

Summary of Minutes of Meeting of Islands District Council

Date : 25 February 2013 (Monday)
Time : 2:00 p.m.
Venue : Conference Room, Islands District Council, 14/F., Harbour Building,
38 Pier Road, Central, Hong Kong.

I. Question on future medical services of Tung Chung
Question on phased implementation of services of North Lantau Hospital
Question on North Lantau Hospital

The Chairman said that the above three questions were related and thus would be discussed all together.

A representative of the Hospital Authority briefly introduced the contents of the consolidated reply.

The representative of the Transport Department said that minibuses played a supplementary role in the overall public transport system. In planning minibus routes, the Department would take into account factors such as changes in population of the districts concerned and opinions of the public. North Lantau Hospital was close to Yat Tung Estate, which was currently served by buses such as nos. 37 and 38. The Department would closely monitor the demand of passengers and would consider the introduction of minibuses to North Lantau Hospital when there was a need.

A member gave opinions and raised enquiries as follows:

- (a) What would be the opening hours for the Accident and Emergency (A&E) Department in 2013 and when in 2014 would 24 hours A&E services be provided?
- (b) Would speciality services such as gynaecology, paediatrics, ophthalmology and geriatrics be provided?

- (c) What were the criteria for the Transport Department to introduce minibus services?
- (d) Would the three hectares of land adjacent to North Lantau Hospital still be used for development of private hospital in Phase 2? He further queried whether the factor of population should be taken into consideration before implementation of the plan.

A member was not satisfied with the reply given by the Transport Department and he requested that minibus route(s) be introduced for Yat Tung Estate. Residents of the Estate currently relied on nos. 37 and 38 buses to connect to other means of transport, and the buses were often full. If patients and their relatives would have to take the same buses in the future, problems such as inadequate seats, spread of infectious diseases and inconvenience for the mobility-handicapped would be created.

The representative of the Hospital Authority said that it had all along been their target to provide 24 hours A&E services. The Hospital Authority was closely assessing the supply and demand of manpower and hoped to provide 24 hours A&E services at the earliest possible. It would as soon as possible report to the District Council and the Legislative Council of the arrangements of the A&E Department in 2013 and 2014. Speciality clinics would be provided in gradual progression. Geriatrics would initially be part of the internal medicine clinic, and gynaecology and paediatrics were also being considered. North Lantau Hospital was a community hospital and thus would not be able to provide as a wide range of services as a university hospital. Ophthalmology and otorhinolaryngology services would be considered at a later stage. The Hospital Authority would determine the development and timing of the Phase 2 project after assessing the needs for medical services of the community and evaluating the experiences of the recent tendering of the two pieces of land assigned for private hospitals.

The representative of the Transport Department said that there needed to be a sufficient number of passengers for minibus routes to be financially viable. The Department would carefully study and consider the introduction of minibus service depending on the need of passengers.

The Vice-chairlady said that the Hospital Authority should not determine whether or not to provide 24 hours A&E services “basing on needs”. If services would be provided, people would use them. The transportation of patients from South Lantau

and Mui Wo to hospitals of Kowloon West Cluster or Hong Kong East Cluster was lengthy in time. She hoped that a comprehensive hospital service would be provided for the whole Lantau Island and she requested a clear timetable for the provision of 24 hours A&E services. To tackle the shortage of manpower, she proposed that initiatives to retain existing staff and conducting recruitment in the immediate district be considered. She also urged for the provision of ophthalmology services because there was a great demand in the district. On the issue of minibus, she was critical of the Transport Department in its lack of initiative in dealing with the transportation of Tung Chung, and that long term strategies should be formulated to tie in with the development of the area.

Another member also demanded minibus service and ophthalmology services for Tung Chung. He hoped that more written information about Phase 2 development would be provided and that the District Council would be informed of the service arrangements of North Lantau Hospital before the Hospital Authority would report to the Legislative Council in May.

A member said that there was indeed a need for minibus service in Tung Chung and he urged the Transport Department to study the introduction of minibus service expeditiously.

A member said that North Lantau Hospital should not be considered as a community hospital as it would hinder the development of services of medical specialities. He also said that minibus services were needed for Tung Chung.

The representative of the Hospital Authority said that a special report in respect of North Lantau Hospital would be made to the District Council as soon as possible. At the current stage, North Lantau Hospital was a small scale hospital but there would be room for improvement as the population grew. The Hospital Authority would also study enhancement of transportation of patients, such as non-emergency ambulance service.

II. Question on progress of establishing a special school in Tung Chung

The representative of the Education Bureau said that the main policy target of special education was to facilitate children with special needs to develop their potentials fully. The Bureau encouraged those children to receive education in

mainstream schools as much as possible, or in special schools in accordance with their special needs. The Bureau would regularly review demand for and plan the supply of places of special schools and school buildings. There were currently no school for mentally handicapped children in Tung Chung and Lantau, and the Bureau agreed that a special school should be built in Tung Chung. Close liaison had been maintained with relevant departments to look for a suitable location for the construction of the school. The proposal of Area 27 in Tung Chung had raised concerns from residents and thus possibility of other suitable places was being explored. Once a suitable location was identified, relevant procedures would be expedited so that the school could be built the soonest possible. Planning was being conducted on the land reserved for building of school in Area 108 in Tung Chung and the Bureau was studying the feasibility of establishing a special school there. The Bureau would be pleased to consult and provide members of the District Council more information when it became available.

The representative of the Planning Department confirmed that the land in Area 108, Tung Chung had been reserved for the development of a school.

A member said that any location within fifteen minutes of a taxi ride from the town centre of Tung Chung would be acceptable for parents, and he urged the authorities to expedite the process of establishing the school.

III. Question on installing rails at the pavement of Kin Tung Road Roundabout

The representative of the Transport Department advised against the installation of rails at the roundabout as they would cause inconvenience to pedestrians, and said that the location was not suitable for putting in place a zebra-crossing. He proposed stepping up education of residents nearby and advised them to use the footbridge to cross Kin Tung Road.

A member said that the nearest pedestrian footbridge was quite distant from the crossing point being discussed and thus he proposed installing a zebra-crossing or a traffic light.

A member proposed to replace the roundabout with a traffic light and crossing facilities.

The Vice-chairlady supported the installation of rails at the footpath near the roundabout.

A member worried that rails might not deter people crossing the road and zebra-crossing was not suitable for the location. He said that the roundabout should be converted into a proper crossing facility in the long run.

The representative of the Transport Department said that all opening points of the pavements had to be blocked if railings were to be installed, and that members of the public would be forced to enter the area of Caribbean Coast if they were to use the nearby zebra-crossing. The establishment of a zebra-crossing at the roundabout was not advisable in terms of road design. The Department would reflect the issue to the management agent of Caribbean Coast and would also consider putting up a sign to direct people to the nearest pedestrian footbridge.

IV. Question on future development of coastal areas in Tung Chung North

The representative of the Planning Department said most lands in Areas 53 to 56 of Tung Chung had been planned for residential development. Only a piece of land in Area 53 had been planned for commercial purposes and two pieces of land in Area 89 for schools. The Housing Department had provided a written reply in regard of Area 56. Auction had been conducted for two lands in Area 55A and 55B and they would be used for private housing. Around 3 800 residential flats would be built on those two sites for an estimated population of 8 000 to 9 000 people. Conditions of sale required that construction works had to be completed by 30 September 2016 for the site in Area 55A, and by 31 December 2015 for the one in Area 55B.

The representative of Transport Department said that Tung Chung North was currently served by various bus routes of several bus companies. The Department would strengthen services in accordance with the growth of population in the area. Under existing policies, red minibuses were not allowed to operate in new towns. The Transport Department would closely monitor the growth of population in Tung Chung North to determine the role to be played by green minibuses.

A member asked whether the Transport Department had plans to introduce green minibuses into Tung Chung.

The representative of the Transport Department replied that it did not have such plans at the current stage.

A member hoped that the Transport Department would adopt an open attitude on the issue of whether or not to introduce green minibuses into Tung Chung. He estimated that the future population of Tung Chung North would increase to around 20 000 families and that there was a need to introduce green minibuses or other means of transport to provide connective transportation.

V. Question on Mandatory Building Inspection Scheme and Mandatory Window Inspection Scheme

A representative of the Housing Department said that the main target of the Mandatory Building Inspection Scheme and Mandatory Window Inspection Scheme implemented by the Buildings Department was private housing. The Housing Authority would also conduct building and window inspection on a voluntary or compulsory basis for public housing under its charge.

Another representative of the Housing Department said that under the Total Maintenance Scheme implemented since 2006, the Housing Authority had conducted inspection on installations of housing estates under its charge, including windows. Inspection would also be conducted on selected buildings.

A member enquired when the Total Maintenance Scheme would be implemented in Yat Tung II Estate.

A representative of the Housing Department said that the Total Maintenance Scheme would be implemented every five years and thus he estimated that it might be 2013 or 2014 for Yat Tung Estate.

A member said that the Total Maintenance Scheme mainly relied upon residents' reporting faulty installations for maintenance. Failure to detect or report faulty installations might cause risks, and thus he proposed the Housing Department to take the initiative to inspect window to ensure safety. He also proposed deploying staff solely for such duties.

A representative of the Housing Department said that maintenance staff

under the Total Maintenance Scheme would take the initiative to enter each unit and conduct inspection on installations, including windows.

VI. Question on digital television reception on Cheung Chau

A representative of Office of the Communications Authority said that the Department received 8 complaints about digital television reception on Cheung Chau in 2010, 13 in 2011 and 21 between January 2012 and January 2013. The surge of complaints received between January 2012 and January 2013 was due to a collective referral of 8 cases from Cheung Chau Kaifong Association. The Department had given technical advice on the above cases so as to improve reception. In addition, Asia Television Limited and Television Broadcasts Limited both planned to improve the effective radiated power (ERP) of the transmission station in mid 2013. It was anticipated that most Cheung Chau residents would be able to receive steady digital television signals upon completion of the improvement works.

A member enquired whether the above improvement works aimed at individual locations where reception was poor, or aimed at improving the overall reception of Cheung Chau.

The representative of Office of the Communications Authority said that the ERP would be enhanced by 10 times after the improvement works and reception of the whole Cheung Chau area would be improved. Should residents still encounter reception problems after the improvement works, they could contact Office of the Communications Authority.

VII. Question on outside vehicles repeatedly entering Discovery Bay

The representative of the Hong Kong Police Force (HKPF) said that the Discovery Bay Tunnel Link Ordinance stipulated that only types of vehicles as approved by the Commissioner for Transport were allowed to enter Discovery Bay. In normal circumstances, all vehicles entering Discovery Bay entered through the tunnel, and thus it was the responsibility of the Discovery Bay Road Tunnel Company Limited (the Tunnel Company) to see that stipulations of the ordinance were enforced. The HKPF would provide assistance and conduct investigation as and when necessary. In 2011, the HKPF received a complaint about unauthorized vehicles entering

Discovery Bay. Investigation conducted in that regard found that the vehicles concerned were light goods vehicles and fell within the approved categories. No complaint was received in 2012. She said that such complaint about the Tunnel Company could first be lodged to the Transport Department.

The representative of the Transport Department confirmed that vehicles in the above-mentioned case were light goods vehicle and fell within the categories approved by the Commissioner of Transport.

A member said that there were more and more light goods vehicles entering Discovery Bay, and that it was very important to ensure that they were used for purposes as stipulated in the ordinance.

VIII. Question on air quality of Discovery Bay

The representative of the Environmental Protection Department (EPD) said that the air quality monitoring station in Tung Chung (Tung Chung Monitoring Station) was responsible for collecting data of Discovery Bay and nearby areas. Data collected by Tung Chung Monitoring Station in recent years revealed that concentration of major pollutants met the air quality objectives. Instruments used in air quality monitoring stations were certified by the Environmental Protection Agency of the United States (USA) and monitoring methods were based on those used in USA.

The member who raised the enquiry was concerned that the monitoring benchmarks adopted by the EPD were outdated and they lagged far behind those adopted in Europe. Residents in Tung Chung were concerned that air quality in the area was poor and was worsening. She urged the Environment Bureau to set up new paradigm and draft new laws in respect of air quality in Hong Kong. She was critical of the Hong Kong Disneyland of not sending representative to the meeting. When the company submitted application for environmental impact assessment in 2005, the requirements then were low. She criticized the company of not improving the situation in the eight years since.

IX. Public Rental Housing Development at Tung Chung West (Area 39) & (Area 108 part) - Revised Scheme

A member said that he supported the revised scheme and urged the Transport Department to collaborate with the Housing Department in future transport arrangements. He proposed space be set aside for future widening of Tung Chung Road, and that Chung Yat Street be made a direct through-road to Tung Chung Road. He also proposed setting aside adequate space in Area 39 for future increase in bus routes and construction of bus terminus.

Another member was also supportive of the revised scheme. In relation to the possible establishment of a special school in Area 108, he proposed that information should be disseminated to the public the soonest possible. As there would be many community and social welfare facilities in the area, he hoped that the Education Bureau and the Social Welfare Department would work together to alleviate possible concerns of the local community.

A member gave some figures about the vacancy rates of the public housing estates in Tung Chung to illustrate that there was in a great demand of public housing units in the area, rather than having a low occupancy rate as some members of the public misconceived. He did not object to altering the plan to build Home Ownership Scheme (HOS) units as long as it would not affect the schedule of the overall construction project. He was supportive of the paper and proposed that Area 39 should be connected with Yat Tung Estate through road level pavements rather than footbridges. As there would be no Integrated Community Mental Health Support Service Centre in Area 39, he proposed the provision of such services elsewhere in Tung Chung.

A member supported the increase of supply of housing units and said that more HOS units should be built in Tung Chung. HOS units could be a means of upward social mobility and there should also be a balance between number of public housing and HOS units built.

A member said that the middle class was the mainstay of Hong Kong society and he was open to the proposal of increasing the supply of HOS units. However, he was skeptical of the provision of one-man public housing units. He reiterated his objection to the construction of public housing in Area 56, but supported of its construction in Area 39, Tung Chung.

A member hoped that the authorities concerned would minimize the negative effects on the Tung Chung old areas during the construction period.

A member hoped that the concern of high transportation fees be related to the Transport and Housing Bureau in its future planning of public housing. He further enquired whether the population of 50 000 was the minimum requirement for provision of community facilities, such as an indoor stadium.

A member also supported the use of part of lands for HOS units, so that a balance of public housing and HOS could be achieved.

The representative of the Housing Department responded as follows:

- (a) Members' proposal of a mixed mode of housing would be related to the Department. The main concern was that the timetable would not be affected.
- (b) A consultant had been engaged to study transportation facilities and road network, including those issues raised by members.
- (c) Members were concerned about the provision of a special school and special social welfare facilities. As the issue involved some other departments, the Housing Department would study it jointly with authorities concerned. Planning requirements had made the placing together of social facilities and the special school unlikely, but the Department would study the proposal further.
- (d) The Housing Department would consult the Tung Chung Rural Committee in March of the current year, and negative impacts of construction would be kept to the minimum.

The representative of the Planning Department said that land had been set aside for an indoor recreational centre and that the Leisure and Cultural Services Department would make decision as to the time of construction.

X. New Home Ownership Scheme Development at the Government Land adjacent to Mui Wo Fire Station

A member said that he did not object to the development plan, and advised the Housing Department to provide suitable transportation and relevant facilities and increase the number of parking spaces.

A member urged the authorities to conduct consultation before implementing any plan.

A member supported the plan but urged the Housing Department to seek options to lower the management fee.

The representative of the Housing Department appreciated the support given by members. The Department would try to increase the number of housing units so as to lower the management fee. It would also discuss with the Transport Department to provide suitable transportation facilities and consult the local people about the development plan.

A member proposed the construction of a basement parking lot and provision of shops at the ground level to facilitate easy shopping.

XI. Draft Tai O Fringe Outline Zoning Plan No. S/I - TOF/B

A member said that he had received many objections from Tai O residents against the Draft Plan. He criticized the Planning Department of not heeding opinions given by members of the District Council and residents. Many private lands were planned as conservation area and green belt, and owners' rights were violated.

A member expressed his regret that opinions expressed against the Draft Plan on many occasions were ignored, and that land owners were not compensated. He said that the planning was conducted from the angle of urban dwellers and there was inadequate land for small houses.

A member enquired whether existing planning would affect land ownership, and whether land in New Territories was "real estate" or "lease".

The representative of the Planning Department responded as below:

- (a) The Draft Plan was prepared in accordance with stipulations of the Town Planning Ordinance and did not involve resumption of land, thus land ownership would not be affected.
- (b) The proposals in the Draft Plan were based on past planning studies, and were made after local consultation. They were also based on most recent information and data collected and discussions with relevant professional departments. For example, the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department had been consulted on the establishment of conservation area.
- (c) Discussions had been conducted with the Transport Department which held the view that there was insufficient justification for building new roads, but the matter would be kept in view.
- (d) Agriculture was one of the permitted usages and if construction of houses was affected, land owners could submit application to the TPB.
- (e) Apart from consulting the District Council, stakeholders had been consulted through the Rural Committee. Opinions collected had been related to the TPB. The Planning Department had consulted the Development Bureau on the issue of compensation, and the Bureau opined that the Town Planning Ordinance did not provide TPB with the authority to make compensation and that there were adequate provisions in the ordinance for applications of amendments under various mechanisms.

A member said that the Planning Department tended to listen to opinions of government departments rather than those of land owners, and that past experiences showed that applications for amendments were difficult.

A member said that in preparing the Draft Plan, the Planning Department had not paid adequately attention to the history of Tai O.

A member said that the Planning Department had too much power and he proposed the setting up of a planning committee for the countryside. He supported another member's proposal of a resolution of objecting the Draft Plan.

A member said that he disagreed with the way the Planning Department and the TPB operated. The government departments' stance of conserving reed-grass area instead of supporting rehabilitation of farming was partial. He further said that land ownership should be protected under the Basic Law.

The Chairman asked for a show of hands to vote on the resolution of "Objection to the planning of private lands as conservation areas in the Draft Tai O Fringe Outline Zoning Plan". Fifteen members voted for the resolution, one abstained and there was no vote against the resolution. As such, the Islands District Council passed the above resolution.

The representative of the Planning Department said that he understood the resolution, and would report it to the TPB. He clarified that he did not say "rehabilitation of farming was undesirable development". He reiterated that the Draft Plan had clearly stipulated that existing usages would not be affected by the usage belt as listed in the Draft Plan. The mangrove area shown in the Draft Plan was for compensating the loss of mangrove area in the development of airport, and that most of the green belt and conservation area were slopes and there was no information to show that they were suitable for building houses.

XII. Progress Report of Major Works Projects in Islands District

Members enquired about the status of works and the representative of the Civil Engineering and Development Department briefed members of the most recent progresses.

Islands District Council Secretariat
April 2013