

Summary of Minutes of Meeting of Islands District Council

Date : 20 October 2014 (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 Commissioner for Labour to Islands District Council

The Commissioner for Labour briefed the meeting of the work of the Department, including the employment situation of Hong Kong, its employment services, Work Incentive Transport Subsidy Scheme, implementation of Statutory Minimum Wage, enactment of paternity leave legislation and the work of Standard Working Hours Committee.

A member appreciated the Department's sending representatives to Tung Chung in September of the current year to listen to various organizations on their opinions of employment services. He hoped that the Department would actively co-operate with local organizations to provide assistance to those in need (such as ethnic minorities). He enquired the telephone number of Tung Chung Job Centre and also hoped that its services would be extended to cover labour disputes. He urged the Department to follow up on recent fatal industrial accident occurred at construction site of Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge.

A member enquired about the types of work (such as white/blue collar) of vacancies existed in private enterprises as mentioned by the Commissioner and their distribution by industries, and whether the Labour Department had provided training, measures and incentives to assist recruitment for these jobs.

The Commissioner for Labour responded as follows:

- (a) In order to enhance employment support for residents of remote areas, the Labour Department had newly established a job centre in Tung Chung. With regard to the proposal of extending the services of the job centre to labour disputes, the Department had to take into account the essential differences between employment services and labour

disputes. The 24-hour hotline of the Department provided consultation for those enquiries of rights of labour, and most people would not need to approach the Department in person. Mediation service would be required only when there were labour disputes between employees and employers, and rarely would someone constantly need mediation service. The area of Tung Chung Job Centre was limited and thus it would mainly provide employment services.

- (b) The Occupational Safety and Health Ordinance required employers to safeguard the safety and well-being of their employees. The Labour Department would prosecute those who violated the Ordinance if there was sufficient evidence. The Labour Department had been at the site of the Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge to understand the matter, and a suspension notice had been issued. Relatives of the deceased and injured workers had been contacted in order to provide suitable assistance.
- (c) The proportion of full time and part time vacancies of private enterprises was 85% to 15%, and most jobs were in the food and retail business. As such the Labour Department had set up two recruitment centres for the two industries at Revenue Tower, Wanchai.
- (d) The Labour Department had rolled out many schemes to provide training for people who might have difficulties in getting employment. Some allowances were provided to employers to enhance the employment prospect of these people. When necessary, some were referred to Vocational Training Council, Employees Retraining Board and the Construction Industry Council for further training.

The Vice-chairlady proposed that apart from employment services, other services that could enhance productivity should also be provided at Tung Chung Job Centre, such as consultation services for labour disputes and injuries at work. She hoped that the Department would discuss with relevant parties to provide policy support to match organizations in need of labour with job seekers, so that training and employment could be provided at the same time. She requested the Department to be mindful of changes in the job market and vacancies, and be effective in matching and provision of job market information.

A member said that members of the public reflected to her that some property management agents paid employees salaries way below the statutory minimum wage, despite having stipulated wages conforming legal requirements in the tender. Staff concerned was not willing to lodge complaints for fear of dismissal. She enquired how the Department would ensure that employees were paid in accordance with wages as stipulated in the tender.

The Commissioner for Labour responded as follows:

- (a) The hotline number of Tung Chung Job Centre was 3428 2943. Further information and posters of the Centre would be provided in due course, and he hoped that members would assist in publicizing.
- (b) Briefing sessions on employment opportunities would be organized at Tung Chung Job Centre regularly, and topics such as job market situation, channels and skills of job-seeking and basic knowledge of labour legislations would be included. Follow-up of individual cases would be more effective if they were dealt with by experienced staff familiar with relevant legislations. The Department would timely review the work of Tung Chung Job Centre in order to improve its services. For the time being, residents would have to approach other regional offices for other services.
- (c) The Employment Ordinance stipulated that employers had to record the total number of hours worked by the employee during the wage period and the wages paid. The Labour Department would conduct inspections at workplaces to ensure that relevant stipulations were enforced, and prosecutions would be taken if there was sufficient evidence. Should employers dismiss employees for standing as witnesses or providing information, the employers could be subjected to prosecution. As there was a great demand for labour currently, there would be costs on the part of employers if they dismissed employees. Employees should contact the Labour Department as soon as possible if they suspected that their employers had violated the stipulations of the requirements of the minimum wage.

II. Updates on North Lantau Hospital

The Vice-chairlady was appreciative of Hospital Authority's regularly updating the Islands District Council (IDC) of the most recent situation of North Lantau Hospital (NLTH) and its timely provision of services as planned. As reflected by the number of patients, there was a certain demand for night clinic. She enquired that in the industrial accident of the Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge, whether NLTH was the first station or diversion station. She also requested an update of the follow-up on provision of direct transport to the Hospital.

Two members enquired whether the dispensary of NLTH would provide service on Saturdays and Sundays.

A member enquired what specialist clinics were being and would be provided, and what new specialist clinics to be provided in 2015. He also enquired whether patients currently attending specialist clinics in Kowloon West Cluster hospitals could be referred to NLTH if the latter had the same specialist service. He also enquired about the progress of minibus service and requested the building of cover on the private roads of the Hospital.

A member enquired whether the scale of the A&E service of NLTH was the same as those of other hospitals. In the recent Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge industrial accident, the two injured persons were sent to NLTH and Princess Margaret Hospital separately. He enquired whether the arrangement was a normal one, or it was made because NLTH could not cope with the serious incident. He also enquired about the plan of future expansion of NLTH.

The representative of Hospital Authority responded as follows:

- (a) The scale of the A&E service of NLTH was comparable to those of other hospitals. The Hospital Authority had in place an established mechanism in respect of major incidents or serious traumas. Hospitals concerned would send a medical team to the scene if and when necessary. If the place of incident was in north Lantau, NLTH would be the first hospital to send a medical team to the scene. He gave an example to illustrate that if there were many injured persons, they would be sent to various hospitals to avoid overloading of any hospitals and to ensure patients receiving proper care.

- (b) In the Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge incident occurred the day before, Hospital Authority and the Fire Services Department acted in accordance with established pre-hospital diversion arrangements of serious trauma cases. Survival rate of patients of serious trauma was best if they were sent directly to trauma centres. Thus, if requirements of pre-hospital diversion were met, patients would be sent to the trauma centre of Princess Margaret Hospital directly. The arrangement was applicable across the whole territory of Hong Kong.
- (c) Currently the dispensary of NLTH could not provide service around the clock. On Saturdays and Sundays, it would provide service in the morning session. When the dispensary was not open, the A&E Department would provide essential pre-packed drugs to patients in need.
- (d) Specialist clinics already in service in NLTH included Day Rehabilitation Centre, Department of Medicine, Psychiatric Unit, Surgical Unit and Orthopaedics. Patients could request their doctors to transfer them from other hospitals to NLTH if relevant specialist services were available in the latter.

Another representative of Hospital Authority responded as follows:

- (a) NLTH was very concerned of the proposed minibus service, and it regularly provided figures of patients and visitors to the Transport Department for it to study the proposal.
- (b) The building of cover for the pedestrian walkway had been included in NLTH's plan pending the provision of fund from Hospital Authority. NLTH would maintain contact with relevant government departments in design matters and implementation of works in the future.
- (c) NLTH would increase sessions of specialist clinics if more manpower and resources became available.

III. Question on requesting the Transport Department to introduce minibus services into Tung Chung

The representative of the Transport Department said that the housing development projects in Tung Chung Areas 55 and 56 would be completed in the third quarter of 2015 and fourth quarter of 2016 respectively. The Department had been closely monitoring the progress of works and the time of intake of residents. It had also maintained close contact with NLTH in keeping abreast of its figures of patients and visitors, so as to have better grasp of the demand for public transport. After obtaining relevant data, the Department would plan corresponding means of public transport to address the need, which might include minibus services.

A member enquired what other means of public transport, apart from minibus services, would be planned to address the future population growth of Tung Chung. At the Traffic and Transport Committee meeting held in September of the current year, many members expressed their reservation about the ability of New Lantau Bus Company Limited (Lantau Bus) to meet the demand of future population growth. He said that new contractors should be introduced to improve quality of service through competition. Members would not accept the proposal of only increasing frequencies of bus trips.

The representative of the Transport Department said that there was strong demand for No.38 bus service even before the intake of new housing projects in Tung Chung North. The Department would closely monitor the service of No.37 and 38 buses before the introduction of new services. The Department was considering the means of transport to be brought in to connect NLTH, and the major consideration was that no standing of passengers would be allowed on whatever means of transport to be introduced and it had to reach the podium of the Hospital directly. The Department would deal with members' opinions of Lantau Bus separately, and the issue of number of public transport contractors on Lantau had to be handled very carefully.

A member enquired when the Department would be able to arrive at a decision. He proposed that contractors could be invited to give their expression of interests in order to understand how many franchised bus companies were interested in providing service on Lantau Island.

Another member concurred with the previous member's opinion that the Transport Department should consult the industry's intention. She also stressed that invitation for expression of interests should be issued earlier as time schedule was tight.

The Vice-chairlady said that the Transport Department should also consider the development and changes in the area, and the feeling of passengers. She said that existing bus services simply could not meet the demand of the population, and overcrowdedness was serious during peak hours. She criticized the Transport Department for not pro-actively resolving the issue. Residents were particularly unhappy about the difficulty of travelling within the area. She said that the Department should let contractors trial-run minibus services.

The representative of the Transport Department said that in planning the transport services of NLTH, the Department would take into account the overall situation of the area, including those of the city centre and North Lantau. The Department had been planning carefully on the transport service connecting NLTH and tried to ensure that resources would be utilized efficiently.

IV. Question on MTR Interchange Discounts

The representative of MTR Corporation (MTR) said that the interchange concessions provided for outlying islands ferries were different from that of fare saver machines. The latter was a relatively long term concession, and its setting-up depended on the distance between the fare saver and the nearest MTR station. The interchange concessions machine provided for outlying islands ferries was too close to the nearest MTR station (Hong Kong Station), and thus it did not comply with the principle of setting up a fare saver machine. Currently, fare discount provided at fare savers was \$1 while it was \$2 previously. The discount for interchange concessions was \$1.5, and it was a special promotion scheme. MTR had to conduct a review upon the conclusion of the scheme for future plans. The company was aware of and would study members' opinions.

A member said that residents of Islands District hoped very much that the interchange concessions would continue and she hoped that MTR would reply soon.

The representative of MTR said that the company would conduct a review at the end of the concession period, and it would not be able to provide information

about the time and type of the next concession at the current stage. She reiterated that the interchange concessions provided were a commercial promotion and a review had to be conducted.

The member cited an example to illustrate that termination of concessions would not be of benefits for neither residents of Islands District nor MTR.

The representative of MTR said that she would relate members' opinions to the Marketing Department of the company.

V. Lantau District Action Plan 2014 Mid-Year Review

A member said that many policemen had been deployed to maintain law and order in the so-called "occupation areas" and some residents worried that the security in Tung Chung might be affected. He enquired about the recent law and order situation in Tung Chung.

The representative of Hong Kong Police Force said that there was no deterioration of law and order in Tung Chung. While some policemen had been deployed to other regions, the police work in Tung Chung would be maintained. Reports of crime would be dealt with as usual. The Police would keep close contact with the community and patrols would be deployed to ensure the safety of the neighbourhood.

VI. Marine Port District Action Plan 2014(Interim Report)

The representative of Hong Kong Police Force appreciated the co-operation and support given by the local community. She cited the recent arrest of five men for illegal felling and theft of incense trees on Lamma Island as an example. The case also illustrated the successful implementation of "one village, one police officer" scheme on the island.

VII. Question on progress of construction of special school in Tung Chung

A representative of the Education Bureau said that the technical feasibility study report had been endorsed by the Development Bureau. It was anticipated that

work could begin the earliest by 2016 and completed in 2018.

A member enquired whether the Education Bureau would be able to brief the IDC of the contents of the project in 2015, such as its scale and design.

The representative of the Education Bureau said that the current site was chosen after the original site was changed, and thus there might be some alterations in the original design. If the changes were minor, time needed for design would be shortened. The Bureau was aware of the demand of the members and residents, and it would follow up on the project pro-actively.

The member enquired whether the project would be submitted and endorsed by IDC and the Legislative Council in 2015.

The representative of the Education Bureau said that if all went well, it was anticipated that IDC would be consulted in the last quarter of 2015 the earliest.

VIII. Question on works to improve steep road

The representative of the Transport Department said that the Department had contacted the Police and had learnt of the location and relevant information of the two traffic accidents of the previous two months. The Department had also conducted a site visit. After studying the relevant information, it proposed that two traffic signs reading “Bend to right ahead” and “Reduce speed now” be installed at suitable spots to warn drivers. A “Works Request Form” in that regard had been issued to the Highways Department.

The representative of the Highways Department said that a contractor had been arranged to follow up on the works which were anticipated to be completed in late November.

A member enquired whether there would be other improvement measures, such as a deeper brushed road surface.

The representative of the Highways Department said that during the site inspection, its staff found that the brushed road surface was still usable, but a manhole cover was well worn. The relevant party was informed to have the cover replaced and the Highways Department would monitor the wear and tear of the road surface.

IX. Updates on Islands District Signature Project

Members noted the progress of the two Signature Projects (at Silvermine Bay and Yung Shue Wan respectively) of Islands District and that a public briefing would be held on November 15.

X. Project No. 7414RO2A - Improvement Works at Mui Wo, Phase 2 Stage 1

A member was concerned of the traffic flow after the completion of the works, and he did not agree with the arrangement of removing part of the perimeter wall of the former New Territories Heung Yee Kuk Southern District Secondary School (the school) to widen the road. He proposed to review the arrangement of traffic flow, and remove some trees if necessary.

The representative of the Civil Engineering and Development Department (CEDD) said that the current project was prepared in accordance with the Engineering Feasibility Study of the Improvement Works at Mui Wo of 2009. A small portion of the perimeter wall of the school would be removed and rebuilt. Some trees had to be removed as well.

A member enquired whether gazetting would be conducted only for works of Mui Wo Ferry Pier Road Car Park Extension.

The representative of CEDD said that works for Mui Wo Ferry Pier Road would also be gazetted.

A member said that Improvement Works at Mui Wo, Phase 2 should include the conversion of the cooked food centre of Mui Wo Ferry Pier, and he queried the CEDD for gazetting only the works of Car Park Extension and those of Mui Wo Ferry Pier Road. On CEDD's proposal of using the school as temporary site office and storage area and arrangements of Phase 1 works, he gave some opinions and raised some concerns. He was also sceptical of the Department's real motive of borrowing the school for the use. He said that some sponsoring organizations were collecting statistics to prepare for reopening of the school. He worried that if CEDD should successfully borrow the school for a few years, sponsoring organizations might have the wrong impression that Mui Wo residents had given up the school. He supported the extension of the car park, but improvement works of cooked food centre

should also be gazetted. He also urged authorities concerned to discuss earlier with owners of cooked food stalls about removal and tenancy arrangements.

The representative of CEDD clarified that the Department proposed borrowing the school because the contract of Phase 1 stipulated that the temporary office had to be set up on the works site of the car park under extension. As such, Phase 2 works could fully begin only upon the completion of Phase 1 works. The Department proposed borrowing the school because it hoped that land for the temporary site office could be vacated earlier to allow Phase 2 works to commence. The Department would implement the works of Car Park Extension and the improvement works of cooked food centre in stages. The existing plan was to conduct the Car Park Extension first. Upon its completion, the cooked food centre could temporarily be moved to the fee-charging car park outside Mui Wo Ferry Pier, so that the site vacated could be used for reconstruction of the temporary cooked food centre. The Department proposed implementation of works by stages so as to benefit Mui Wo residents as early as possible.

The Vice-chairlady asked why the CEDD had not provided more information about Phase 2 works to Mui Wo Rural Committee and District Councillors of the area concerned beforehand. She hoped that works of Phase 2 could be implemented immediately after those of Phase 1, and she agreed in principle that CEDD should implement Phase 2 works the soonest possible. The Department should discuss issues such as future traffic flow with Mui Wo Rural Committee and relevant District Councillors in due course. She hoped that the Department would find another place for setting up the temporary site office instead of the school.

A member said that if it was a multi-storey car park, time for construction would be longer. If not, time needed for extension of car park after the office was vacated would not be very different from using the school as site office first, and then restoring the school to its original state. He proposed sticking to the original plan of using the car park as temporary site office. Then upon the completion of Phase 1 works, extension of car park could begin to avoid affecting the school.

A member said that according to past consultation papers, the future car park might be two-storey high. However, the current proposal was to extend the car park and increase the number of parking spaces only. He supported the Government's developing Mui Wo into a leisure and historic rural township, but had reservation about the proposal to borrow the school. He reiterated his hope that the improvements

works for the cooked food centre and the extension of car park should be implemented together.

The representative of CEDD clarified that in the paper of the current discussion, there was no mentioning of borrowing the school for use as temporary site office. In earlier consultations conducted, the Department learnt that members did not support the proposal. As such, the timetable of Phase 2 Stage 1 premised on using the car park work site as temporary office, i.e. Phase 2 works would be fully implemented upon the completion of Phase 1 works. It was anticipated that works could be completed earliest by 2019.

A member concurred with a previous member's opinion that it was feasible to restore the car park work site which had been used as temporary office upon the completion of Phase 1 works, and followed by implementation of extension works. On some members' disagreement with the traffic flow upon completion of the works, he proposed that CEDD should improve the design and amend the number of parking spaces. In such case, the original traffic route could still be used and the school would not be affected. He stressed that the school was very important for residents, and they worried that the plan to re-open the school would be jeopardized.

A member said that he deplored that the decision of not borrowing the school had not been conveyed to members, resulting in some misunderstandings. He also hoped that CEDD would clearly relate the most recent situation to members in the future.

Another representative of CEDD supplemented as follows:

- (a) The timetable of Phase 2 Stage 1 did not premise on using the school as the temporary office, and thus the works period could be completed only in 2019.
- (b) Assessment conducted by a geotechnical engineer revealed that a natural slope adjacent to the extension of car park posed risks. Thus stabilization works for the slope had to be done first in Phase 2 Stage 1 works. It was anticipated that the works programme would take three years.
- (c) CEDD, the Transport Department and the Highways Department had conducted discussions to avoid the Mui Wo Ferry Pier Road going into

the school area. Unfortunately, results of many studies suggested that minimum road safety and visual requirements could not be met. The current proposal was to slightly move the perimeter wall of the school inwards. As there was serious shortage of parking spaces in Mui Wo, the Department hoped to implement works as soon as possible in order to provide more parking spaces.

The Chairman hoped that works for extension of car park could be implemented the soonest possible. He said that members were not against gazetting, but just concerned about the future traffic flow. He hoped that CEDD would discuss further with Mui Wo Rural Committee and IDC members concerned, so that works would not be hindered.

A member was concerned that the bend of the future road would form a 90 degree turn and that might affect safety. He proposed using the existing route and not affecting the school.

The representative of CEDD said that the Department had conducted a very detailed scientific model study on the bend and found that even full-sized coaches would have adequate space for making a turn. The Department would discuss with the Transport Department to determine if imposition of speed limit would be necessary.

A member said that while Mui Wo Rural Committee and District Council members had their opinions on the works, he agreed with the Chairman that the implementation and gazetting of works should not be hindered. He proposed that CEDD should explain to residents of their plan so as to relieve their concerns.

The representative of CEDD said that the Department would send representatives to explain the works project to the residents.

Islands District Council Secretariat
December 2014