

Summary of the Minutes of the 4th Meeting of Sha Tin District Council (2009 Session)

The 4th meeting of Sha Tin District Council (STDC) (2009 session) was held on 30 July 2009. The major issues discussed are summarized below:

Visit of Commissioner for Labour to STDC

2. Commissioner for Labour said that the work of Labour Department (LD) was generally divided into employment service, anti-illegal worker, labour relations, occupational safety and health as well as industrial safety on small-sized renovation and maintenance work. She added that LD was focused on the submission of three Bills, namely the Minimum Wage Bill, Employment (Amendment) Bill 2009 and Occupational Deafness (Compensation) (Amendment) Bill 2009, to the Legislative Council for consideration in 2009.

3. Representative of LD said that there were a total of 12 Job Centres and an Interactive Employment Service Website serving the public. Employment programmes were also launched to cater for different age groups and needs, such as Youth Pre-employment Training Programme cum Youth Work Experience and Training Scheme (YPTP • YWETS), Employment Programme for the Middle-aged and Internship Programme for University Graduates. He added that a Recruitment Centre for the Catering Industry was also established this year to provide specific job-matching services for the catering industry.

4. Members were concerned with the fatal accident of a South Asian female student working in a laundry workshop and asked about the follow up action of LD. Some members asked about the consultation timetable and details of the minimum wage. Few members pointed out the youth unemployment problem and urged LD to formulate a long-term strategy in helping those youngsters with low education qualification. Questions were also raised on the traps of summer jobs, extension of Transport Support Scheme (TSS) to 18 districts, employment opportunity in the Mainland, employment service for young ex-drug addicts, assistance and training for starting up business, measures to protect the lower-skilled workers, implementation of 5-working days in private sectors, legislation on maximum working hours, support for injured workers, measures against illegal employment and assistance given to employers of foreign domestic helpers. Besides, a member asked LD to explain the confusion in the distribution of quota tags for the recruitment of Inland Revenue Department (IRD) in Sha Tin Job Centre on 18 May.

5. Commissioner for Labour replied that the government did create short-term job opportunities via the implementation of minor works. She said that Sha Tin Job Centre organized 23 job fairs in the first six months of this year. Apart from the Recruitment

Centre for the Catering Industry, LD was now considering the need of establishing recruitment centre for other trades. Moreover, training had been given to more than 150,000 youngsters since the implementation of YPTP • YWETS and the employment rate of the trainees was kept at a level of more than 70%. She explained that the Internship Programme for University Graduates was implemented in view of the financial tsunami, which was also supported by the Hong Kong Chinese Enterprises Association in providing placements in the Mainland for university graduates. She said that LD would reinforce the publicity work around March and April every year to disseminate the information on traps of summer jobs. She said that the launching of “Path Builders” by the Narcotics Division of Security Bureau did provide 6 to 12 months on-the-job training to young ex-drug addicts and YPTP • YWETS also offered job training to those referred by drug rehabilitation centres. Regarding the Employment Programme for the Middle-aged, she said that more than 44 000 people were successful in finding a job since the implementation of the programme.

6. In addition, she said that the fatal accident occurred in the laundry workshop was still under investigation and LD had immediately conducted surprise inspections at similar workplaces. She explained that the frequency of inspection would be determined by the safety performance of the workplace, the accident rate and the risk level. Warning or suspension notice would be issued upon any irregularity detected. For the consultation timetable on minimum wage, she expected that the first statutory minimum wage would be implemented at the end of 2010 or early 2011. Regarding the lower-skilled workers of the contractors of Government departments, she said that an employment contract should be entered between the employer and employee and a point system was enforced to monitor the contractors. She remarked that the TSS only offered a time-limited allowance for residents of remote districts to look for job opportunities. She emphasized that the employment of illegal workers was a serious offence. In the first six months of this year, 105 employers were convicted and 36 of them were sentenced to imprisonment. She said that employer was required to report to LD any fatal and injured case resulted from industrial accident within 7 and 14 days respectively. LD would help the injured or deceased to fight for their rights in accordance with the Employees’ Compensation Ordinance. She explained that the issue of maximum working hours had to be considered carefully in striking a balance between the benefits of employer and employee. While the Minimum Wage Bill would exclude both local and foreign live-in domestic helpers. She added that both LD and Immigration Department did provide hotlines to serve the employer and foreign domestic helpers. Besides, the levy of foreign domestic helper was charged to provide training to local workforce.

7. Representative of LD replied that the confusion in the distribution of quota tag was caused by the breakdown of computer system in Sha Tin Job Centre. The problem had been solved as two quotas were obtained from IRD later and distributed to the first two job

seekers. He said that case managers were arranged to provide support for the trainees of YPTP • YWETS in familiarizing their work.

Confirmation of the Minutes of the 3rd Meeting held on 21 May 2009

8. The Council endorsed the minutes of the above meeting.

Progress Report of Sha Tin District Major Works in 2009/10

9. Representative of Civil Engineering and Development Department (CEDD) briefly introduced the progress report.

10. Most of the members were concerned about the progress of T3 road works, including several covered walkways at Tai Wai Station, the road works at Mei Tin Road, the road divider near Buddhist Wong Wan Tin College and the roundabout at Tai Wai Road. They also asked about the implementation and details of T4 road works, the reinstatement and improvement works of Lion Rock Tunnel, the arrangement of noise barriers at Tai Po Road (Sha Tin section), Belair Garden and Sha Tin Road, the progress of D4 road works at Chung Pak Road and Hin Tai Street/Fu Kin Street, the improvement works at Shing Mun River, Roads and Drainage Modification Works at Whitehead and Lok Wo Sha Phase I, the building of Library, Sports Complex cum Community Hall at Area 14B, an additional carriageway at Mei Tin Road, the Insitu Redevelopment of Sha Tin Water Treatment Works, the Uprating Works of Sha Tin Salt Water Supply System, the traffic arrangement at Ching Ho Villa (清河小苑), the building of an international bicycle race track at Whitehead, the inspection work of water mains and salt water mains in Ma On Shan, the Ma On Shan Waterfront Promenade and the bad smell arising from the expansion of Sha Tin Sewage Treatment Works.

11. Representative of CEDD replied that T4 road works and the flyover at Hung Mui Kuk Road were under review and would be suspended for the time being. He apologized for the delay of T3 works and stated that the main works of T3 had been completed. It was expected that the remaining works would be completed by September of this year and the works at Mei Tin Road by next summer. Regarding the covered walkway connecting Exit D of Tai Wai Station and Grandway Garden, he said that the works would be commenced in the first quarter of next year. Since there was a huge demand for walkway covers in 18 districts, he said that Government would establish a mechanism in handling these requests. He added that CEDD would request the contractor to speed up the noise barriers installation works at Mei Tin Road. Proposals of installing noise barriers would be conveyed to Environmental Protection Department (EPD) for assessment in accordance with the established standard. He said that the information on Sha Tin Salt Water Supply System would be provided later and the proposal of building an international bicycle racetrack at

Whitehead would be considered. He remarked that the reinstatement works at Lion Rock Tunnel could not be implemented together with the noise barriers installation works as different resources were used. He said that the proposals of adding a footbridge and an interchange bus station at Lion Rock Tunnel would be conveyed to Transport Department (TD).

12. Another representative of CEDD added that CEDD and TD were reviewing the traffic situation of Chung Pak Road and Hin Tai Street/Fu Kin Street. He said that CEDD was discussing with TD and the Police in implementing temporary traffic arrangement at Ching Ho Villa and a permanent loading/unloading area would be built in the future.

13. Representative of Water Supplies Department (WSD) said that WSD planned to consult District Council on the arrangement of in-situ re-provisioning of Sha Tin Water Treatment Works and would reflect members' views to the relevant section of WSD. He said that the Water Mains Reinstatement Works of Lion Rock Tunnel would not affect the traffic at Lion Rock Tunnel because workers could enter the mains from the outside of the tunnel. Representative of Highways Department replied that the department would consult the District Council upon confirming the method used in the Reinstatement Works of Lion Rock Tunnel when the consultancy report was completed. Representative of the Leisure and Cultural Services Department (LCSD) replied that after taking over the Ma On Shan Waterfront Promenade, LCSD would carry out landscape works. The promenade would be opened to the public on 18 July. She added that LCSD would strive for more resources to develop Area 14B.

14. The Committee passed the following provisional motion with a vote of 11 in favour, 3 against and 8 abstentions:

“T3 Road Works has been lasting for more than 10 years from preparation to implementation but still not yet completed. The Chief Engineer had been changed for 4 times with lots of blunders found. The Department wasted the time and energy but still could not meet the expectation of the public. Therefore, the Council strongly reprimands CEDD for failing to monitor the works and demands the Department to complete all the works at Mei Tin Road and move out from the site office by the end of December 2009. The remaining works should also be completed by the end of 2010 with no further unreasonable postponement.”

Proposal on Converting the Hall of Sir Ellis Kadoorie Secondary School (Sha Tin) into Neighbourhood Activity Centre

15. Representative of Vocational Training Council (VTC) said that VTC would like to

cooperate with District Council in using Sir Ellis Kadoorie Secondary School (Sha Tin) to provide service for the public.

16. A member requested VTC to lower the air conditioning fee. Another member worried about the legal liability involved and whether DC Fund was sufficient for the rental payment.

17. Representative of VTC replied that the air conditioning fee would only be charged when air-conditioner was used. He remarked that activity organizers should be responsible for procuring insurance for the activities.

18. Sha Tin District Officer (STDO) replied that Home Affairs Department (HAD) would not procure insurance for community halls. She said that according to option 2 of the proposal, accident caused by the activity should be the responsibility of the organizer. Moreover, option 2 would be more flexible in terms of cancellation of booking and leasing period. She added that Sha Tin District Office would sign the leasing agreement on behalf of STDC and the Secretariat would consult HAD about the insurance arrangement.

19. The Council endorsed the adoption of option 2 with a vote of 20 in favour and 3 abstentions. Therefore, VTC would take over the whole premises of Sir Ellis Kadoorie Secondary School (Sha Tin) and lease the hall to Sha Tin District Office, acting on behalf of STDC, for using as Neighbourhood Activity Centre.

Application of additional funding for employing contract staff by STDC Secretariat

20. The Council endorsed the revised funding application.

Financial Account of STDC as at 21 July 2009

21. The Council noted the above paper.

Reports of District Facilities Management Committee, Culture, Sports & Community Development Committee, Development and Housing Committee, Education and Welfare Committee, Health and Environment Committee, Traffic and Transport Committee and Finance and General Affairs Committee

22. The Council noted the above reports.

Funding application for Mid Autumn Festival Activities

23. The Council endorsed the above funding application.

Question put forward by Mr. SIU Hin-hong on the enforcement and review of existing legislation for the prevention of youngsters from alcoholic abuse

24. Mr. SIU said that the loopholes in the existing Stadia Regulation under the Public Health and Municipal Services Ordinance and the Dutiable Commodities (Liquor) Regulations hindered the law enforcement of the police and requested for a review of the above legislations. A member requested the concerned departments to coordinate in the prevention work. Some members added that the police was not empowered to conduct alcohol screen test in liquor-licensed premises and suggested regulating the places and time for selling liquor.

25. Representative of Hong Kong Police Force replied that inspections were conducted for liquor-licensed premises and prosecution would be instituted against any irregularity found. The Chairman said that owing to the absence of quorum, the motion of Mr. SIU could not be voted and members' views would be reflected to the relevant bureaux.

Report of the District Management Committee

26. STDO reported that nine million dollars would be appropriated to HAD for the implementation of anti-drug community programme in 18 districts as announced by the Chief Executive. She remarked that after discussion with Regional Social Welfare Officer, Sha Tin Youth Outreaching Social Work of Chinese YMCA was appointed to organize anti-drug activities for youngsters in Sha Tin for one year. The programme would serve 200 youngsters under the age of 21 and 160 of them belonged to high-risk group. She added that the Fight Crime Committee would sponsor the opening ceremony of the above programme and cooperate with Sha Tin District Office in organizing activities.

Next Meeting

27. The next meeting would be held at 2:30 p.m. on 24 September 2009.