

Notes of the Nineteenth Meeting of the Eastern District Council

The Nineteenth Meeting of the Eastern District Council (EDC) was held on 8 July 2011 and the major items discussed were summarized as follows:

I. Commissioner for Labour to meet Eastern District Council Members

The views expressed by the Councillors were summarized as follows :

- (a) A number of Councillors held the following opinions towards the minimum wages and related policy:
 - (i) opined that the current legislation was rather in favour of the labour side thus making the management feel the pressure;
 - (ii) reflected that at the discussion stage of the legislation the middle class all expressed understanding towards the grass-root workers and therefore supported the legislation. The current price of the merchandise increased along with the increase of wages but the service and quality of the workers were not found lifted. Councillors considered that the Department should introduce measures to help improve the level of service but not only to put the resources in the disposal of the complaint cases;
 - (iii) opined that the legislation could provide reasonable remuneration for the workers and that whenever any legislation was being introduced it must undergo the teething troubles and after that the community would benefit eventually;
 - (iv) reflected that in the past there were voluntary organizations which employed the handicapped at ten-odd dollars per hour, but after the legislation was put into effect they could not afford the hourly wages of \$28, such that the handicapped also faced employment difficulty. How would the Department help such organizations;
 - (v) pointed out that the legislation requested that the employer must record the working hours for those workers whose monthly wages were less than \$1,150 and keep a safe record of it as well, what was the purpose of this; why was the daily wages which was higher than the median

wages of \$10,400 was also affected; how to help the small enterprise to record the working hours, particularly those which did not understand clerical work, such as café restaurants, noodle shops and congee shops etc;

(vi) stated that after the legislation was put into effect, the community came across numerous unforeseen phenomena, such as the clerical staff changed to the post of security guards with higher wages, how would the Department help the small and medium enterprises to find suitable staff;

(vii) enquired of the Department when handling the publication of employment advertisement, if there was any mechanism to ensure those work categories which were not in compliance with the legislation would not get referral; the government was studying to make legislation for the maximum working hours, when would it be expected to take implementation, what was the most updated direction; would the Department supervise the contractors contracted out by the government and issue guidelines etc for them.

(b) A number of Councillors held the following opinions towards the labour-management relations :

(i) reflected that for the meeting arranged by the Department for both the labour and management side, very often only the representative of the labour side attended the meeting;

(ii) opined that when the government dealt with the labour matters, they were all talks they would try their best but could not provide substantive support in cases such as work injuries and accidental death; also pointed out that the government did not make good use of resources and queried the Department how to solve the problem of poverty in employment;

(iii) enquired if there was regulation for the number of working hours of the drivers of heavy duty vehicles to avoid overdrawal of their body strength resulting in accident;

(c) A Councillor considered that in handling the case of work injuries

compensation, it was a pessimistic arrangement for the Department to request the employee to submit sick history evidence because the employee had to spend several hundred dollars in order to get the sick history evidence, whereas it took time to apply for legal aid and before they got the compensation, how would the Department help them to continue with their living and work? Would counselling service be provided for them and what were the procedures involved?

- (d) A number of Councillors held the following opinions towards the employment counselling service :
 - (i) pointed out that in the past the Department operated an employment centre in such areas as Chai Wan and Shau Kei Wan etc and now although people could look for job through internet, there were many citizens who still did not know how to use computer, therefore it was hoped that the Department could set up more small employment centres;
 - (ii) hoped that the Department could strengthen the publicity of the ways of seeking employment and help the immigrants who came to Hong Kong lately including Indian and Pakistan to seek employment so as to meet the basic needs of living;
 - (iii) hoped that the Department took concern over the new immigrants and helped them to integrate into the community by means of a suitable employment;
 - (iv) pointed out that the employment recruitment board mostly put the youngsters as targets and the general vacancies all required secondary school or above qualification. How would the Department help the middle-aged with low academic qualification and provide them with more employment choices etc.
- (e) A Councillor pointed out that in order to strike the illegal labour, the Department indicated that they had launched 140,000 times of inspection patrol, how long did the inspection last and did it include those domestic helpers or Mainland labours who assumed the post of private car drivers and the number of inspection for this; did the Department keep a record of the prosecution figures?

- (f) A Councillor hoped that the Department could coordinate with related departments and tie in with the population policy in order to study the introduction of male paternity leave, so as to provide incentive to encourage young couples to give birth.
- (g) A Councillor reflected that it was often heard lately that some professional drivers on their way of driving died of sudden attack of hidden disease. He opined that if a vehicle was driven by a professional driver whose health was not ideal, the vehicle might then turn into a killer weapon. He enquired that within the scope of professional security, would the Department consider to provide body check-up for such drivers in order to safeguard their health.

II. Director of Leisure and Cultural Services to meet Eastern District Council Members

The views expressed by the Councillors were summarized as follows :

- (a) A Councillor reflected that citizens often failed to make successful bookings of the recreational facilities managed by the Department through computer internet at home, so that they had to queue personally to make the bookings of the venue, but the professional coaches and the domestic helpers had already accounted for most part of the queue, this was unfair to the general public.
- (b) A number of Councillors held the following opinions towards the pet park and the related management policy :
 - (i) reflected that the overall management policy of the pet park was not good enough. A number of government departments expressed that the Department needed to put forward a request for the land to be used for the purpose of a pet park so that scientific study could be carried out. It was hoped that the Department could activate the management policy for city animals;
 - (ii) pointed out that when the government made the policy of greening and sitting-out areas, it used to take the population figure as a benchmark,

and now some citizens requested for appropriation of land for the enjoyment of pets, what effect would this have on the planning standard.

- (iii) reflected that the current policy did not permit the entrance of pets in the park, this could still be acceptable for the small-scale park but as more and more citizens reared pets, if the same policy was applied in the large-scale park such as the Quarry Bay Park, it would get disconnected from the society. It was hoped that the Department could study to amend the policy;
 - (iv) pointed out that the Department had promised earlier on to build a pet park in Fu Hong Street, Siu Sai Wan and hoped that the project could commence as soon as possible;
- (c) A number of Councillors held the following opinions towards the library facilities;
- (i) reflected that the usage rate of the library was high and hoped that the Department could increase the area of the newspaper reading room and the quantity of newspaper of the library, and also increased the number of two most common newspapers and reduced the number of other newspapers which were read by fewer readers;
 - (ii) pointed out that the project of Lei King Wan Library had been discussed for three to four years and it would be located inside the Lei King Wan Complex. Could the Department confirm the development scale of the project with the related departments as soon as possible so as to inform the residents of the progress of the project;
 - (iii) reflected that estates such as Neptune Terrace and Shan Tsui Court etc were located on the slope and now that the mobile library could only park on the level ground, hoped that the Department could purchase mobile library van of new model and smaller volume so as to facilitate residents within the district to borrow books;
 - (iv) reflected that the efficacy of the community library partnership scheme was good and hoped that the Department could positively promote the scheme;

- (d) A number of Councillors held the following opinions towards the Siu Sai Wan Library which was just opened to the public:
- (i) hoped that its opening hours could be extended until 8 p.m.; also suggested that it be opened early before 10 a.m. and also opened in holidays;
 - (ii) pointed out that currently there was only the facility of automatic borrowing machine, hoped that staff could be increased to provide book borrowing service;
 - (iii) reflected that as there were six secondary schools and numerous primary schools in the vicinity of the Library, therefore there was a great need of the citizen for the study room, hoped that the Department could study to add reading rooms for use by citizen and students within the area.
- (e) A number of Councillors held the following opinions towards the Siu Sai Wan Swimming Pool which was just opened to the public:
- (i) reflected that as the swimming pool was located outdoor, some citizens reflected that the pool water was very cold, hoped that the Department could study the situation;
 - (ii) considered that the design of the swimming pool was very good because even a person with walking difficulty such as using a staff could also use it. It was a very successful facility.
- (f) A number of Councillors opined that it was necessary to add a gymnasium in the Siu Sai Wan Complex, which was just opened , so as to respond to the great demand for fitness facilities by the community nowadays.
- (g) A Councillor considered that the Aldrich Bay Park which was going to open very soon was very splendid and magnificent, but the fountain without fences would be a danger to the kids and hoped that the Department could strengthen patrol to take precaution against calamity. The boat inside the park was constructed beautifully but it was a pity that it was only used as a pedestrian-passage. It was hoped that the Department could improve the

design so that citizen could appreciate the structure of the fishing boat. In addition, a Councillor hoped that the Aldrich Bay Park could be opened as a pet park too and also increase the night shift caretakers.

(h) A number of Councillors held the following opinions towards swimming pool facilities :

(i) pointed out that the Victoria Park and Chai Wan were both already equipped with swimming pools, whereas in the vicinity of Quarry Bay and North Point there was no public standard swimming pool and hoped that the Department could positively consider and study to appropriate government land for construction of swimming pools within the area;

(ii) supported the fight for construction of swimming pool in Quarry Bay area;

(iii) pointed out that the redevelopment of Victoria Park Swimming Pool would soon commence and hoped that the Department could consult the residents more regarding the design and the effect of the project on the residents, and should also refer to the experience of the increase of light pollution and noise caused by the tennis court project, so as to increase the transparency of consultation, so that the daily life of the residents would not be affected.

(i) A number of Councillors held the following opinions towards the soccer pitch:

(i) pointed out that the urban district was a “concrete” jungle, it was just in need of a large piece of turf pitch as a sitting-out area and for greening the environment, but the Department announced that it would in the coming five years turn the grass soccer pitch into artificial turf pitch, what effect would this have on the environment;

(ii) pointed out that at present only in Siu Sai Wan of Eastern District was there one 11-a-side turf soccer pitch, only for the use by large scale football association, hoped that the Department could consider to expand the artificial turf of Taikoo Shing or Hoi Chak Street to a 11-a-side turf soccer pitch or at least imitation grass pitch but must not be changed to artificial turf. Prior to the completion of these facilities, could the Department study to introduce measures so as to let the area

football team of Eastern District have the priority to rent the soccer pitch of Wan Chai or Happy Valley area;

(iii) reflected that under general circumstance, the football team often encountered the difficulty of renting soccer pitch, hoped that more soccer pitches could be added in Eastern District, and also hoped that the Department could help to promote such healthy activity.

(j) A number of Councillors held the following opinions towards the matter relating to greening:

(i) pointed out that the greenhouse effect had caused the temperature rise daily and hoped that the Department could plant more trees in densely populated areas, such as schools and bus stops;

(ii) pointed out that in recent year the incidents of trees falling down happened one after another, resulting in death and injuries. The government had conducted a territory-wide supervision and provided a 2-day course but it was absolutely not enough to meet the needs, hoped that the Department could look at the problem seriously and provided enough courses to train up professionals to safeguard the safety of the citizen.

(k) A number of Councillors held the following opinions towards the sitting-out areas and related facilities :

(i) reflected that the population of the seniors of Eastern District was high, although there were many recreational facilities, nevertheless the sitting-out areas for the seniors particularly the retired males were not enough and hoped that the Department could add sitting-out facilities for them;

(ii) hoped that the Department could as soon as possible include the land at the side of the Aldrich Bay Park in the item of recreational projects, so as to commence planning, design and construction as soon as possible;

(iii) reflected that the management measures of Victoria Park quite affected the daily life of the residents, including the sale of articles

by foreign domestic helpers in the Park in holidays, how to clean up rubbish and the problem of mosquito breeding etc.

(l) A number of Councillors made the following proposals on the performance venues :

(i) pointed out that the facilities of the community hall such as sound and stage lighting could not compare with those of the Civic Centre and hoped that the Department could study if professional advices could be provided during the construction of the North Point Community Hall so as to make the facilities of the Hall meet the standard;

(ii) reflected that the population of Eastern District was high and hoped that one more Civic Centre could be built.

(m) A number of Councillors held the following opinions towards the other recreational facilities which were built and managed by the Department :

(i) stated that the Department in the recent year introduced measures to let citizen use the venue free of charge, but according to observation, many citizens booked the venue whereas the usage rate of the venue was very low. It was hoped that the Department considered to request the citizen booking the venue to pay a deposit, so as to avoid the real user from being rejected.

(ii) reflected that the usage rate of Hong Kong Museum of Coastal Defence in the recent years was declining, apart from publicity, hoped that the Department could introduce the idea of joint ticket in order to increase the usage rate;

(iii) reflected that when the citizen wanted to use the recreational facilities such as gymnasium and water sports etc, they often had to make advance booking very early, but it was full very soon, hoped that the Department could improve this situation.

(n) Councillors made enquiries as follows :

(i) the Victoria Park was equipped with a large monitor screen for the

purpose of viewing competition etc., could similar facility be installed in Chai Wan or North Point area etc; and

- (ii) it was very difficult for the citizen to book the venue of Chai Wan Sports Centre, but the vacancy rate of the venues was very high, did the Department keep any data about the vacant venues resulting in the wastage of resources in the past year, were there many such cases?
- (o) A number of Councillors thanked the Department for its work done and the efforts they put in, including the recognition of the outstanding job they did for the Eastern District, their great assistance to Eastern District in participating the Hong Kong Games, the provision of numerous brand-new services to the Siu Sai Wan Library and their job well done for the conservation of heritage and antiquities.

III. Director of Civil Engineering & Development to meet Eastern District Council Members

(EDC Paper No. 44/11)

The views expressed by the Councillors were summarized as follows :

- (a) A numbers of Councillors held the following opinions towards the greening projects :
 - (i) hoped that the Department with its resources and professional advices could help the LCSD to plant trees for greening the environment within the district;
 - (ii) after completion of greening the slopes, hoped that the Department could continue with the maintenance of the plantation planted thereat;
 - (iii) reflected that Yiu Hing Road of Yiu Tung Estate having been greened many years ago, its environment became very beautiful, but hoped that the Department could follow up with and handle the problems as a result of greening, these were respectively the plants withered on the slopes and the blocking of the channels by the fallen leaves and the trees growing transversely due to the strong wind, thus affecting the traffic

and road safety;

(iv) reflected that the greening projects in the vicinity of King's Road and Kornhill Road had been completed but the plants grew in a disorderly manner and were used by the citizens as dog latrine, hoped that fences could be added;

(v) pointed out that many years ago suggestion was given to the government that when laying underground facilities, the cable and the pipes etc should be placed orderly on the same side underground so as to leave space for greening purpose but up to now there was no response, hoped that the Department could follow up with this;

(vi) pointed out that Eastern District was densely populated, and greening project would make the environment comfortable, but the problem was that pipes and ducts were abundant underground, if planting could not be arranged for, was there any remedial plan on hand;

(b) A number of Councillors held the following opinions towards the projects of the seashore of Eastern District:

(i) agreed that the enhancement projects of the northern coast of Hong Kong Island encountered lots of difficulties and also agreed with the concept of linking the town residents to the seashore, therefore considered that the coherence of the waterfront promenade was very important;

(ii) pointed out that the project of "Hoi Yu Street Temporary Waterfront Promenade, Quarry Bay" would commence at the end of this year and would complete in 2012. As the residents of Quarry Bay were very concerned about the progress of the project and also hoped very much to use the facilities as early as possible, hoped that the Department could ensure that the project be completed on time as scheduled;

(iii) pointed out that the Planning Department proposed the development plan of constructing a footway under the Island East Corridor, hoped that the Department could shoulder the important responsibility of confirming the project.

- (c) A number of Councillors held the following opinions towards the project relating to the slopes:
- (i) pointed out that the water drainage under the slope of A Kung Ngam Road was not satisfactory, the drainage channel was often blocked by tree leaves and mud, resulting in flooding and affecting the use of the pavement, hoped that the Department could follow up with this;
 - (ii) stated that works was being carried out in the natural slope of A Kung Ngam, hoped that the prevention of landslide could be strengthened so as to safeguard the safety of the workmen and the nearby residents;
 - (iii) reflected that there were many seniors living in Quarry Bay Street, the Department requested them to maintain the slopes at their own expense and this caused them to fall in financial difficulty, hoped that the Department could exempt them from the expense, and also hoped that the Department could examine and inspect the follow-up work in future, so as to assist the vulnerable group within the district;
 - (iv) pointed out that the Department put in huge resources to prevent landslide but what to follow up with the reinforcement of the slope, had the Department explained to the citizen about the follow-up procedure such as the cycle when there was a need for reinforcement etc.
- (d) A Councillor although appreciated the Department for its work done in environmental protection and slope, pointed out that the Department had damaged the seabed by dredging countless mud pits for dumping tons of construction waste, and it would soon dredge mud pits in the vicinity of Chek Lap Kok and also in the east of Tung Lung Island, thus affecting the marine ecology and making the fishes unable to stay and rest thereat, such that the fishes captured by the fishermen greatly reduced, but later on the government accused the fishermen of damaging the environment and therefore confiscated their fishing boats. He hoped that the Department would explore new ways to handle the mud. In addition, he pointed out that reclamation works would only affect the marine ecology for good and that was not to be followed.
- (e) A number of Councillors expressed appreciation and gratitude for the work done by the Department, because they spared no effort to carry out the

greening work and also with high efficiency and they could often take up follow-up work immediately upon request; Councillors also agreed that the change of climate would cause inconvenience to the work of the Department, and there were numerous slopes in Eastern District but the Department was highly professional in the maintenance of slopes; the greening project under the bridge at the Tung Hei Road section of the Island Eastern Corridor had been completed and produced evident effect.

IV. Briefing on DC suspension

(EDC Paper No. 45/11)

A Councillor enquired that during the suspension period, the “Meet-the-Public Scheme” had to stop, did it include the arrangement of individual Councillor meeting a citizen.

V. Matter regarding the continual employment of dedicated staff to discharge the duties of District Council

(EDC Paper No. 46/11)

Councillors adopted the continual employment of dedicated staff to discharge the duties of District Council until 31 March, 2012.

Eastern District Council Secretariat
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