

BELMONTE, SAN ROQUE RESIDENTS VOW TO FIND 'WIN-WIN SITUATION'

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Residents and volunteers of Sitio San Roque, an informal settlement in Barangay Bagong Pagasa, Quezon City, celebrated a “landmark victory” after submitting their Community Development Plan (CDP) for in-city and on-site housing to Mayor Joy Belmonte on Monday. Belmonte received San Roque’s Cdp—which residents had laboriously crafted with volunteer lawyers, architects and other design professionals—during a dialogue with community leaders and members of the Save San Roque Alliance at City Hall.

She called for cooperation among community members, developers and government agencies like the National Housing Authority (NHA) to achieve a “win-win situation.” “They lost trust in government when they were given false information way back in 2013 only to be demolished without warning,” Belmonte said. “We had a very fruitful meeting this afternoon and I will try my very best to gather all the relevant agencies together so we can agree on a resolution acceptable to all.”

“The mayor maintains her promise that there will be no demolition without a proper review of the agreement between the NHA and Ayala Corporation [on developing the site], to check if they have fully complied with the requirements under the Urban Development and Housing Act of 1992,” said Jmar Atienza, one of the convenors of the Save San Roque Alliance.

The CDP is the formal response of around 5,000 families in Sitio San Roque to the planned Quezon City Central Business District (QCCBD). It is an inclusive, participatory and community-led development plan that pushes for on-site development. Since the QCCBD’S inception, residents said they had been facing threats of eviction, forced demolitions and harassment. Sitio San Roque is government-owned land that is part of the 256-hectare QCCBD, a joint venture between the NHA and Ayala Corp.