**Draft Minutes**

**Chinatown Working Group**

**November 2, 2020, 6:30 via Zoom**

**Present:** Art Against Displacement (Fran Benitez, Vanessa Thill); Chinese Staff and Workers Association (Zishun Ning); National Mobilization Agasint Sweatshops (Steph Kranes, Briar Winters, Antonio Queylin); Lower East Side Preservation Initiative (Richard Moses)

**Also Present:** Downtown Independent Democrats (Tom L); Village Preservation (Harry Bubbins), Kaiyu Li

Agenda:

The Marte campaign

Outreach to SoHo/NoHo Alliance

174 & 184 Forsyth St

Citywide connections

Minutes

October 2020 minutes approved by all present.

The Marte Campaign

Zishun: The Coalition has been doing tabling for more than a month outside of Fine Fare. The responses have been good.

Vanessa: AAD folks Went to do posting of flyers and the No Towers posters. People ripped them down but we’ll keep putting them up. One member spends money to print posters.

Briar: The Coalition is going to discuss shifting the tabling location, and update on the outreach plan.

Zishun: Change the locations and explore other forms of outreach such as door-knocking and small businesses outreach.

Tom: would love to have DID support CWG. Any effort for phone banking and text banking?

Fran: We’ve done text and email, but mostly street outreach at this point.

Antonio: Going inside the building is good, and we get good responses and people joining our cause, though time consuming.

Fran: COVID is rising, so I’m worried, going indoor will increase traffic, prefer outdoor.

Outreach to the NoHo/SoHo Alliance

Briar: Marte connected with us with SoHo folks. Zishun, Caitlin and I were there. Spoke about DCP info session and ways we can connect with our fight. We started to understand our connection of the fights. Helpful that YAD put out the statement about the rezoning. Maybe CWG can send out a statement as well. Now we have more details about the rezoning and will meet with them soon.

Zishun: We encouraged them to come up with a counter proposal. SoHo Rezoning also affects Chinatown as one of the spots for upzoning is in Chinatown, and it will affect the surrounding area. So CWG should also take a position against it.

Briar: And it’s important to mobilize, not just focus on technicality.

Tom: DID wants to push forward a positive vision, need to do ground work. One key point is rent-stabilization. Open New York uses “affordable housing” as an excuse to push the rezoning. We need concrete mechanisms to expand affordable housing. One is to expand rent-stabilization, to peel off the “affordable housing” rhetoric.

Fran: how about small businesses? How can we make it not just for international big businesses?

Zishun: In Chinatown and LES, we unify small businesses by letting see the common interest

Briar: We should connect with the independent merchant’s struggle there.

Harry: They attack our neighborhoods, not just SoHo and Chinatown, but citywide. We have an email action targeting elected officials. Have reached out to some organizations to talk more.

Richard: our organization has also jumped on board to help with the effort

174 & 184 Forsyth St struggle

Fran: We only found out about it recently. The living conditions there are pretty bad, and tenants’ concerns have not been answered. There have been violations for years, and robberies in the building. Grace Lee has connections to the building and stepped in to help people organize. I went to the protest. It was raining but the action was well attended. Some Coalition members and elected officials were there. We went into the building to look at the conditions. Cooper Square was involved.

Briar: I noticed Cooper Square there as well. But some complained their approach as too measured. We can connect with the tenants. They are in an early stage but will be great to stay in touch. We have a lot in common.

Citywide anti-displacement connections

Vanessa: Got an email from an organizer at MinKwon. Talked to Alicia in Brooklyn who proposed a meeting to talk about citywide fight. Not everyone have the same goal, but hopefully can find common issue. We have an alternative plan and people look to us. Important to show people with a positive vision

Zishun: Some of us have been joining their meeting in the past. Good to bring up our position, to hold mayoral candidates accountable by demanding them take a stand against de Blasio’s agenda.

Tom: Diane Morales might be more open