

Dragnea, Irina

From: Ross Lam s.22(1) Personal and Confidential
Sent: Wednesday, June 27, 2018 6:50 PM
To: Public Hearing
Cc: Ball, Elizabeth; Bremner, Hector; Carr, Adriane; De Genova, Melissa; Deal, Heather; Jang, Kerry; Louie, Raymond; Reimer, Andrea; Stevenson, Tim; Robertson, Gregor
Subject: Amendments to the Chinatown Design Guidelines and Policies

Dear Mayor and Council,

I would like to write to you as a small business that does not own property in Chinatown. I believe that at the public hearing on Thursday, you will hear from many speakers which represent property owners, and also many speakers that are trying to preserve the heritage of Chinatown. I have been told by recently by members of both groups that there are not many of the commercial tenants that are willing to speak to this, so I would like to share with you my perspective.

My family operates a housewares store on East Pender Street. This is where our business started and we have been here for 30 years.

For a long time I have been a proponent of more market housing in Chinatown to balance the abundance of social housing in the area. I felt that there needed to be more residents with disposable incomes here to support the local economy. We have seniors that come into our store to make small purchases such as batteries because they know that we will help them replace them in their portable radios and TV remote controllers. Unfortunately this will not sustain us.

Our businesses has evolved over the years to survive and we now also have a large mix of non-Chinese customers that come across the city to our Chinatown location for our products and services. I was hoping that having new businesses setting up shop in Chinatown (regardless if they had Chinese owners or not) would bring vibrancy back to the area and new customers to our store. However, what I am seeing is that these new businesses which have come are not complementing the traditional Chinatown businesses. Most of the new restaurants are not open during the day when shops are open. The clientele of the new retail stores, art galleries, and coffee shops are young and too hip to be interested in the products and services from long time Chinatown businesses such as ours. So instead of having the new businesses and the established businesses helping each other to grow and succeed, our customers are fighting over the limited parking spaces.

I was also very disappointed with the new condominium projects that have been built recently under the current policy. The retail offering were small and cramped with low ceilings but still very expensive. It seems that the almost all of the new residents in these buildings are living here because they cannot afford to rent or buy downtown, and not because they want to be part of the Chinatown community. I feel the same way about the businesses in these new developments.

I no longer know if more market housing will help the businesses in Chinatown, but I believe that more seniors housing will not help either. Maybe more family housing? But how do you make ensure that if a developer builds 2 or 3 bedrooms units, it is occupied by a family with children?

In the past few years, I have visited two other prominent Chinatowns in New York and San Francisco. What I noticed there is they have larger buildings there compared to the 25-foot frontages that is typical of Vancouver's Chinatown. There is retail and/or restaurants on the ground floor and 'family housing' on the upper floors. You see many elderly Chinese seniors living there with their children and grandchildren. I believe that this local residential community has allowed the businesses in these other Chinatowns to remain vibrant. Of course not having the DTES next door or having to compete with Richmond also makes things much easier!

With regards to the retail and office component of the new design criteria that the city planners are proposing, I am all for it! Paul, Helen, Wesley and Tom have done a great job to improve this over the current policy. I especially like the requirement for a mezzanine and 2nd floor offices. I am also in favor of the Chinatown Voices request that existing frontages should be grandfathered and that Chinatown businesses do not fit a cookie cutter floor plate and should not have to leave Chinatown if they need to grow.

Our business has outgrown our premises ourselves and our staff are tripping over each other as we do not have enough space for the newer divisions of our business. I have seen the plans for the commercial area for the Sparrow project and I think they did a good job in incorporating the new design guidelines. The retail and office spaces in there would be very suitable for us. However, the price tag for the first and second floor retail + office is \$8,700,000!! So this space would be well beyond our means to rent or buy. It will be interesting to see what kind of business will be able to afford to set up shop there.

I attended the UNESCO presentation in January featuring Dr Lee Ho Yin and he talked about how the intangible characteristics of a neighbourhood such as the people and businesses within it are just as important as it's architecture.

I am very concerned about the survival of businesses like ours which have their roots in Chinatown but do not own the buildings that we occupy. With speculation from developers comes increases in property values, which are passed on to the rent of commercial tents. We have seen many of our neighbours leave Chinatown recently because of the increasing overall costs to run a small business in Vancouver as well as dwindling sales from fewer and fewer Chinese shoppers that chose to come to Chinatown.

In summary, I don't know if the proposed amendments will help or further hinder independent businesses such as ours in Chinatown. My hope is that you also consider the ramifications for small businesses that rent in here when you listen to the presentations from the property owners and heritage advocates.

Sincerely,

Ross Lam

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Dragnea, Irina

From: Imelda Nurwisah s.22(1) Personal and Confidential
Sent: Wednesday, June 27, 2018 5:49 PM
To: Public Hearing
Subject: Chinatown Zoning Amendments

Dear Staff and Council,

I commend staff for their diligent public consultation work in the DTES and Chinatown community. It is difficult to balance the community's vision for their neighbourhood with development realities.

With regard to the latter, I feel that Staff and Council need to honour the previous 10 years of consultation conducted to form the HA-1A zoning for Chinatown. This document sought to revitalize Chinatown through redevelopment. This is not an inherently evil endeavour if done with social outcomes in mind.

Cities are limited in terms of their financial ability and risk tolerance to deliver social housing and community amenities so it falls on the developer to build this under the prevailing municipal framework. This should be tweaked to deliver funding to social programs, legacy business support, and the creation of programming space for youth and seniors. These are difficult to deliver at the civil society level without critical mass and financial capital.

Can a discussion not be had about a public benefits plan that would be directed by community priorities and include thoughtful implementation? I feel that this would result in better outcomes for the Chinatown community.

Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully,

Imelda Nurwisah

s.22(1) Personal and Confidential

Good evening Mayor and council.

I am a retired VPD officer. My 30-year career has taken me full circle. I started out as a Constable in what used to be Team 3, this was Gastown, DTES and Chinatown. By the time I retired I was the Superintendent for the North half of the city. Basically Broadway North. This again included the three areas I mentioned.

Although I don't live in Vancouver I have decided to speak before council as I believe that I can offer some insight on my impressions of Chinatown and how it has changed since I first started walking the beat in 1981.

I have fond memories of walking through Chinatown with its abundance of unique businesses spilling out onto the sidewalks with the hustle and bustle of a vibrant and very robust community. Not just from tourists that would visit, but with residents.

This is quite the different picture from when I retired 30 years later.

A number of businesses are closed, fewer people can be seen, the flavor of the neighborhood has changed. It has the feel of a community that is struggling to survive and maintain its identity.

In contrast I would like to turn your attention to the west, Yale Town.

Before Yale Town there was expo 86, and before that I remember there being a few old night clubs and nothing else. Why has that area gone from derelict buildings to what it is now? The answer is the influx of people and businesses. It's recognized that one supports the other, and both are needed for a successful thriving community. More so if you are trying to ensure the survival of an ethnically specific community.

Chinatown, to be blunt and harsh, is on its way to decay. If the current trend continues there will no longer be a Chinatown for people to argue over its future. It would be an absolute shame for the city to lose this jewel. It is such a historically unique neighborhood.

Now, I know nothing about development, or the economics of development. What I do know comes from 30 years of working the streets of Vancouver and all of its different neighborhoods. From my observations, I can tell you that without businesses to bring people in and adequate numbers of people living in a community to support the businesses it's difficult for a community to thrive.

You only have to look a couple streets to the north to see how the loss of businesses and lack of resident population has ravaged a community. Which again, I witnessed its decline over the course of my 30 years.

I spent years working with city staff through the Vancouver Agreement to try and address and fix some of the issues that had developed in that neighborhood. I only raise this to illustrate how difficult it is to put a neighborhood back on its feet when it has dipped so low

Those of you that continue to do that work know of what I speak.

I understand that these are complex issues with many facets, and that its important to get these things right. However, I strongly believe that Chinatown can be made to succeed and thrive through bringing in market housing, and not only supporting but encouraging the development of new businesses that are reflective of the Chinese community.

It can be done.

You only have to look across the Fraser River to see a thriving Chinese business community.

As of 2011 Vancouver has roughly 28% Chinese residents, why not make it more attractive for them to shop and invest and live in Chinatown rather than going to Richmond. Since 1996 Richmond has increased it Chinese population to about 56%. Why such a difference?

My opinion, its because potential residents and business owners are not being offered what is needed, and what they desire, so they go elsewhere.

Suffice to say that one the roles of the Mayor and Council is to support the residents and make the city attractive in all aspects to encourage individuals to spend their leisure time and shop within their own city and continue to live there.

I believe that by limiting the opportunity for people to live within Chinatown you will not attract the businesses to invest, as they may not see it financially viable, and you won't get what I call the hustle and bustle of people that you need to support the resurgence of the community.

Thank you for your time.

Ludwig, Nicole

From: Sydney Ball s.22(1) Personal and Confidential
Sent: Thursday, June 28, 2018 2:57 PM
To: Public Hearing
Subject: Chinatown Economic Revitalization Action Plan

Hello,

I stand with the Chinatown Concern group and the sentiments of the low-income residents of Chinatown in their opposition to the current iteration of the Chinatown Economic Revitalization Action Plan.

Year after year we are looking at the loss of services and amenities for low-income Chinese seniors due to the rapid gentrification of the DTES. The rising costs of housing and essentials is not being taken seriously in this plan for revitalization. The culture and community that was made by the working class residents in Chinatown is being used as a selling point for condos and trendy businesses while the city stands by and lets these residents be displaced. It's time to put people before profits.

Drastic action needs to be taken now to provide 100% welfare and pension rate housing in Chinatown and protect it's heritage and residents. The real thing needed to protect heritage is the people.

A Plan has already made, please implement the demands of the People's Vision for Chinatown: <https://chinatownaction.org/>

Sincerely,
Sydney Ball