

## CWG Meeting Notes 7.12.2021

Present: Francisca Benitez (AAD), Zishun Ning (CSWA), Vittoria Fariello (DID + District Leader in AD65 PartC); Steph Kranes (NMASS); Briar Winters (NMASS); Caitlin Kelmar (YAD), Fannie Ip (East River Park Action), Violette de la Selle (Citygroup), Michael Cohen (Citygroup), Jay Sanders (Artists Space), Mahir Rahman (CSWA/YAD), Jennifer Chiao (CSWA), Mitchell Grubler (Bowery Alliance of Neighbors)

Also Present: Sarah Ahn (Flushing Workers Center), Rob Hollander (Secretary/LESRRD); Kaiyu-Li (University of Chicago); Zeke Luger (Flushing Anti-Displacement Alliance), Joseph Jung (Flushing Anti-Displacement Alliance), Shelly Silver (Chinatown resident), Chris Marte (democratic nominee for City Council District 1)

Minutes and agenda approved; meeting called to order 6:32pm. Meeting facilitated by Fannie Ip.

### **Chris Marte's democratic primary win**

What does it mean for CWG? We now have a chance to get the plan passed.

Rob notes that we should think about updating the report with more recent data and review aspects of the plan that are not currently as relevant, as well as think about exactly how we want to present and promote it.

Caitlin mentions that she and Chris met with Citygroup this past week and talked about the idea of having a CWG reading group, to start from the beginning and read 2 sections per week. The preference would be to meet in person, but hybrid meetings are also possible. Rob asks if the group will review the Pratt report or the actual CWG selected options. Caitlin: we can start with the Pratt report and then move into the CWG plan itself. The idea is to give a wider range of people more depth of understanding and background about how the plan was created.

Zishun shares his enthusiasm about Chris Marte's win, says that it shows the power of the people. The community now has many ideas about what is possible when we are united. He would like to see us look over the plan for any needed updates, and suggests we discuss expanding the plan into areas not previously covered, like the Grand Street Co-ops. He also suggests speaking with Soho/Noho tenants to see if there is interest in expanding the principles behind the CWG plan into their community plan, are they interested in working more together? How do we continue to unite around these issues? Wonders if Chris will meet with CWG? Caitlin: yes, we will set up a meeting to strategize soon.

Rob notes that Tom (who wasn't able to attend this evening) had suggested planning a "zoning gala" with Chris Marte and other primary winners, including BP candidate Mark Levine to get them on the same page. Rob thinks Levine is skeptical of our plan, and that maybe we could expand the event to include other groups in Manhattan who have similar zoning concerns.

Fran wonders about using the term "gala", thinks it might not sound welcoming to everyone.

Rob mentions that a group he was involved with did a similar event to address bar oversaturation issues, bringing office holders to a large event, not for them to speak, but to listen to the community, as a public way to raise concerns. It was effective in dealing with the bar issues.

Fran feels that a town hall might be more comfortable for people. She also feels cautious about the discussions around making updates to the plan, notes that we don't want to be sent back to the drawing

board. The emphasis on the reading group should be on educating our community. Caitlin agrees. Violette notes that the goal is mostly to have the details fresh in mind to help spread knowledge.

Rob mentions that the Pratt report is mostly data and that it doesn't explain the actual zoning designations, or why certain options were chosen over others. There are 15 pages at the end that specify the actual plan, let's go through that and dive into the options. Michael is concerned that the bigger picture and context will be missing without reading the full report. Some discussion about where to find the more zoning-heavy details for analysis. Caitlin notes that this is just the beginning of a process of deeper engagement.

Fannie re-shares a document that Rob compiled earlier about things that may need updating, we will review and address.

Fran wonders about the general election, Caitlin: we are looking good, so we'll be really diving into the issues in the meantime to prepare for Chris taking office.

Zishun notes that the reading group is an opportunity to get new people interested and on board.

Mitchell inquires about the actual steps required to submit the plan. Rob: the plan will be presented to DCP, which will do its own study and create their own zoning plan, and at that point we must stand strong together in order to get the plan we want. Then the plan goes through ULURP and EIS process. Fran wonders about the makeup of DCP under a new mayor. Mitchell notes that Eric Adams has supported 70 Mulberry Street, however he and the new BP nominee have not been very supportive of community-led rezoning.

Zishun emphasizes the importance of activating people leading up to this process, wonders if we should host an event soon. Chris notes that they will be strategizing and mobilizing over the next two weeks.

Fannie inquires about the status of the jail situation. Chris: still in the appeals process, we will host a press conference soon. Eric Adams is on the record against the jails, but we need to organize around holding him accountable.

### **5WTC Affordable Tower Coalition**

Vittoria gives a short recap about the 5WTC Coalition currently in formation. The Coalition has 3 main asks in their petition: (1) 5WTC be 100% affordable housing, including preference for the responders and survivors (includes parts of Chinatown), and their children, of the September 11 terrorist attacks, (2) Additional community representatives be included on any Community Advisory Committee (CAC), (3) The community advisory process include regular meetings and be transparent and open to the public.

Briar inquires about how affordability levels will be determined, it feels important that this not go the way of so much housing that gets advertised as being affordable, but actually isn't. Vittoria notes that this is part of what the Coalition will be working on. The Coalition is working to get better representation for the community on the CAC, which right now doesn't include anyone from Chinatown or Southbridge Towers etc. More details on the Coalition can be found here: <https://affordabletower5.com/>

Rob asks if the group can reach consensus about signing onto the 5WTC Coalition petition as CWG. We can discuss CWG formally joining the Coalition as we move forward. No objections.

## **Other updates**

Zishun mentions that MoCA is reopening and that there will be a protest in front of the building (215 Centre St.) on Wed. July 14<sup>th</sup> at 9:45am, to call out MoCA for taking the city's bribe of \$35 million in exchange for not opposing the borough-based jail plans, as well as their continued association with board co-chair Jonathan Chu, one of Chinatown's biggest landlords who is behind the closure of the Jing Fong dining room and the loss of many local union jobs.

Fannie also notes that ERPA is planning a protest at 1 Centre St. to demand that Comptroller Scott Stringer not sign off on the ESCR project contractor bid. The city has sent the bid to him to sign and he has 30 days. ERPA is in the middle of another lawsuit around the contractor situation, Stringer is named in the lawsuit. Details to come.

Meeting notes courtesy of Briar Winters