



Rising Voices Urges City of Detroit to Preserve Historic Building Key to the Asian American Movement



Rising Voices Urges City of Detroit to Preserve Historic Chinatown Building Key to the Asian American Movement in the United States.

The building at 3143 Cass Avenue served as a community center and home for the American Citizens for Justice, a force for the Asian American movement in the wake of the murder of Vincent Chin.

DETROIT, MI - Rising Voices joins elected officials, community organizations and advocates to call on Mayor Mike Duggan's administration to stop the demolition of the building at 3143 Cass Avenue in Detroit's historic Chinatown. The building is one of the last remnants of the city's old Chinatown and holds great significance for the Chinese and Asian American communities in Southeast Michigan.

The building slated for demolition for decades served as a community center for local Chinese Americans, providing a welcoming space where residents could gather, share mutual aid resources and celebrate cultural holidays and community events. However, the building also served as the meeting place for the American Citizens for Justice, an organization formed in response to the killing of Vincent Chin in 1982. The ACJ was key to establishing a national model for the pan-Asian movement that worked in solidarity with Black civil rights organizations and leaders to advocate for social justice.

“The preservation of 3143 Cass is essential to recognizing not only the historical presence and contributions of Chinese Americans in the city of Detroit, but of the larger pan-Asian community as well,” said Jasmine Rivera, co-executive director of Rising Voices. “In its heyday, the building was a safe haven for the community and later on served as a center for Asian American civil rights activists whose work has had an enduring impact on the rest of the nation. We call on the city to work with the developers and community members to preserve and explore options to restore the building back to its original function of providing a nurturing gathering place for the local community.”

In the wake of the recent rise of anti-Asian violence, the activism that originated from Detroit’s Chinatown remains a relevant and important legacy for the nation to recognize and uplift as an example of community power and action. The destruction of this building would only serve to erase this essential aspect of American civil rights history and disrespect the legacy of our communities.

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Rising Voices, a project of the Center for Empowered Politics, is a nonprofit 501(c)(4) organization that seeks to increase the civic participation of Asian Americans in Michigan by developing the leadership, organizing, and power-building capacity of Asian American women, youth and communities. It is the state’s first 501(c)(4) organization dedicated to political organizing and mobilizing for Asian American issues in Michigan.

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