a concrete ask. Explain to him that the ULURP is not a victory.

Andrew Hiller (DSA): What is your strategy on the ULURP or its outcome?

Caitlin Kelmar (YAD): That should be a coalition decision.

Briar: When do we learn about the timeline of the ULURP? Will there be an appeal?

Mitchell: We don't know what will happen behind the scenes between Chin and DCP.

Fran Benitez (AAD, NMASS): De Blasio may be involved.

Zishun: Yesterday brought many neighborhoods together. They all support the CWG plan.

EAST RIVER PARK AND RESPONSE

rob hollander (LESRRD): There's been a division over the city's plan. Some NYCHA leaders want the city to move forward as quickly as possible to prevent any future flooding. Another group called the East River Alliance has been demanding that either the city scrap its plan in favor of a plan that would not require closing the park, or that any implementation be done in stages so some part of the park can be made available for use. Both scrapping the current plan and implementing in stages would delay progress, so these two groups have different interests and have not succeeded in resolving their differences. Howard Brandstein's proposal from the East River Park Action group, which you all heard yesterday, rejects any staging implementation, leaves the park open, and closes the FDR to gas-based cars.

Zishun: Why not ask these two groups to join the CWG?

Briar will talk to Naomi of ERA, rob to Howard of ERPA.

HENRY STREET TENANTS

Vincent Cao (CSWA): We are holding a press conference in front of the landlord's office, 207 Canal Street, Wednesday.

Zishun: The tenants have been pushing the CWG plan. Henry Street is close by and will be affected by the towers. The landlord also has properties in Brooklyn and the Bronx.

Vincent: He has a building in the Bronx with 70 apartments, 11 empty. Tenants complain about lack of repairs.

Zishun: In one building the landlord used preferential rents to evict. The new rent laws would have prevented this. One household filed suit.

Vincent: The landlord used the preferential rent illegally. They are waiting for a decision. We will talk about that at the conference.

PLANNING EVENTS

Mitchell: Community forums, conversations?

Zishun: We're petitioning for the plan, tabling Wednesdays, Thursdays, Fridays and Sundays in the area and we are reaching out to mobilize local tenants.

Fran: There are people pretending to be NYCHA residents knocking on doors.

Briar: NMASS is trying to create a tenants organization in Riis Houses.

Zishun: We reached out to Corey Johnson.

Andrew: How about a public, outward-facing panel discussion on the CWG plan?

Briar: Lynn Ellsworth would be good on a panel.

Caitlin: DSA has even more legitimate authors.

Andrew: Tom Angotti and Sam Stein?

Caitlin: We should have a coalition meeting after the meeting with the lawyer.

Meeting adjourned, 7:30pm.

Respectfully submitted,

rob hollander, CWG Secretary