

DRAFT Minutes
Chinatown Working Group Meeting
September 9, 2019, 6:30pm, 275 Cherry Street Community Room

Voting members present: Art Against Displacement (Francisca Benitez); Chinese Staff and Workers Association (Zishun Ning); Lands End Residents Association 2 (Mercer Jabull); Lower East Side Organized Neighbors (Anthony QueyLin); National Mobilization Against Sweatshops (Francisca Benitez, Steph Kranes, Briar Winters); Sixth Street Community Center (Howard Brandstein); Youth Against Displacement (Caitlin Kelmar, Steph Kranes, Zishun Ning).

Also present: Lazar Bloch (Democratic Socialists of America); Andrew Hiller (Democratic Socialists of America); rob hollander (Lower East Side Residents for Responsible Development); Grace Lee; Michael Perles (Democratic Socialists of America); Susan Yung (artist).

Meeting called to order, 6:45pm, Francisca Benitez (AAD, NMASS) facilitating.

AUGUST MINUTES approved by all present.

AGENDA: East River Park, Henry Street, Outreach/Plans. Agenda approved by all present.

EAST RIVER PARK REDESIGN

Howard Brandstein (SSCC): The city plans to destroy everything in the park. The community had approved the Rebuild by Design plan which would have disturbed only one third of the park. We're holding a march and rally. The community plan would cost less and would include both climate justice as well as flood protection. CB3 voted in favor of the city plan. The electeds also support it with the condition that the city do it in stages to keep parts open rather than closing the entire park throughout. We are not in favor of phased destruction. The Borough President has hired an independent expert hydrologist from a Dutch group. The East River Park Action will be meeting him on Friday. City Council will vote on the plan September 24. Instead, we could deck over the FDR Drive to expand the park. Let's consider the long-term future of the climate in the city, and the future of private autos. Naomi Schiller testified on the possible displacement that a redesigned park would cause.

Susan Yung: Construction would disrupt the brownfield.

Briar Winters (NMASS): The CWG would protect the entire neighborhood from any possible displacement.

Howard: We'd like a representative from the Asian community to speak at the rally.

Anthony QueyLin (LESON): Need to distribute flyers in NYCHA.

Howard: We could use help with our ongoing outreach.

Zishun Ning (CSWA, YAD): We can talk more about that. The waterfront rezoning won't help the NYCHA properties, but the CWG whole plan includes both.

Howard: The 6th Street Center supports the whole plan.

Grace Lee: What about the alienation of the park?

Howard: Harvey thinks it might be an effective move. We need more pro bono assistance. We're thinking of getting help from Earth Justice.

Briar: Try Mitch Bernard from the Natural Resource Defense Council.

rob: Weren't we going to ask ERPA to join CWG?

Howard: Yes. Can someone attend our meeting tomorrow?

rob: I can.

Steph: I'll send the fold-out by email so you can print them out for the members.

HENRY STREET TENANTS

Zishun: 229-231 tenants are fighting for rent regulation and against the loss of preferential rents. There was a successful action two months ago demanding that the building be stabilized. DHCR and representatives from the State Assembly and Senate agreed that it should be stabilized. It is a bigger struggle than just Henry Street. The landlord owns buildings in other boroughs. It's an opportunity to connect with other neighborhoods.

OUTREACH/PLANS

Steph: We will petition Wednesdays, Fridays and Sundays tabling and flyering to express that the ULURP is a sham.

Fran: Do you have a link so we can participate?

Zishun: Yes, we have a link. We are asking the mayor and Corey Johnson to pass the whole plan now, not wait until the ULURP process.

Briar: There will also be a community garden license rally Thursday September 19. I can take petitions there.

rob: Regarding the East River, the community board and the electeds approved the city's plan because the residents in NYCHA need flood protection without delay. That's why ERPA is organizing in NYCHA to inform them of the options.

Meeting adjourned 7:35pm

Respectfully submitted

rob hollander, Sec'y