

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

Voting members present: 229 Henry Street Tenants Association (Xiu Yiu Cho); Bowery Alliance of Neighbors (Mitchell Grubler); Chinatown and Lower East Side Artists Against Displacement (Francisca Benitez); Chinese Staff and Workers Association (Jeng Fung, Zishun Ning, Ren Yang); Groundwork (Caitlin Kelmar, Christopher Marte); Land's End 2 Residents Association (Mercer Jabul, Tanya Negrón); Lower East Side Organized Neighbors (Tanya Negrón, Antonio QueyLin); Lower East Side Unified Neighbors Association (Tanya Negrón, Richard Yuen); Mujeres y Hombres Luchadores (Yolanda Donato); National Mobilization Against Sweatshops (Francisca Benitez, Joanna Estevez, Madeleine Jackson, Steph Kranes, Antonio QueyLin, Briar Winters); Youth Against Displacement (Steph Kranes, Zishun Ning).

Also present: rob hollander (Lower East Side Residents for Responsible Development).

Meeting convened at 6:45pm, Richard Yuen (LESUNA) facilitating.

Agenda approval

Briar Winters (NMASS): The agenda includes approval of the march minutes, a LESON update, a Bowery update, LaGuardia Houses update, the mission revision, Pratt Plan update, meeting time and location, the proposed lifting of the FAR cap, the Seward Park fair, activism at the Seward Park library and website review.

The agenda is approved by all present without objection.

March minutes

The March minutes are approved by all present without objection.

LESON update

Tanya Negrón (LE2RA, LESON, LESUNA): LESON is writing a letter on behalf of the community, including supportive organizations. It addresses our strategy and why it's needed. LESON should put out a survey to ask what our community concerns are. It's not just the waterfront -- it's NYCHA and the whole neighborhood. We want to draft the letter before the press conference for the EIS at the end of April. The EIS hearing will be on a Monday, announced on the DCP website. The text amendment has not reached DCP.

Rezoning of the waterfront may not move forward. We should gather signatures to show that the community wants the entire rezoning plan, not a partial rezoning.

Yolanda Donato (LESMHL): The NMASS flyer gives more information on the future.

Tanya: We can attach it to the letter.

Fran Benitez (CLAAD, NMASS): We should have a button on the website.

Madeleine Jackson (NMASS): A petition helps so neighbors see previous signatures.

Tanya: The goal is 5,000 signatures.

83-85 Bowery update

Zishun Ning (CSWA, YAD): The deadline for tenant return has passed. The landlord used The DoB to prevent the tenants from going home. The tenants got support from groups across the city. Byron from Queens was impressed with the CWG plan and would like to know more. The landlord will pay for the hotel. Tenants were asked to move belongings for the asbestos removal. They are considering a town hall to inform the community of what is happening. Also, 229 Henry went to housing court and appellate court.

La Guardia Houses update

Tanya: Only 12 people attended the Next Gen meetings and most were not residents of La Guardia. They said don't want any amenities. and don't want any infill, but they did say they want a supermarket. Next Gen turned that into as a form of support. Residents aren't coming out. Vayl is there right now. Felicia is overwhelmed.

Richard: Extell is supposed to provide a supermarket.

rob (LESRRD): Where do we go to have a voice on the supermarket?

Tanya: The District Leader.

rob: Also CB3 chair?

Madeleine: Let's go back to La Guardia and ask the residents to come to the table.

Mission Statement

[The mission statement is read with the additions. rob will incorporate the additions to the mission.]

Pratt Plan update

rob: Eva explained that MIH doesn't change the Plan recommendations. I'll send her a brief paragraph that she'll review on the implications of MIH on the plan.

FAR uncapping

rob: It would not affect any neighborhood unless there is a rezoning. It would allow greater density to relieve the housing crunch and create more affordable housing. But if low income neighborhoods are rezoned for larger buildings, it will gentrify those neighborhoods and result in community displacement.

Tanya: Greater density has an impact on our schools.

Briar: Can some of us gather more information on the implications?

rob: I'm interested.

Meeting location and time

Mitchell: David Mulkins has a connection with University Settlement.

Fran: The library is tricky. it would work only for an earlier time.

Mitchell Grubler (BAN): What was the outcome of the poll?

rob: 13 to 11 in favor of 5:30pm, but we need more members to express their preferences. I'll encourage members to go to the poll again. Is there anyone who cannot make the earlier time?

Madeleine: I can't.

Seward Park Fair

Briar: Mary O'Grady is coordinating a "Let's Talk Democracy" empowerment and advocacy workshop, May 2, 6:15-7:45.

Joanna Estevez (NMASS) & Madeleine: Let's find out if we can table. Can we present?

Let's find out more.

Briar: Consensus is we're interested.

Website

Fran: Please everyone look at it. I have 3 issues: the plan should precede the strategy. There should be a menu option for strategies and actions including the LESON strategy and actions. Also, all the members should be listed together on one list. All the past minutes should be posted.

Briar: There should be some mention of the old website and explain why the old one is still up and why our website is current.

Screening at the library

Madeleine: We attended a screening of Class Divide. We talked to the librarian who was completely supportive. We could hold an event in June. Figure out a day for panel discussions.

Antonio QueyLin: We could bring the movie to the community rooms.

Caitlin: We should draft a press release. Bowery Boogie would feature it.

Briar: If there is no new business, meeting is adjourned.

Meeting adjourned, 8:15pm.

Respectfully submitted,
rob hollander, CWG Sec'y