

**Summary of Minutes of Meeting of Islands District Council**

Date : 22 October 2012 (Monday)  
Time : 2:00 p.m.  
Venue : Conference Room, Islands District Council, 14/F., Harbour Building,  
38 Pier Road, Central, Hong Kong.

I. Visit of the Director of Lands to Islands District Council

The Director of Lands briefed the meeting of the duties of the Lands Department.

A member said that land for building of small houses in Mui Wo had almost been used up, and he hoped that there would be more land assigned for the purpose.

A member hoped that the Lands Department could speed up the vetting of small house applications of Islands District, in particular those of Sha Lo Wan and San Tau Village. Applications for building of small houses in Sha Lo Wan were not approved as it was located within the control zone of the (aircraft) noise exposure forecast contour. Only three small house applications had been approved in the past years. He said that it was not reasonable to reject applications for San Tau Village as it did not locate within the control zone.

The Vice-chairlady requested the Lands Department to provide details of vacant government lands suitable for community usage on a short term lease in the district and the procedures for application, so that members could relate the information to local organizations. She also enquired about the authority of the Lands Department in clearing obstructive materials in public places, what other government departments were also responsible for such matters, what channels were available for members to relate such matters to the Government, and what procedures had to be completed before clearance actions could be conducted.

In view of the extensive area of the Islands District and the vast number of cases to be handled, a member said that a review should be conducted to assess

whether the existing manpower and resources available for District Lands Office, Islands were adequate to meet its workload and to handle cases expeditiously.

A member said that Discovery Bay was the only private housing estate developed in phases based on the Master Plan. The Lands Department approved the Master Plan of Discovery Bay on 28 February, 2000, and the Executive Council endorsed the Outline Zoning Plan in 2004. In theory, development had to be conducted in accordance with the above two plans. However, many supplementary master plans were approved in the last 12 years for the development of Discovery Bay North. According to planning, there should be a transport interchange of about 10 000 square metres in the area. She was concerned whether there was still adequate space in the area for setting up the said interchange. There were much traffic at present and she was concerned of road safety if the interchange were not set up. In addition, she was supportive of the new measure of requiring the stipulation of the area of public facilities in future sales brochures of properties. In the sale brochures of the newly completed Amalfi (a housing development), there were no stipulations of public facilities owners should provide. She enquired how the Lands Department would protect the interests of the owners.

A member enquired about the co-ordination of government departments in handling illegally displayed banners.

The Director of Lands responded as follows:

- (a) Apart from Islands District, other districts faced the same problem of shortage of land for small houses. The Department would endeavour to cope with applications if they fulfil planning requirements. For the case of Sha Lo Wan, the Department would turn down applications for small house building within the noise exposure forecast contour. The Airport Authority was conducting environmental impact assessment for the construction of the third runway, thus the noise exposure forecast contour might undergo some changes. As a result, small house applications outside the contour zone were being suspended until the situation became clear.
- (b) The Lands Department, the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD) and the Hong Kong Police and some other

government departments were empowered by law to remove materials that caused obstruction in public places. For the sake of efficiency and to avoid duplication of actions, the departments had arrived at a consensus about their respective areas of jurisdiction. If and when necessary, joint actions would be taken.

- (c) The number of tree cases in Islands District was enormous. Subsequent to a fatal incident in Tai Po, the Department now gave priority to inspection of village roads on government land not leased and not under jurisdiction of any government departments, and with busy pedestrian or traffic flow. Before such actions could be carried out, sightings of problematic trees could be reported to Lands Office of various districts.
- (d) Both the Master Plan and the Outline Zoning Plan were legally binding, and in theory they should not contradict each other, although details could be added. The Department was endeavouring to clarify the relationship of the Master Plan approved in 2000 and the Outline Zoning Plan in the case of Discovery Bay, and it would closely co-ordinate with the Islands District Office to ensure that local consultation would be conducted in a satisfactory manner. Supplementary master plans mainly stipulated the details of development of each phase, and would not contradict the Outline Zoning Plan. Discussions with the District Lands Office, Islands would be conducted to improve consultation in regard of formulating the Master Plan.
- (e) The requirements of sale brochures had become stricter and the Lands Department would ensure that information provided in the brochures were adequate to protect the interests of consumers. The Department would consult the Transport and Housing Bureau if and when necessary.
- (f) The government departments had reached a consensus in handling banners. The FEHD would remove banners illegally displayed in public places, and the Lands Department would provide assistance if necessary.

A member said that the Islands District was vast in area. Sometimes private land was included in conservation zones but no one was responsible for its management. She said that policy in that regard should be reassessed. Tree management should focus on prevention rather than remedy. Only the Leisure and Cultural Services Department (LCSD) had set up a tree unit in the Islands District. The District Lands Office, Islands did not have adequate manpower to handle the vast number of trees in the whole Islands District. She proposed the setting up of a tree team in District Lands Office, Islands, which would regularly maintain trees to achieve effective prevention.

A member enquired how much land was available in Tung Chung for construction of public and private housing, under the premise of no reclamation and no land resumption. And among these lands, were there any government land leased on a short term basis.

A member said that members had many times brought to the attention of various departments of the case of banners illegally displayed outside the MTR Tung Chung Station. He urged for law enforcement actions.

A member supported the establishment a tree team dedicated to Islands District. She said that Cheung Chau also faced the problem of illegally displayed banner.

The Director of Lands further responded as follows:

- (a) The Government would try to achieve a reasonable balance between development and conservation.
- (b) The Tree Management Office was mainly responsible for formulating policies and co-ordination of management duties. For trees situated on lands not under jurisdiction of any other government departments, the Lands department would be responsible and the number of those trees was enormous. To be practical, the Lands Department would first inspect trees on village roads. There was also a shortage of expertise in the field of tree management in Hong Kong and the Department was trying to resolve the issue with the Tree Management Office.
- (c) Member's opinions about illegally displayed banners would be

discussed with department(s) concerned, so as to improve co-ordination among departments.

- (d) There was a total of about 400 hectares of land in Hong Kong which could be used for residential or commercial purposes. The Planning Department was studying existing vacant lands assigned for community usage, and exploring the possibility of changing some for construction of houses. Information of Islands District would be provided in due course.

## II. Visit of the Director of Social Welfare to Islands District Council

The Director of Social Welfare briefed the meeting of the duties of the Social Welfare Department (SWD).

Members raised enquiries and gave opinions as follows:

- (a) With reference to the recent vessel-collision incident at Lamma Island waters, a member proposed the extension of Traffic Accident Victims Assistance Scheme to cover victims of maritime accidents.
- (b) A member supported the Old Age Living Allowance proposal of the Government. He said that the means test was necessary for the Government to adopt a prudent fiscal management approach. He asked whether the asset limitation would date back to a certain time, and he hoped that the asset limitation would be adjusted upwards appropriately. He further enquired if the requirement for applicant to reside in Hong Kong for a year still existed for the Old Age Allowance- Guangdong Scheme.
- (c) The Vice-chairlady said that elderly living with families were unlikely to be eligible for Comprehensive Social Security Assistance (CSSA), and she hoped that the authorities would review that policy. For the pilot scheme on community care service voucher for the elderly, she was supportive of the “money-follows-the-user” approach and would like to learn about the mode of its operation. She was appreciative of the SWD’ allocating more resources for youth services in Tung Chung.

She very much hoped that the new outreaching team would be handed over to one and the same organization to avoid confusion. The currently proposed \$186 000 asset limitation of the Old Age Living Allowance was regarded as low in popular view, and she thus proposed that a review be conducted six months after its implementation. The review would enable a reasonable assessment of the number of elderly to be benefited.

The Director of Social Welfare responded as follows:

- (a) The source of finance for the Traffic Accident Victims Assistance Fund came mainly from vehicle licence fees and driving licence fees, and thus it was only for victims of road accidents. The proposal of setting up a similar fund for maritime victims would be studied by the Marine Department and relevant policy bureaux. On the other hand, the SWD, alongside charitable organizations, would provide assistance to those affected by unfortunate incidents.
- (b) Under the pilot scheme on community care service voucher for the elderly, financial aid would be given directly to eligible elderly, rather than to service providers. An amount of \$5 000 monthly would be issued to the elderly in form of vouchers which could be used at various recognized community service providers. Initial responses from non-governmental organizations and social enterprises were encouraging. Currently, work was being done to determine districts suitable for implementation of the scheme, contents of services, mechanisms for quality supervision and evaluation of services. It was anticipated that the scheme would be rolled out in chosen districts in the third quarter of the following year.
- (c) A new outreaching team for youth would be set up for Tung Chung in the following year and one and the same organization would be responsible for both day and night services. Division of work for existing organizations would not be affected.
- (d) The Old Age Allowance- Guangdong Scheme required the applicant to reside in Hong Kong for at least one year immediately prior the date of application. Under the consideration that many elderly had migrated to

live in Guangdong for a long time, a one-off special arrangement was being studied to allow exemption of the said requirement in the first year of implementation. The exemption would be allowed only for application in the first year of implementation, and subsequent applicants had to fulfil the requirement afterwards.

- (e) The Old Age Living Allowance was a measure for poverty alleviation. It was a well thought-out measure to provide for needy elderly who would have to subject to a simple and relaxed means test. As there were no available data for an upward adjustment of income and asset limitation, it would be difficult to assess the financial implications resulted. If the present proposal was approved, a considerable number of elderly in need would be benefited.

A member said that there was a need to set up a fund dedicated to victims of maritime accidents, as there were as many as 188 cases of accidents at sea every year.

A member said that there should not be income and asset limitation for Old Age Living Allowance applicants of or over seventy years old. He also opined that the \$186 000 asset limitation currently proposed was too low, and he did not agree that the declaration system was relaxed.

The Director of Social Welfare responded that as far as he understood it, the Marine Department and relevant policy bureaux were studying the feasibility of setting up a fund for victims of maritime accidents. As far as the SWD was concerned, it would endeavour to provide assistance when emergencies occurred. He reiterated that Old Age Living Allowance aimed at provision of assistance for needy elderly who would have to make simple income and asset declarations. Implementation of any new initiatives would have to be sustainable and its effects in the long run had to be taken into account.

### III. Question on slopes and vacant Government Land on Cheung Chau

The representative of the Lands Department said that of the four locations at issue, grass-cutting was being carried out at one, while grass-cutting of the other three would be completed before the end of October of the current year.

A member was concerned about the safety of a slope at Ko Shan Tsuen and the representative of the Lands Department said that the Department would follow up.

IV. Question on progress of investigation of the Cheung Chau ferry collision accident

The Chairman said that the Marine Department was not able to send a representative to the meeting, but a written reply was provided.

A member said that according to the written reply from the Marine Department, investigation report of the incident had been completed in June 2012. However, the report would not be publicized until legal proceedings were concluded. She enquired how long relevant legal procedures would take.

The Chairman said that the Traffic and Transport Committee had set up a working group to follow up and he proposed that the issue should be dealt with by the working group.

The previous member agreed with the Chairman's proposal. Many residents enquired about the report as they would demand compensation pending the publication of the report.

A member said that the report was an independent investigation of the Marine Department and he did not see any reason for delaying its publication until legal proceedings were concluded.

The representative of the Hong Kong Police said that the police were waiting for legal advice from the Department of Justice before prosecution could begin.

V. Question on progress of constructing mountain bike trails in South Lantau

A member said that according to the written reply of the Civil Engineering and Development Department (CEDD), the Department would proceed with the selection of engineering consultant. Detailed design work would begin in the first half of 2013 and construction would begin in 2014. The EMSD had held a public forum on 29 May 2010 for residents and users. He advised the Department to discuss with users



before determining the alignment of the trail, and then briefed this Council on the matter.

VI. Question on progress of constructing a cycle track at Silver Mine Bay, Mui Wo

A representative of the CEDD said that Phase 1 of Improvement Works for Mui Wo Facelift had been submitted to and supported by this Council on 20 February of the current year. Phase 1 included the construction of a cycle track at Ngan Kwong Wan Road, which was about 230 metres long. Gazetting of the project was conducted on 4 May of the current year and objections were received afterwards. The Department would proceed with legal procedures required and funding application and tendering would begin subsequently. The project would include the construction of a bridge, and the bridge's design had been approved by Advisory Committee on Appearances of Bridges and Associated Structures. The CEDD had discussed with the Mui Wo Rural Committee and the relevant member of the District Council about temporary traffic arrangements, which had also been agreed by the police and the Transport Department. Proposal for compensatory planting had been submitted to the Lands Department and the LCSD.

A member said that residents were most concerned about traffic arrangements during the construction period. He proposed to use part of the roadside green zone as temporary pedestrian path, in addition to single-lane two-way arrangement. He also proposed to New Lantao Bus Company Limited to temporary reposition some bus-stops. The member was satisfied with the progress being made but was concerned whether objections from a few people would stall the progress of the project. He thus hoped that the CEDD would deal with the objections sooner.

The representative of the CEDD said that the Department would as soon as possible complete the necessary legal procedures, and then apply for funding and conduct tendering.

VII. Question on insufficient parking spaces in Tai O

The representative of the Transport Department said that there were more than 100 parking spaces in Tai O area for use of members of the public. They included spaces for private cars, lorries and tourist buses. The Department had conducted a

survey on roadside parking spaces in Tai O. The overall usage rate in weekdays was between 70% to 80%, and around 90% on holidays. The usage rate for spaces at the bus terminus at Tai O Pier was particularly high. Usage rate for spaces (mainly for tourist buses and lorries) at Lung Hin Court was not high, and there were available spaces for members of the public. Usage rate for spaces at Yim Tin was lower than those at Tai O Pier and stood at around 60% on weekdays and about 80% on holidays. As such, the Transport Department believed that existing parking spaces in Tai O was on the whole sufficient to meet demand. The CEDD was conducting design and study about Phase 2 of Improvements Works at Tai O. The Transport Department had requested the consultant to review the demand of parking spaces in Tai O and make recommendations on suitable number and locations for parking spaces in the area, so as to tie in with development of its tourism.

A member was not satisfied with the reply of the Transport Department. He said that parking spaces at Leung Uk Tsuen, Tai O Road and Lung Tin Estate were seriously insufficient. He requested the Transport Department to conduct on-site visits on peak hours of weekdays and holidays with representative(s) of the Tai O Rural Committee to have a practical understanding of the issue.

A member said that the Transport Department concluded that there were sufficient parking spaces in Tai O because it was calculating usage rate on a whole area basis. The conclusion had deviated from actual situations. During holidays, parking spaces for private cars at Lung Hin Court were not sufficient while those for lorries had a higher vacant rate. Thus, private cars used spaces meant for lorries. He gave an example to illustrate that it was very difficult to find parking spaces at Tai O Pier from 10 am to 11 am from Monday to Friday. He was skeptical of the Transport Department's saying that there were 20% to 30% of parking spaces available at Lung Tin Estate on holidays. He was concerned about the issue of insufficient parking spaces leading to illegal parking. And if strict enforcement actions were to be carried out, he was concerned about popular resentment. There was an urgent need for more parking spaces in Tai O and Phase 2 of Improvements Works at Tai O would take several years to complete. The waiting period would be too long. He agreed with the previous member's proposal of conducting on-site visits on both weekdays and holidays.

A member said that parking spaces in South Lantau were insufficient and he requested the Transport Department to set up more spaces.

A member gave a recent case as an example and hoped that the police would first advise owners to drive their cars away before taking law enforcement actions. The number of vehicles entering South Lantau had increased substantially after the opening of the new section of Tung Chung Road. Thus the demand for parking spaces had outstripped supply and many cars parked illegally on private land and at road sides. He requested the Transport Department to conduct field visits and explore suitable places to set up parking spaces on Lantau.

VIII. New Home Ownership Scheme Development at Government Land adjacent to Ngan Wan Estate, Mui Wo

Members raised enquiries and gave opinions as follows:

- (a) A member asked whether special factors had been taken into account in planning plot ratio and height of the building concerned, such as legal requirements and opinions of residents. While the scheme was relatively small, better use of resources could still be effected, by increasing the height or floor area of the building, for instance.
- (b) A member said that he did not oppose the Home Ownership Scheme (HOS) in Mui Wo, but he hoped that the Housing Department would be aware that there was a shortage of parking spaces in the area. He said that the few parking spaces available in the project would not be adequate for the 130 flats planned. He also hoped that government departments concerned would consider opening up the emergency roads in Mui Wo to achieve better traffic flow in the area.
- (c) A member proposed to use empty land around the site as parking spaces.
- (d) A member said that residents moving into Mui Wo were likely to buy cars and thus the Housing Department should provide more parking facilities than those provided in estates of the urban areas.
- (e) The Vice-chairlady welcomed the Scheme as there was an urgent need for housing. She said that the downside was that the small number of flats would likely result in higher management fee. She hoped that

suitable transportation support be provided for residents. Some other lands in Tung Chung were suitable for building houses and the Government should make effective planning to avoid problems fermenting in the area, such as aging population

The representative of the Housing Department gave responses as follows:

- (a) The less than three times plot ratio of the scheme was arrived at after discussion with departments concerned. As Mui Wo was a low density rural area, the plot ratio was considered appropriate. To try to increase plot ratio at the current stage might pose much difficulty.
- (b) The height of the building being planned was similar to those of Ngan Wan Estate in the vicinity, and it was appropriate.
- (c) The parking facilities were provided in accordance with the Hong Kong Planning Standards and Guidelines. The Housing Department would discuss with the Transport Department about members' view of the special conditions of Mui Wo.
- (d) Management fee was likely to be higher as a result of fewer number of flats, but efforts would be made to combine management of other suitable housing facilities in future to try to lower the fee.
- (e) Members' concern about transportation would be related to relevant departments.

A member said that public housing should be built on the site at issue. Should HOS estate be built, it should be on the land adjacent Mui Wo Fire Station because the latter site was larger in area and would help lower management fee. He was sceptical of the effectiveness of building small scale HOS estate. He also proposed the construction of basements as parking facility.

A member was disappointed at the reply that it was difficult to alter the plot ratio and he hoped that members of the District Council be consulted in future projects. He said that the height of the proposed building should be lower than that of Ngan Wan Estate.

A member also said that the scale of the project was too small and that management fee would be high. He questioned why larger and more suitable land not be explored in Islands District to be used for housing.

The representative of the Housing Department further responded as follows:

- (a) The Housing Department would discuss with relevant departments before consulting district councils, so that an initial proposal could be formulated as a basis for consultation. If members were of the view that the proposed less than three times plot ratio could be increased, the Housing Department would consult other relevant departments of the matter.
- (b) Various government departments were endeavouring to look for suitable sites for construction of houses, but as a result of planning restrictions, some land could not be used for the housing immediately. To increase housing supply, the Department hoped that the new HOS could be implemented as soon as possible.
- (c) There was as yet no solution for the possibly higher than average management fee foreseen. Bundling of management of future housing estates would be looked into.

For the proposal of using the site adjacent to Mui Wo Fire Station for HOS, the Housing Department would study its feasibility.

Islands District Council Secretariat  
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