Summary of Notes of the
13th Meeting of the Central & Western District Council (C&W DC)

held on 18 March 2010

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(1) Meeting the Director of Food and Environmental Hygiene

The Director briefed members on the priority work areas of his department. Regarding food safety, the two-year grace period of the Food and Drugs (Composition and Labeling) (Amendment: Requirements for Nutrition Labelling and Nutrition Claim) Regulation 2008 would expire on 1 July 2010. Regarding market management, the department succeeded in renting out two third of the 40 stalls set aside for introducing new trades into the markets. The department also offered rent discount for 1 180 stalls which had been vacant for a long time. Regarding hawker management and licensing policy, the department would maintain the existing number of hawker stalls while allowing hawkers to take over adjacent vacant hawker site. The rest of the vacant hawker sites would be opened for other applicants.

Several members commented on the work of the department. A member hoped that a mechanism could be set up for the district council to monitor the performance of cleansing contractors. A member said that some shop owners might not fully understand the regulations and registration system related to pre-packed food. He hoped that an inspection could be carried out before the new regulations came into effect on 1 July, during which shop owners would be informed about the regulations and exemptions. A member was concerned about the time table of road washing and the disciplinary mechanism of cleansing contractors. Another member said that the government had been shifting between bringing hawkers into indoor markets and reviving open markets. It should clarify the rationale behind the policy. A member said that the government should develop strategy to tackle the hygienic problems caused by cat, dogs and

pigeons in the district.

The Director responded to all members' views. The Chairman concluded that the department should increase the competitiveness of market stalls and take regional factors into account in issuing static hawker licences.

(2) Progress of the MTR West Island Line (WIL) Project – Work progress of the WIL

The Senior Co-ordination Engineer of MTR reported that temporary chess tables, playground facilities and fitness equipment for the elderly would be provided in October 2010 in seven places in the district. The minibus driveway of the Kennedy Town minibus terminus would be narrowed down while the rooftop of station exit opened to create a connected open space. The upper level of the New Kennedy Town Swimming Pool was under construction and phase one was expected to open in 2011. The blasting works of the temporary magazine underneath Victoria Road had already begun in the frequency of once a day between 2pm to 5pm from Monday to Saturday. Regarding temporary traffic management measures, some sections of Ko Shing Street, Des Voeux Road West, Queen's Road West near Whitty Street, High Street, Bonham Road, Forbes Street and Smithfield would be narrowed. The construction site on the slow lane of Des Voeux Road West would shrink and all essential equipment be placed on Li Shing Street to reduce traffic impact. Strata resumption would continue.

Several members regretted that the proposed Bonham Road vent shaft could not be removed. They urged MTR to require the contractor to minimize the size and emission of the vent shaft. Devices should be set up to monitor the pollution level to safeguard the health of residents, teachers and pupils. A member asked in which month the construction of Hill Street escalator would begin and the exact completion date. The representatives of MTR promised to build the vent shaft on a level higher than the primary school and turn it away from the school. The

Chairman said that C&WDC would hold an informal meeting in the afternoon of 16 April to discuss the matters related to the extension of the MTR Admiralty Station and blasting works.

(3) Findings and recommendations of the traffic study on the Mid-Levels

Comments of the Ombudsman on the implementation of height restriction on the Mid-Levels

Request for constructing another escalator from Central to the Mid-Levels to address the problem of population surge and traffic congestion

The Chief Engineer/Transport Planning of the Transport Department explained the Mid-Levels Moratorium and the findings of the Traffic Study for the Mid-Levels Area. Several members put forward their views and questions on the result of the traffic study. A member considered that the moratorium was necessary before the MTR West Island Line came into operation. He also said that a moratorium was needed because the Mid-Levels had adverse geological conditions. According to the consultation done by the government over the years, most residents on Conduit Road opposed to cancelling the moratorium. In support of building another escalator to the Mid-Levels, several members were of the view that the government should take the effectiveness of the pedestrian-crossing and traffic initiatives into account in deciding whether to cancel the moratorium. A member said that the Ladder Street escalator proposal could be a mistake because the traffic volume forecast by the government would appear much earlier than 2021. A member supported to control development density by transferring plot ratios. He also doubted the accuracy of the traffic data used in the traffic study report.

Several members supported the Peel Street escalator proposal because it was in line with the Conserving Central policy and compatible with the existing Mid-Levels escalator. The two escalators would be complementary by providing uphill and downhill services at the same time and in the same place. Several members wanted to build one more escalator at Pound Lane. C&WDC on the whole opposed to the Ladder Street escalator proposal for fear of destroying the outlook of the Grade 1 historical building.

After discussion, C&WDC adopted the following motion:

> Motion: The government should build as soon as possible another escalator to the Mid-Levels within about 100 meters west of the existing Central to Mid-Levels escalator to relieve the traffic congestion caused by the rising population on Kent Road, Robinson Road, Seymour Road, Castle Road and Conduit Road.

The Chairman concluded that C&WDC objected to cancelling the moratorium and had reservations over the traffic study report which based too much on assumptions.

(4) Report on heritage conservation initiatives, Conserving Central, Financial Assistance for Maintenance Scheme, and the assessment of 1 444 historic buildings

The Commissioner for Heritage introduced his work on heritage conservation. There were all together 94 declared monuments in Hong Kong. According to the mechanism of heritage impact assessment, any capital works project which might affect heritage sites had to conduct a heritage impact assessment. The Revitalising Historical Buildings Through Partnership Scheme was launched in 2008. The government had selected the best conservation and re-use plans for each of the six historical buildings under Batch I of the scheme. Batch II of the scheme covered Old Tai Po Police Station, the Blue House Cluster, the former Fanling Magistracy, the old house at Wong Uk Village in Shatin and the Stone Houses in Kowloon City. Financial assistance in the form of grants was provided for privately-owned graded historic buildings owners to carry out minor maintenance works by themselves. In respect of Conserving Central, the Hong Kong Jockey Club would announce the new design of the Central Police Compound soon. The government would soon invite proposals on transforming the Former Police Married Quarters on Hollywood Road into a creative industries landmark. It had also decided that the Main Wing and East Wing of the Central Government Offices Complex would be preserved for adaptive re-use by the Department of Justice, while the West Wing be demolished to make way for commercial development. The Murray Building would be demolished to make way for a hotel

while four of the historical buildings of the Hong Kong Sheng Kung Hui (HKSKH) Compound be preserved.

Some members were concerned about the development of the historic cityscape of the district. They advised the government to formulate an overall development plan for the district to preserve the historic cityscape and safeguard the interest of the indigenous residents. Without overall planning, the revised Land (Compulsory Sale For Redevelopment) Ordinance would speed up redevelopments at the peril of cityscape and the life of residents. A member was concerned about how far privately owned historical buildings could be preserved. The Commissioner assured that historical building assessment was an ongoing exercise to be conducted on a regular basis.

(5) Amendments incorporated into the draft Sai Ying Pun and Sheung Wan Outline Zoning Plan No. S/H3/23

The representative of the Planning Department explained the eight amendments incorporated by the draft zoning plan of Sai Yin Pun and Sheung Wan, covering the Former Police Married Quarters on Hollywood Road, Lok Hing Lane Sitting-out Area, Wa On Lane Sitting-out Area and 9B Bonham Road. Formerly designated MTR routes and stations and a portion of the G/IC at 9B Bonham Road were deleted. MTR alignment and stations were indicated according to the authorized railway scheme on the MTR West Island Line. 9B Bonham Road was defined as "Railway (MTR exit, vent shaft and mechanical and electrical plant)". The above amendments were gazette on 5 February 2010 by the Town Planning Board. The draft Sai Ying Pun & Sheung Wan Outline Zoning Plan No. S/H3/23 showing the amendments would be exhibited for public inspection for a period of two months up to 7 April 2010.

Concerned about Amendment Item F related to changing 9B Bonham Road to MTR exit and vent shaft, a member stressed that C&WDC opposed to the location of the vent shaft. Another member was concerned that Amendment Item A1&A2 was not bound by height restriction. He

considered it necessary to maintain the gross floor area and building height on the current level. The Vice-Chairman concluded that C&WDC had reached a consensus on tree preservation in the Former Police Married Quarters on Hollywood Road and on building height restriction. The Chairman proposed to submit members' views to the Town Planning Board.

(6) Request for finalizing as soon as possible the development plan of the Central & Western District Promenade

A member proposed to hold a planning contest for the development of a continuous promenade in the Central & Western District, aiming at collecting professional and public views on how to realise the dream about the promenade as soon as possible. The representative of the Development Bureau said that the Bureau had the determination to build a continuous, green and accessible promenade. It would allocate resources to implement short-term, medium-term and long-term measures to enhance the waterfront of the district in a gradual manner.

Several members urged the Bureau to stop the Marine Department (MD) from putting out the vacant berths of the Western District Public Cargo Working Area for tender. They did not think MD should continue to put out any vacant berth for tender. Members were concerned about the time table of the development of different sections of the Central & Western Promenade. The representative of MD said that to cancel the berths would affect the front-line jobs of drivers, sailors and crews. Several members hoped that MD could postpone the tendering process until the Harbourfront Authority was set up to formulate an overall development plan for the waterfront of the Western district.

C&WDC agreed that the Working Group on the Beautification and Enhancement of the Central & Western District Harbourfront should organize a planning contest for the development of a continuous Central & Western District Promenade. Members strongly requested MD to stop the tendering of the Western District Public Cargo Working Area. The Chairman proposed to

write to the Chief Executive to express members' concern over the government's failure to implement the development plan of the Central & Western District Promenade.

(7) Revitalization of the former campus of Hon Wah College

The University of Hong Kong (HKU) planned to revitalize and restore the former campus of Hon Wah College to a postgraduate hall. However, it was advised by the Buildings Department (BD) to reduce the size the campus so that its coverage area could comply with the existing Buildings Ordinance. The representative of BD said that as HKU had not submitted the building plan yet, he could look into the proposal further with the representative of HKU. Several members were in support of the revitalization and restoration plan of HKU because it could not only preserve Ching Lin Terrace and the collective memories of alumni, but also provide the residential places needed under the "334" new academic structure.

A member said that the college building was very compatible with the environment. Removal works would not only cause hard feelings but also nuisance to the neighbourhood. The Chairman concluded that members were in support of preserving the campus in-situ and to use it as the postgraduate hall of HKU. C&WDC would give its support to HKU proposal in writing.

(8) Concern over the false claim of a member as the Chairman of DC committee

Despite the fact that the chairpersons of DC committees had already been re-elected, a member found that one of the ex-chairmen still put up banners in the capacity of a DC committee chairman. The Chairman concluded that a meeting would be called by the Working Group on Central & Western District Council Affairs in due course to discuss on how to deal with similar matters in the future.

(9) The 10th Central & Western District Festival

The paper seeks to introduce and consult members' views on the background, aims, structure of the organizing committee and funding arrangements of the Festival which would be held in 2010. After discussion, C&WDC agreed that the Festival should promote the concepts of "caring" and "Conserving Central" this year while the main theme be decided by the organizing committee later. It also agreed that no more than 1 million dollars of the DC funds would be reserved in 2010-11 for organizing the Festival.

(10) Funding for organizing diversified community activities

The paper seeks to consult members' views on the allocation of funding for organizing diversified community activities. After discussion, C&WDC agreed to set up the Working Group on the Allocation of Diversified Community Activities Fund to handle applications flexibly and efficiently and to monitor the utilization of funding. The decision of the working group should be regarded as the final decision of C&WDC.

Secretariat of the Central & Western District Council

June 2010