

**DRAFT Minutes**  
**Chinatown Working Group Meeting**  
**February 4, 2019, 6:30pm, 275 Cherry Street Community Room**

**Voting members present:** Art Against Displacement (Vanessa Thill); Bowery Alliance of Neighbors (Mitchell Grubler); Chinese Staff and Workers Association (Zishun Ning); Good Old Lower East Side (Tyquan Bates, Gio Matos, Julian Morales); Land's End 2 Residents Association (Mercer Jabul); National Mobilization Against Sweatshops (Briar Winters); Youth Against Displacement (Caitlin Kelmar, Zishun Ning).

**Also present:** Bob Angles (DSA); Andrew Hiller (DSA); rob hollander (Lower East Side Residents for Responsible Development).

Meeting called to order at 6:50pm, Zishun Ning facilitating.

rob hollander: Two corrections from last meeting: Michele de la Uz is appointed to the City Planning Commission not by the mayor but by the Public Advocate, and the Extell tower was as-of-right and not within the LSRD so no court could have denied Extell its right to build it even if a mayor had tried to prevent it.

Mitchell Grubler (BAN): That doesn't mean it's not gentrifying, out-of-scale and ugly.

AGENDA

LESON update

Deed restriction on 80 Rutgers

Update on CB3 plans

Updating the CWG plan

Framing language

Agenda approved by all present.

JANUARY MINUTES

January minutes approved by all present.

LESON UPDATE

Zishun: LESON is planning to file suit against the city for its violation of its own LSRD zoning. Community support gives weight to the lawsuit. LESON is still looking at the law, so the suit won't be filed right away.

Caitlin Kelmar (YAD): We have until April to file. We're interviewing residents and considering which aspects of the LSRD should be the prominent issue in the suit. We are consulting with other groups to ensure that it will be comprehensive.

## 80 RUTGERS DEED RESTRICTION

Caitlin: The Borough President found that there's a deed restriction on 80 Rutgers Street. Above a certain height it must be affordable senior housing. The developers would have to have the deed restriction lifted, like the Rivington House. Not clear what will happen.

Zishun: This sudden "surprise discovery" clearly is the result of community opposition. Yet Chin wants to continue with ULURP. Why not say no to the development?

rob: It was community resistance alone that prevented development at P.S. 64. Nothing has been developed there for over 20 years and the deed restriction is still in place.

## UPDATING THE CWG PLAN

Caitlin: The goal would be not to change the plan but to update the demographics or other relevant factual data. It would also be useful to refamiliarize ourselves with the plan.

Vanessa Thill (AAD): Architects are meeting to considering how to make the plan more digestible.

Zishun: Maybe we can join with the architects' project.

Vanessa will be the point person.

## CB<sub>3</sub> PLANS

rob: Eva Hanhardt, the principal author of the CWG Plan, told me a few months ago that she'd heard that discussions about zoning Chinatown had resumed. Any such discussions would have to involve DCP and CB<sub>3</sub> at some point. This is why I suggested that CWG apply for public membership on the Chinatown Sub-Committee of CB<sub>3</sub>.

Mitchell: Who's on it?

rob: Wellington Chen, banker, developer and architect who was instrumental in developing the Flushing Mall.

Caitlin: ...and represents the Chinatown BID.

Julian Morales (GOLES): [Lists the names of the Committee members.]

Mitchell: Jonathan Chu is another developer. He built the new hotel 50 Bowery just south of Canal Street.

Caitlin: Maybe we can go back to our groups to see who has the capacity to take that on?

Zishun: If it's just for information, we don't need to be a public member.

rob: A public member can vote on the committee proposals and can participate in the committee discussions.

Mitchell: The public member votes in the committee, though not at the full board meetings.

Zishun: Are their meetings public?

rob: Yes, but the general public can't vote and might not even be allowed to speak. What do we lose by being public member?

Caitlin: Why do we think they will be meeting again?

rob: We should find out if there are renewed discussions on Chinatown.

Caitlin will investigate.

### FRAMING

rob: The two members who asked to have this on the agenda are not here, so maybe we should table this matter for a later time.

Zishun: Okay.

### RETURNING MEMBERS

Caitlin: Why don't we send out a Newsletter updating the former members on our work to promote the plan, our successes and our projects?

Briar and Caitlin will work on a newsletter.

### NEW BUSINESS

Mitchell: A big reason for our insistence on the whole plan was that the East Village rezoning left out Chinatown and the Lower East Side and the fear -- which has come to pass -- that our neighborhoods would be developed. CB3 is rezoning to prevent chain stores north of Houston to 14th Street, from Avenue D to 2nd Avenue. Will the chain stores then move to our neighborhood? The commercial rezoning will limit the physical size of stores.

Caitlin: So no big box stores, but a small Verizon would slip through?

rob: Storefront space limits are included in the CWG Plan too.

Caitlin: There's a SoHo rezoning meeting in Chinatown coming up. All the areas excluded in the EV commercial rezoning would be allies for us.

[The EV commercial rezoning will be on the agenda for the CB3 Economics Committee Wednesday. The SoHo rezoning open house will be held at P.S. 130 same day.]

Julian: GOLES wanted to let you know what we are working on. We worked with CWG for many years now we're working on the area that is being under immediate threat. We support the entire CWG plan. We understand your position on getting the entire plan. We don't have the resources to promote the entire plan -- we have only the tenth of the people needed to move forward the entire program. So we are working on the rezoning effort on the waterfront. Our lawsuit is separate from Brewer's.

Caitlin: Did you pay for the zoning application fee?

Julian: CB3 sponsored so the application fee was waived. We are still interested in pushing the whole plan, so we'd like to work with you since we can't do it ourselves alone. What are your plans to move it forward? Do you think the administration would be willing to take on? Who would initiate?

Zishun: Displacement is the issue that brings the communities together. Why not mobilize all the communities together? If we organize separately, how can we succeed? If the plan had been implemented, the proposed jail could not be built. If we focus on any section, we pit one community against the other. We have a mayoral election coming up. The candidates should speak out in favor of implementing the entire plan.

Julian: GOLES, as a non-profit, cannot by law engage in partisan politics.

Caitlin: I heard Margaret Chin has not signed on. What's going on there with her and Brewer?

Julian: They are not co-applicants. We will move forward with or without them. They are focused on their litigation. The Council Speaker has expressed an interest.

Caitlin: Have you filed your lawsuit yet?

Julian: Not yet, but soon. So, although we are working distinctly, we've come to see if this is a space where we can participate, coordinate and cooperate.

rob: I hope you'll continue to participate in CWG. The mayoral election is a great opportunity to corner the candidates on the plan. On the other hand, we are not the only

player determining the game. The mayor, DCP and the community boards make decisions that set the terms of the game, so we end up in a struggle on the waterfront, meeting here rather than a location that BAN would prefer. In that sense, the plan has already been successfully pulled apart. We should consider that local groups, like LESON, might have the bandwidth to push their part of their plan while coming to us to coordinate, while CWG remain dedicated to the entire plan.

Julian: The council's new charter revision commission is considering the land use planning process. That's also an opportunity. That will be on the ballot this November. I can send you links and information.

Zishun: May we adjourn?

No objections, meeting adjourned, 7:54pm.

Respectfully submitted,  
rob hollander  
Secretary, CWG