

Notes of the Fifteenth Meeting of the Eastern District Council

The Fifteenth Meeting of the Eastern District Council (EDC) was held on 22 October 2010 and the major items discussed were summarized as follows:

I. Director of Home Affairs to meet Eastern District Council Members

2. The views expressed by the Councillors were summarized as follows :
 - (a) A number of Councillors hoped that the construction of the facilities of Eastern District could be started and completed early, including a Cantonese opera performance venue of the size of a medium theatre, a promenade, a standard 11-a-side grass football pitch, a small swimming pool, a small function arena such as jogging track etc. A Councillor also suggested improving the facilities of the community halls, such as converting the small function room into a chess room. In addition, a Councillor hoped that the number of “count down activities” held in the community halls could be increased.
 - (b) A number of Councillors hoped to hold a full study of how to solve the problem of shops causing street obstruction.
 - (c) A Councillor hoped that the conduct of the district administration summit could be increased from once in two years to once a year, so as to enhance the awareness of each district towards the concrete problems of Hong Kong and to share their experience in a way to widen the horizon of the District Councillors.
 - (d) A number of Councillors opined that the funding for the district facilities should be distributed according to the population ratio. A Councillor considered that more power should be transferred to a District Council and an independent secretariat be formed, there should be financial independence and an additional office be set up for direct support of a District Council.
 - (e) A Councillor pointed out that the district facilities management by the District Council had been conducted over three years and hoped that a conclusion could be drawn to its experience, so as to make improvement to the shortcomings.
 - (f) A Councillor hoped that the resources of a District Council could be increased so as to enable a District Council to handle more district affairs. A Councillor hoped that the number of contractors in the name list of minor works contractors

could be increased so as to arouse competition, in that more choice could be provided for the District Council.

- (g) A Councillor hoped that district work should be esteemed in order to solve livelihood problem, such as keeping the street clean, building rest garden etc. A Councillor pointed out that whenever a problem of greater influence arose, a District Council then looked helpless, he hoped that the authorities would study how the views of a Council could gain esteem and its resolution be confirmed.
- (h) A Councillor hoped that arrangement could be made for professionals or consultative groups to help the private building incorporations to follow up with the matter of building maintenance. In addition, a Councillor hoped that the formation of a professional consultative group could be confirmed as soon as possible so as to strike a balance between the interests of the little landlords and that of an incorporation.
- (i) A Councillor hoped that the problem of the common passage which was at present partly privately owned should be looked at seriously.
- (j) A Councillor held that when the government made a policy, it should proceed from the lower to the upper, and the views of a District Council should be sought first, then the policy should be formally confirmed.
- (k) A Councillor proposed that before the expiration of the tenure of a District Council for this term, the Chief Executive should pay a visit to the District Council in each district.
- (l) A Councillor considered that the Department should provide training for its staffs to enhance their social coping skill and communication ability, so that when they attended the body corporate meetings they could project a good image for the Department.
- (m) A Councillor pointed out that the government had made an inappropriate apportionment of resources. In the bid to host the East Asian Games or the exemption of public housing tenants' rents, they were extravagant in giving out money but failed to grant appropriation for the construction of theatre sound-proof barriers and stadium etc. She was of the opinion that the government should have a concrete plan for the need of the citizens in terms of livelihood and leisure and culture.

- (n) A Councillor proposed that evening statutory declaration service should be added to make convenience for members of a body corporate. He also suggested that District Councillors should also be authorized to administer an oath. In addition, a Councillor suggested that the Departmental representative who attended the meeting of a body corporate could administer an oath.

II. Should Hong Kong Bid to Host the 2003 Asian Games ?

3. The views expressed by the Councillors were summarized as follows :

- (a) Councillors generally showed their support for Hong Kong bidding to host the 2023 Asian Games (AG). The grounds and evidences included : Hong Kong successfully hosted the 2009 East Asian Games and with such experience gained, it was believed that it would be helpful to hosting the AG. It could lift the popularity of Hong Kong, the status and competitiveness of Hong Kong as an international finance centre, it could upgrade those aging sport facilities to the benefits of the citizens, it could foster more young athletes and enhance the quality of the athletes to make Hong Kong a really dynamic city and finance centre, it could enhance social cohesion, it could increase the sport venues of Hong Kong and the opportunity for Hong Kong citizens to do exercise and strengthen their body and reduce the opportunity ratio of illness at young age, it could promote the commonality of sports and make the best use of the original facilities and improve the present situation of lacking exercises. It bore cost effectiveness and would bring about employment opportunity, it could greatly promote city optimization and quality of the citizens, it could improve air quality and round out transport and tour package.
- (b) The Councillors who showed their support opined that the present bidding to host the AG which was to be conducted 13 years later indicated that the government was farsighted and also hoped to make a detailed explanation to the citizens on the arrangement of funds so as to make the application as soon as possible.
- (c) Several Councillors objected the bid to host the AG, they mainly considered that: the climate was not yet mature at the present stage, the economy of Hong Kong had not yet bloomed, the resources should be used in helping the needy and there was no need to be so hurried suddenly. Hong Kong was already a metropolis and there was no need to build up such image by way of bidding to host the AG.

Now that the financial arrangement was not yet clear and in terms of cost-effectiveness, a lot of money would be spent first without seeing any achievement.

- (d) A Councillor hoped that when facilities were being added, training should also be given to the local athletes.
- (e) A Councillor praised the government for listening to the views of the people and following willingly what was right by extending the consultation period. He agreed to the work for promoting sports, but was reserved whether the funds needed to be put into the function could achieved the desired result. He considered that the training of the athletes could not only rely on upgrading the hardware but the determinedness and hard work of the athletes themselves was particularly important.
- (f) A Councillor pointed that the present stage was only to discuss whether or not to bid to host the AG but the process was only most important, it was too early to say whether we could get the right to host the AG. He opined that by means of bidding to host the AG, team(s) of volunteers could be fostered which would make the volunteers realize the etiquette of treating people and such could largely raise the quality of the future generation and it could also improve the city environment, including air quality, infrastructure and quality of the citizens.
- (g) A Councillor considered that if any long-term policy, if it could lift sport spirits and the health of the citizens, it should be supported, so he opined that the bid to host the AG was a correct direction and he supported the proposal. He suggested that the financial arrangement should only provide the funds for operation and the remaining part should be borne by a body coporate whether it was a profit or loss, as such it would be more acceptable to the society.
- (h) A Councillor reflected that the grass-root level had no chance of viewing the Olympic Games or the World Cup, and hoped that the government could review whether it could open its subordinate venue to broadcast the event with large-size television so as to cohere the affinity of sport games.
- (i) A Councillor made the following declaration , “I am in support of Hong Kong bidding to host the 2023 Asian Games in order to raise the sport spirits of the Hong Kong citizen and strengthen their healthy body build, which will be achieved by clear sport policy together with the coordination of hard and soft

ware and the generalization of exercises.

III. Management Scheme for the Display of Roadside Non-commercial Publicity Materials (EDC Paper No. 76/10)

4. The views expressed by the Councillors were summarized as follows:
- (a) Councillors unanimously objected to the management scheme proposed. A Councillor opined that the policy affected the District Council members who served the community and was a blow to the freedom of speech, a restriction on the flow of information and it was even divorced from the reality and did not understand the feeling of the people.
 - (b) A number of Councillors held that the details of the management scheme might not be easily put into force, for instance the request for the banners not to charge publicity fee was not clear; the request for the publicity materials to use anti-ultraviolet ray, anti-moth, anti-mould, durable, strengthened plastics might cause difficulty to skill and enforcement.
 - (c) A Councillor pointed out that the department was originally at its wit's end in handling the illegal hanging of banners and enquired how to take enforcement after conducting the altered plan. A Councillor also worried if the contents of the scheme could be put into force properly.
 - (d) Councillors put forward several enquiries, including if the altered plan had been enforced; for those banners which had not been approved would they be cleared by follow-up action; after the conduct of the altered plan, how to handle the illegal hanging of banners during weekends. The banners of the District Councillors were often confiscated and fined afterwards, whereas the commercial banners had been hanging for good, what was the criterion for this? Was there any studied data to cite as evidence that the hanging of banners would affect the safety of the pedestrians? If an area had not been assigned any location for hanging banners, how would this be handled? Why was it now the criterion which had been set down in the past had to be altered? Why was it not possible to increase the transparency of the enquiry mechanism and was there any consideration taken that the District Councillors had to brief the citizens on information by way of hanging banners?

- (e) A number of Councillors pointed out that the banners were a very important channel for communication and interflow with the citizens, therefore they had to rely on banners for publicity of a District Council and the community affairs, and the alteration of the plan would obliterate the publicity channel of the District Councillors, particularly the roads of Hong Kong Island were narrow and rare and therefore the diminution of locations was impracticable. A Councillor considered that the prime thing to do was to solve the perfunctory enforcement.
- (f) A Councillor pointed out that the alteration of the plan was an intention to narrow the publicity capability of a District Council. A number of Councillors pointed out that the District Councillors were law-abiding but the department took strict enforcement, whereas the commercial banners were treated leniently due to insufficient manpower.
- (g) A Councillor requested that a sample be made to demonstrate how to comply with the publicity specification made by the altered plan.
- (h) A Councillor opined that the criteria which were set down in the past had been used all along and everything was okay, and if now some alterations had to be made, then the data of the traffic accidents which had been caused by the banners should be submitted.
- (i) A number of Councillors elaborated their personal experience which were cited as evidence of strict enforcement against them. A Councillor suggested that the current enforcement procedure be reviewed, particularly when the banner was forced to be deviated from the intended location, for instance, it would be moved by the contractor due to the need for maintenance of road surface.
- (j) Upon discussion, Councillors moved the following motion:

“The Eastern District Council strongly object to the Management Scheme for the display of roadside non-commercial publicity materials proposed by the Lands Department”

Moved by : Councillor CHIU Chi-keung

Seconded by : Councillors CHAO Shing-kie, MH, IP Chiu-shing, MH and CHIU Ka-yin, Andrew.

The motion was unanimously carried by an affirmative vote of 27 with zero

objection and zero abstention.

IV. Discussion of The 2010-11 Policy Address

5. The views expressed by the Councillors were summarized as follows:

- (a) A number of Councillors considered that the “My Home Purchase Plan” failed to help the citizens buy a flat effectively and suggested resumption of building HOS (Home Ownership Scheme) estates. A Councillor suggested that the shortcoming of the current HOS policy should be amended and optimized.
- (b) A Councillor agreed to the increase of directly-funded first-degree places but pointed out that the quality of the private tertiary colleges varied from one to another and hoped that concern should be paid to the quality of the university curriculum.
- (c) A Councillor held that the elderly who were receiving the comprehensive social security assistance payment (CSSAP), although the restriction on their residence in Hong Kong had been relaxed to 60 days, the effectiveness of such was insignificant. A number of Councillors suggested that the limit of absence from Hong Kong imposed on the elderly should be abolished as soon as possible.
- (d) A Councillor expressed that the problem of insufficient manpower in Eastern Hospital was serious and besides, the population was ageing daily therefore it was considered that the welfare of the healthcare personnel should be increased at bulk range in order to retain professionals so as to lift the quality of healthcare service.
- (e) A Councillor proposed that subsidy be given to those old buildings which needed to change the outer wall and install energy-saving facilities, so as to speed up the pace of environmental protection. He also suggested that the underground public facilities should be planned, so as to allow plantation of trees on both side of the road.
- (f) A number of Councillors hoped that the “Work Incentive Transport Subsidy Scheme” could be put into force as soon as possible.
- (g) A Councillor pointed out that the healthcare voucher for the elderly only provided a subsidy of \$250, it was totally insufficient. In addition, he hoped the publicity

on the voluntary healthcare protection scheme could be strengthened, so as to let the public get hold of more details and information.

- (h) A Councillor suggested that the government should change the “Community Care Fund” into a list of donors or organizations, so as to avoid competition for donations between the fund and the volunteer bodies.
- (i) A Councillor suggested that the government should expand the scope of the Protection of Wages on Insolvency Fund to cover pay for untaken annual leave and statutory holidays. He also hoped that the standard working hours be put into force as soon as possible.
- (j) A Councillor pointed out that the labours of Hong Kong did not have the right to collective bargaining and was lacking negotiation ability and hoped that they could be entitled with the right to collective bargaining. He also held that the “inflated building” should be completely prohibited and there was no need to add 10% to the upper ceiling of the overall concessions already enjoyed by numerous items of facilities.
- (k) A Councillor hoped that the average waiting time for public housing units could be shortened to two and a half years. He agreed to introducing legislation to tackle the problems of building dilapidation and unauthorized building works to safeguard the building safety. He also agreed to concrete discussion on regulating the sale of first-hand flats by legislation and reviewing the Capital Investment Entrant Scheme. He held that the deadline for restrictions on “inflated building” to be enforced in April next year could be advanced earlier. In addition, he opined that it would be effective for the URA (Urban Renewal Authority) to build as many small and medium flats as possible.
- (l) A Councillor pointed out that since the strengthening of the building safety measures by the government must involve building management, so it was hoped that the resources of a District Council could be increased, so as to provide more systematic building management training for the owners’ incorporations and to form a working platform for owners’ incorporations to interchange their experience.