

Summary Translation of Minutes of the 21st Meeting of the North District Council (2008-2011)

The 21st Meeting of the North District Council (NDC) was held on 14 April 2011. The major issues discussed are summarised below:

I. Confirmation of Minutes of the Last Meeting

2. The minutes of the 20th Meeting were confirmed.

II. Meeting between the Director of Fire Services and NDC Members

3. Mr LO Chun-hung, Gregory, Director of Fire Services, introduced the work of the Fire Services Department (FSD) as follows:

- (a) The core functions of FSD included fire suppression and rescue services, fire protection and prevention as well as emergency ambulance services with a vision to make Hong Kong a safe place to live and work;
- (b) the fire protection and prevention work of FSD included vetting construction plans, conducting tests and carrying out inspections for buildings, mass transit systems and various kinds of premises to ensure their compliance with fire safety requirements and that their fire service installations were up to standard; and performing regulatory control on dangerous goods;
- (c) the focus of emergency ambulance services was pre-hospital care and the First Responder Programme was implemented in 2003 to provide basic life support to casualties and patients before the arrival of an ambulance crew. Simple first-aid advice would also be given to the public calling for ambulance services starting from this year to enhance ambulance services;
- (d) the services of FSD were widely recognised by different sectors of the community. FSD would endeavour to promote fire safety and protection and enhance community involvement

through various means and activities.

4. Members appreciated the work of FSD and had the following views and enquiries:

- (a) The risk of hill fire was very high in North District and fire service equipment and installations for fighting hill fire should be improved. Besides, enforcement actions against people who caused hill fire should be strengthened;
- (b) there were difficulties for residents of old buildings to carry out improvements to their fire service installations;
- (c) it was suggested that the Fire Safety Education Bus should be put into wider use and greater involvement of the Fire Safety Ambassadors should be allowed in the organisation of fire safety promotion activities; and
- (d) FSD was asked to provide information on the training provided for the Hazmat Task Force, the entry requirement for firewomen, the latest equipment provided for firemen in particular fireproof clothing, and the main differences between the first responder services and paramedic ambulance services.

5. Mr LO responded as follows:

- (a) The Government was very concerned about hill fire and an inter-departmental working group was set up under the Security Bureau to handle the problem. Promotion activities were conducted every year to promote the prevention of hill fire;
- (b) FSD understood that there might be difficulties for old buildings to improve their fire service installations and would discuss with owners and residents to solve the problem practically; and
- (c) FSD would improve the equipment and provide training for firemen from time to time to keep pace with the times. Ambulance men had to receive 26 weeks' basic training and

possess several years' working experience before they could receive training on paramedic ambulance services and, therefore, should not be compared with and could not be replaced by the first responders. Besides, the entry requirements for both firemen and firewomen were the same.

Discussion and Information Papers

III. Proposed Public Housing Development at Fanling Area 49

6. Ms SHUM Yuen-wah, representative of the Housing Department (HD), presented the paper.

7. Members considered that there was a great demand for public housing (PH) in North District and generally supported the proposed PH development at Fanling Area 49. They also hoped that HD would look for more land in North District for PH development. Besides, they urged HD to carefully consider the traffic and service facilities provided for the new PH development and hoped that the new development could blend in with the natural environment. Since the proposed PH building might be changed into a Home Ownership Scheme (HOS) building, this factor had to be taken into account when considering the design and materials used. It was also suggested that the proposed PH building should be developed laterally.

8. Ms SHUM thanked Members for their support of the proposed development. She stated that HD would carry out assessments in various aspects to study the impacts of the development on the living environment and quality of living of nearby residents. Initial assessments revealed that the traffic and service facilities would not be greatly influenced. Besides, there was a box culvert under the proposed site, which was found to be the habitat of various kinds of bats. HD had made some changes to the proposed development for conservation of the bats. It was, therefore, not likely for the building to develop laterally.

9. The Chairman concluded that Members principally supported the proposed development and hoped that HD would make appropriate amendments to the proposed development after taking into consideration

Members' concern and views. He also suggested that HD should report to local residents and NDC forthwith when there was a new design.

IV. Proposed Public Housing Development at Choi Yuen Road

10. Miss YOUNG Chi-ping, representative of HD, presented the paper.

11. Some Members supported the PH development at Choi Yuen Road as there was a great demand for PH in North District. However, some Members considered that the site should be used for building HOS flats. Members also had the following views:

- (a) When the same issue was discussed at the 17th NDC Meeting, most of the Members agreed that the Government should look for more suitable sites in North District for PH development while the Choi Yuen Road site could be considered for other uses. HD was urged to provide information on lands available for PH development in North District for Members' consideration and discussion;
- (b) taking into account that the Government might resume the construction of HOS flats in future, it was suggested that a design which could be used for both PH and HOS flats should be adopted. Besides, the number of floors and the plot ratio should also be increased to meet the future needs arising from the development of Sheung Shui and North East New Territories New Development Areas; and
- (c) in the planning of the new PH development, factors such as the design of the buildings, transport and service facilities and impacts on the environment should be taken into account.

12. Miss YOUNG and Ms MAK Hoi-cheung responded as follows:

- (a) HD had improved the design of the proposed development after taking into account Members' views expressed at the 17th NDC Meeting. The design would not be approved by the Planning Department if there would be serious visual impact of the

development on the surrounding areas. Besides, since no central air-conditioning system was provided for PH, a unilateral design was adopted to reduce the noise nuisance;

- (b) HD's consultant was carrying out a traffic impact assessment to ensure that the proposed development met the traffic requirements. It was initially planned that covered walkways linking the three new buildings and an additional footbridge connecting to existing footbridges would be provided; and
- (c) HD had stepped up the work of identifying suitable sites for PH development in North District and three sites in Sheung Shui and Fanling respectively had been confirmed for PH development.

13. The Chairman asked HD to carefully consider and respond to Members' views and local residents' concern, and report to NDC after detailed information was available. In principle, HD could proceed with the proposed PH development at Choi Yuen Road.

V. Regulation of Shenzhen River Stage 4: Progress of Works and Advance Works

14. Mr CHAN Yu-yuen, representative of the Drainage Services Department (DSD), presented the paper.

15. Members generally supported the project and hoped that upon completion of the project, the flooding problem around Shenzhen River could be thoroughly solved. However, they were concerned about the compensation for land resumption and that Lin Ma Hang Road was not suitable for the use of works vehicles. Some Members urged the Government to open the frontier closed area as soon as possible after the reprovisioning of the boundary fence, and asked DSD to provide more details on the landscaping works.

16. Mr CHAN responded that in respect of the compensation for land resumption, DSD would fully reflect the views of Members and the public to the Executive Council, which would make the final decision. For security reason, only limited planting work would be carried out along the boundary patrol road. Besides, the reprovisioned boundary

patrol road was mainly for the use of the Police and would not open to the public. The representative of the consultant supplemented that DSD would carefully study the impact of the works vehicles on the traffic and would carry out temporary traffic improvement measures when necessary.

17. The Chairman urged DSD to carefully consider Members' views and carry out the project as soon as possible so that the frontier closed area could be open to the public earlier.

VI. Action Plan 2011/12 of the ICAC Regional Office (New Territories East)

18. Ms CHUNG Lai-tuen, representative of the ICAC, presented the paper.

19. Members pointed out that the public were particularly in need of information about corruption during the election of the Owners' Corporations (OCs). It was suggested that the ICAC should put up banners in the vicinity of estates to promote anti-corruption during the election period. Besides, Members were concerned about the purchase of votes or authorisation letters during OC elections and at the meeting of owners. It was suggested that the Building Management Ordinance should be amended to control the purchase of votes.

20. Ms CHUNG stated that the ICAC was willing to provide OCs with information on the law and measures about anti-corruption, and suggested that OCs should take the initiative to contact the ICAC for arrangement of anti-corruption promotion work. She also pointed out that OC elections were not covered by the Elections (Corrupt and Illegal Conduct) Ordinance. The Government was considering amending the Building Management Ordinance, and the views of Members and local residents would be submitted to the committee concerned for consideration.

VII. Food and Environmental Hygiene Department: Strategy and Work for Improving Environmental Hygiene of Hong Kong

21. Ms CHU Kam-chong, representative of the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD) reported the work of FEHD

in 2010 and introduced the strategy and work for improving environmental hygiene of Hong Kong.

22. Members had the following views:

- (a) Some refuse containers managed by FEHD were provided with an ashtray. Non-extinguished cigarette butts disposed there often caused a nuisance. Besides, rubbish was found on carriageways with low traffic flow. FEHD was urged to improve the above situations. FEHD was also asked to provide covered refuse collection points in rural area;
- (b) there were many recovery cages placed in the streets causing obstruction and nuisances;
- (c) in respect of the hawker problem, recently there were illegal hawkers frequently prosecuted by FEHD's Hawker Control Teams even when they had hawked in the areas concerned in peace for many years. On the other hand, licensed hawkers had been found causing an obstruction of public places in the area between Shek Wu Hui Market and Lung Fung Garden in Sheung Shui; and
- (d) the present anti-mosquito work of FEHD was considered ineffective and it was suggested that new mosquito repellent devices should be used to save manpower.

23. Ms CHU responded as follows:

- (a) All refuse containers would be cleansed daily no matter they were provided with an ashtray or not and the cleansing frequency would be increased at places with a high pedestrian flow. The cleansing of carriageways was performed by mechanical street sweepers. The cleansing frequency at the locations mentioned would be increased in view of Members' request. However, in respect of providing covered refuse collection points in the rural area, FEHD had difficulties in identifying suitable locations;

- (b) if recovery cages were found causing an obstruction to the street cleansing work, a notice would be issued to demand for their removal within 4 hours. It was observed that they were usually removed quickly and would not obstruct the street cleansing work;
- (c) FEHD had to strike a balance in the control of illegal hawkers so that enforcement would not be too stringent while complaints of the public would not be ignored. The existing strategy was that illegal cooked food hawkers would be prosecuted forthwith while illegal non-cooked food hawkers would be warned first and prosecuted if further irregularities were found. In respect of licensed hawkers, the taking of enforcement actions depended on whether there was a serious obstruction of passageways and whether complaints were received; and
- (d) the approach of FEHD's anti-mosquito work was mainly prevention by destroying larvae before they grew up to mosquitoes. Consideration would be given to the suggested anti-mosquito device if it was included in the list recommended by the World Health Organisation.

24. The Chairman hoped that FEHD would listen to Members' views and cooperate with the district to solve problems.

VIII. Proposal: Requesting the Government to Introduce a Consultation System in the Application for Operation of Private Columbaria

25. Mr LAW Sai-yan presented the paper.

26. Representative of the Planning Department pointed out that in respect of application for change of land use, consultation would be conducted according to the guidelines of the Town Planning Board (TPB). District councillors and organisations concerned would also be consulted. Members' views on the consultation system would be reflected to the TPB for consideration of amending the existing guidelines.

27. Some Members considered the existing consultation system

effective while some others considered that the scope of consultation should be extended. A Member pointed out that consultation should be carried out in respect of applications for operation of private columbaria irrespective of whether there was a change of land use, and the views of local residents and district councils should be given more weight in the consideration of such applications.

28. The Chairman pointed out that the department concerned had carried out extensive consultation in respect of the application for change of land use mentioned in the paper. He suggested that the department should carry out extensive consultation in respect of applications for operation of private columbaria irrespective of whether there was a change of land use.

IX. Proposed Allocation of North District Council Funds for 2011-2012

29. Members agreed to the proposed allocation of NDC funds and approved the paper.

X. Applications for District Council Funds

30. A total of 11 applications for District Council Funds were approved.

Reports

XI. District Lands Office/North: Returns on Redevelopment of New Territories Exempted House Applications and Small House Applications in North District

31. The paper was noted.

XII. Report of the 1st Meeting of the North District Management Committee in 2011

32. The paper was noted.

XIII. Matters Arising

33. There were no matters arising from the last meeting.

XIV. Any Other Business

34. Members agreed to support the environmental activity co-organised by the New Territories Headmasters Conference and Tai Po Environmental Association.

XV. Date of Next Meeting

35. The next meeting would be held on 9 June 2011.