

(Translation)

**Islands District Council
Minutes of Meeting of the
Community Affairs, Culture and Recreation Committee**

Date : 20 September 2021 (Monday)
Time : 10:30 a.m.
Venue : Islands District Council Conference Room,
14/F., Harbour Building, 38 Pier Road, Central, Hong Kong

Present

Mr WONG Man-hon, MH (Chairman)
Ms LAU Shun-ting (Vice-Chairman)
Mr YU Hon-kwan, Randy, MH, JP
Mr CHOW Yuk-tong, SBS, MH
Mr CHAN Lin-wai, MH
Mr WONG Hon-kuen, Ken (Arrived at around 10:45 a.m.)
Mr HO Chun-fai
Mr HO Siu-kei
Ms WONG Chau-ping
Ms TSANG Sau-ho, Josephine
Mr KWOK Ping, Eric
Mr TSUI Sang-hung, Sammy
Mr FONG Lung-fei

Attendance by Invitation

Ms WONG Ka-ming, Grace	Assistant District Officer (Islands)2, Islands District Office
Mr LI Ming-yau	Senior Inspector of Works, Islands District Office
Mr CHAN Ho-fun, Barkley	Liaison Officer in-charge (Mui Wo/South Lantau), Islands District Office
Mr TONG King-man	Senior Assistant Chief Ambulance Officer (New Territories) (Acting), Fire Services Department
Ms NG Yuen-yan	Assistant Chief Ambulance Officer (New Territories South) (Acting), Fire Services Department
Mr WONG Sui-ki	Senior Ambulance Officer, Fire Services Department
Mr TSANG Wai-man	Administrative Assistant/Lands (District Lands Office, Islands), Lands Department

In Attendance

Mr LI Ho, Thomas	Assistant District Officer (Islands)1, Islands District Office
Ms CHOW Yuen-on, Alice	Deputy District Leisure Manager (District Support) Islands, Leisure and Cultural Services Department
Miss CHU Po-yee, Polly	Senior Librarian (Islands), Leisure and Cultural Services Department
Ms WONG Fan-ni, Jasmine	Senior Manager (New Territories South)Promotion, Leisure and Cultural Services Department
Mr WONG Kin-sun	Senior Community Relations Officer (Hong Kong West/ Islands), Independent Commission Against Corruption
Ms LAM Fong-shing, Florence	Senior School Development Officer (Wanchai & Islands), Education Bureau
Mr WONG Chi-leung	Assistant District Social Welfare Officer (Central Western/ Southern/Islands)2, Social Welfare Department
Ms KWOK Man-lai	Representative, Association of School Heads of Islands District
Mr LAM Kit-sing	Chairman, Islands District Sports Association
Ms CHOI Kwok-por	Chairman, Hong Kong Islands Cultural & Art Association

Secretary

Mr YEUNG Chiu-cheong, Mark	Executive Officer (District Council)1, Islands District Office
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Absent with Apologies

Mr YUNG Chi-ming, BBS, MH

Absent

Mr WONG Chun-yeung

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## Welcoming Remarks

The Chairman welcomed representatives of government departments, organisations and Members to the meeting and introduced Ms KWOK Man-lai, Representative, Association of School Heads of Islands District to the meeting who attended the meeting on behalf of the Association.

2. Members noted Mr YUNG Chi-ming was absent with apologies.

### I. Confirmation of Minutes of Previous Meeting held on 5 July 2021

3. The Chairman said that the above minutes of meeting had incorporated the amendment proposals from government departments and organisations and they were sent to Members for information before the meeting.

4. Members made no further amendment proposals and the minutes of the above meeting was confirmed unanimously.

### II. Question on emergency rescue services for the three villages in Mui Wo (Paper CACRC 28/2021)

5. The Chairman welcomed the guests, Ms Grace WONG, Assistant District Officer (Islands)<sup>2</sup>, Mr LI Ming-yau, Senior Inspector of Works and Mr Barkley CHAN, Liaison Officer in-charge (Mui Wo/South Lantau) of Islands District Office (IsDO); Mr TONG King-man, Senior Assistant Chief Ambulance Officer (New Territories) (Acting); Ms NG Yuen-yan, Assistant Chief Ambulance Officer (New Territories South) (Acting) and Mr WONG Sui-ki, Senior Ambulance Officer of Fire Service Department, and Mr TSANG Wai-man, Administrative Assistant/Lands (District Lands Office, Islands) to present the papers at the meeting.

6. The written reply by the Highways Departments (HyD) and the District Lands Office, Islands (DLO/Is) was sent to Members for information before the meeting.

7. Mr Randy YU briefly presented the question.

8. Ms Grace WONG said that regarding to the matters relating to lamp post as mentioned in the question, the IsDO and the Fire Services Department (FSD) jointly conducted an ambulance access test on the road connecting Pak Mong Village and Ngau Kwu Long Village in April this year. Later, it was confirmed by the FSD that a section of the road surface was too narrow. The IsDO immediately coordinated with the relevant village representatives and government departments for the relocation of the lamp post to make more space for access by emergency vehicles. Coordination work was smoothly conducted by the IsDO and the relevant government departments were urged to relocate the lamp post as soon as possible.

9. As for convening an inter-departmental joint meeting, the IsDO would contact the FSD again for an ambulance access test on the road after the lamp post was

relocated. At that time, the discussion on the condition of that section of the road would again be held with the FSD and relevant stakeholders for appropriate follow-up actions.

10. Mr TONG King-man made a consolidated response as follows:

- (a) The FSD stationed 18 day ambulances and 13 night ambulances at the Lantau (including Tung Chung) Ambulance Depot. Upon receiving request for emergency ambulance services, the FSD would dispatch its ambulance closest to the scene of incident. The Department continuously monitored the demand for ambulance services in Lantau and Tung Chung and would appropriately re-deploy its resources in a timely manner according to the needs of ambulance services.
- (b) With regard to the holding of an inter-departmental joint meeting, he thanked the IsDO and the FSD for their continued cooperation. The Department would continue to cooperate with the relevant government departments for discussions on the improvement measures.
- (c) For years, the villagers had been requesting for the provision of rescue motorcycle and mini ambulance facilities. The Department had been closely monitoring the situation in various districts and conducting timely reviews of its ambulance resources to meet the demand for emergency services. The Department would take into consideration of different factors when determining the deployment of various ambulance resources, including population aging, service demand, distribution of ambulance depots, human resources, local conditions etc. in deploying suitable ambulances for the rescue. The design of the mini village ambulances stationed on the outlying islands (i.e. Cheung Chau, Lamma Island, Peng Chau) was based on their special environment of low-speed and short distance transfer. These mini ambulances were not suitable for use on the ordinary roads and the highways. Under feasible circumstances, the Department would deploy light ambulances for use on the narrow village roads on Lantau, where practicable in light of the actual situation.

11. Mr TSANG Wai-man said he had no further comments to the written reply.

12. The Chairman expressed his views as follows:

- (a) He asked the FSD about the number of light ambulances and said that when the public needed the service, big ambulance were often deployed but they could not reach the scene of incident due to their large size, and they could only reach Pak Mong Village. It took about 20 to 30 minutes for ambulance staff to walk to Ngau Kwu Long Village from Pak Mong Village. Villagers needed to send the injured to Pak Mong Village by private car or to send the ambulance staff to Ngau Kwu Village, which would result in a delay in rescue. However, if accidents occurred when tourists went hiking during the holidays, the FSD would

deploy light ambulance for their rescue. The villagers had grudges because of the different approaches adopted by the FSD. He enquired about the FSD's criteria for ambulance deployment and whether light ambulances were reserved to meet the needs of the villagers of the three villages so that immediate deployment of light ambulance for their rescue could be made when necessary.

- (b) The management of road facilities often involved a lot of procedures. For example, the installation of a lamp post required relevant permission from the Lands Department (LandsD) and HyD. He asked the departments concerned whether urgent matters could be treated in a special way to expedite their handling. He said that there were often incidents in the three villages, and there were villagers who even suffered from untimely rescue. At present case, the condition of a 50-year old villager who suffered from cerebral apoplexy still remained unknown. The remote rural places on Lantau, apart from the three villages, also included places such as San Tau Village. Whenever there was an incident, the ambulance had no direct access to the scene. He asked how the Department could strike a balance in respect of the ambulance services provided to various villages.

13. Mr Randy YU expressed his views as follows:

- (a) According to the reply by the Department, HyD received a referral for relocation of a lamp post from the IsDO on 22 June and a site visit was conducted one month later. Later, the DLO/Is was requested to conduct public consultation on 6 September and the DLO/Is posted a public notice to consult the public on 20 September and the whole process could be regarded as a quick one. He had followed up the matter for more than 7 years during which there was a person suffered from untimely rescues. However, FSD or the ambulance services could not be blamed for it as receipt of telecommunication was unsatisfactory at that time and the person has failed to make a telephone call. Together with the late arrival of the ambulance, it had led to the untimely rescue of the person. Afterwards, the Telecommunications Authority and the communication service provider improved the telecommunication signals of that place to facilitate the prompt despatch of the rescue signals. As for matters relating to the ambulance services, he asked whether the road could contain regular ambulances after the relocation of the lamp post. If access was only possible for light ambulances, he asked about the ways handled by the Department in case all light ambulances were deployed and the regular ambulances could not reach the incident scenes when there were incidents in the three villages.
- (b) They had asked for the provision of rescue motorcycles to enable the prompt arrival of ambulance staff at the incident scene. During the above incident, it took nearly two hours to send the patient to the hospital while the prime time for the rescue of the stroke patient was three hours

after the stroke. Thus the chance for rescuing the patient was grossly affected. He had followed up on the matter for years and saw that assistance was provided by different departments. However, there was no way to uproot the problem at each inter-departmental group meeting.

- (c) In respect of local planning, one of the three villages, Tai Ho, had sacrificed a lot. Firstly, farming was impossible for most of its residents when the stream was diverted after the construction of the Shek Pik Reservoir. Thus they had to leave their home to seek outside job and could only visit their family once a week. Secondly, though North Lantau Highway was at its proximity, there was no road connecting to it. It was until reclamation was carried out at the Tung Chung East, and that a roundabout was built near it. Thirdly, the three villages were planned as a “site of special scientific interest” on which no sewerage could be planned and no houses could be built. The improvement of rescue services for it brooked no delay now. He urged that more consideration should be made by various departments and hoped that the matter would be attended by an inter-departmental group meeting to be convened in the near future.

14. Mr HO Siu-kei said that follow-up actions had been taken on the matter for seven years. Earlier he told various departments that there were remote villages in Tai O such as San Tau Village. When there were villagers and hikers suffered from heat stroke and had accidents at that road section from Tung Chung to Tai O, at present, the rescue staff would have to push the roller bed and walk to San Tau Village from the Hau Wong Temple of Tung Chung, and no improvements had been seen. It was until an incident happened and then the authorities concerned were willing to assist with the relocation of the lamp post. He opined that the matter would affect the safety of the villagers and the hikers. He had asked for the deployment of motorcycles to the scene of the incident for rescue and report so that proper treatment could be provided to patients, but that request was turned down. He agreed to conduct an inter-departmental group meeting for follow-up actions or else the general public would find it hard to believe that the Government had the determination to solve the problem.

15. Mr Eric KWOK expressed his views as follows:

- (a) He said that Tung Chung was a place with both urban and rural development and there were discussions on improving its fire service equipment by committees of various terms for a long time. However, things still remained as they were with no progress. Thus, he supported to conduct an inter-departmental group meeting with the Housing Department, LandsD, the Planning Department (PlanD) and the Lantau Office to discuss the matter and implement improvement measures during the present term of office of the committee.
- (b) He opined that FSD did not squarely respond to the question whether the ambulance services could meet the demand of the densely populated Tung Chung District and the remote villages of Lantau, but only simply responded that the manpower resources and rescue facilities would be

reviewed. He viewed that the Department should make elaboration on the problems presently encountered and the ways to handle them. He said that the population of Tung Chung would be largely increased in the coming 6 to 7 years and the Department should explicitly state the ways to cope with it. He viewed that the representative of the Department failed to respond to his question today and he thus hoped that the Department would respond at the inter-departmental group meeting the ways to improve the fire and ambulance services in the remote urban-rural villages and their timetable.

16. Ms WONG Chau-ping said that issues in respect of the villages had been discussed at different meetings but they were always neglected. She hoped that the Department would pay more attention to it. She viewed that the lamp post issue was a matter of life and death and prompt action should be taken by the Department or even consider treating the special issue in a special way. The commissioning of the North Lantau Hospital was a matter that should be applauded by the whole Lantau. It was close to the three villages but rescue was delayed by the lamp post issue. She opined that the departments concerned should conduct a review again. She said that respect should be paid to the interests of the rural villages and it was important to ensure that adequate resources and timely rescue services would be provided. She hoped that the departments concerned would promptly propose measures to tackle the problem and priority should be accorded to saving lives.

17. Mr HO Chun-fai viewed that there was room for improvement for the provision of emergency rescue services to the three villages, such as re-designing the roads and their use, so as to solve the difficulties encountered by the residents of the three villages. He viewed that the present resources were used on Siu Ho Wan, Tung Chung etc. and only minimum resources were allocated to the villages, leading to urban-rural contradictions. He pointed out that the population of Lantau was on the increase but there was no adequate fire service support provided to it. If there were incidents involving the villagers, only manual transfer could be made, and it was hard to conduct timely rescue services. He hoped that there was coordination among the departments concerned to target the problems in order to tie in with the need of the rural villagers.

18. Mr Ken WONG expressed his views as follows:

- (a) Many villages were inaccessible by vehicles and he viewed that the Department should conduct a full review on it. He queried why HyD, the key department, did not send any representatives to the meeting. He viewed that cycleways might easily be built by the Government, but it took a very long time to relocate the lamp post. He hoped that the department concerned would have a long term planning. Acquisition of rural land for buildings homes for the public was considered natural and reasonable, but road building for improving rescuing works had encountered great difficulties.
- (b) He said that there were hikers complaining about the condition of a road in Nim Shue Wan and prompt actions were taken by some government

departments. However the departments took a perfunctory attitude when the villagers asked the Government to repair the road after it was destroyed by Typhoon Mangkhut, saying that it was a private road and no works would be carried out there. He viewed that the Government did not treat the request of the urban and rural residents fairly, leading to urban-rural contradictions. If Members expressed their views when the Government was developing the rural areas, such as building the HK-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge and the Tuen Mun Lantau Link, the media would report that hindrance was caused by Members of the rural areas. He opined that the department should change their mentality and should not discriminate against the rural villagers. He pointed out that all major infrastructures in the proximity of the rural areas lacked perfect planning and no linkage roads were built for the rural villages.

- (c) The Government should accord top priority to improving the rescue services and fully review the inaccessible roads in the rural areas to avoid any incident in which there was untimely rescue due to inaccessibility by vehicles. The hiking trails and the cycleways were of secondary importance.

19. Ms LAU Shun-ting hoped that various departments would be concerned about the rescue services in the remote villages. She pointed out that the rescue failure rate was rather high in Sok Kwu Wan, Lamma Island and some remote villages were totally inaccessible by ambulance and the ambulance staff could only walk to the incident spot. Some places were accessible by the 4WD but it was very dangerous, for example there were overturning accidents at the bay area of Pak Kok Tsuen, Lamma Island. She viewed that regards must be paid to the safety of the ambulance staff and the firemen and hoped that the departments concerned would construct safety roads for the provision of ambulance services to the residents of the remote villages.

20. Ms WONG Chau-ping said that a regular vehicular access to the three villages should be built in the long run.

21. Mr TONG King-man pointed out that at present there were four light ambulances in Lantau District. When an emergency call for ambulance services was received, the call would be attended by an ambulance closest to the incident scene. Regarding the road conditions in the three villages, the Department would adjust its action plans accordingly after the completion of the road improvement works, including the use of light ambulances to provide ambulance services to the remote villages when circumstances permitted. The Department placed emphasis on efficiency of operations and safety during the rescue process. Thus, the field conditions would be assessed by the frontline crew to decide on the rescue action plans to be taken in the light of the field situation, light and risk factors. Regarding the issue of the use of Emergency Medical Assistant Motor Cycle and light ambulances in the three villages, the department would follow up and study it after the completion of the road improvement works.

22. Ms Grace WONG said that the IsDO was very concerned about the relocation of the lamp post. Upon receipt of the relocation request of the FSD, the IsDO



immediately approached the village representatives and reported the matter to the responsible department requesting for the relocation of the lamp post as soon as possible. However, consultations had to be conducted before the relocation, including seeking the views of the village representatives. She noted Members' views and would reiterate to the relevant departments the urgency for the relocation of the lamp post. She said that the responsible department for the relocation works of the lamp post was the HyD. The IsDO would convey to the HyD after the meeting the views of Members that the works should be completed as soon as possible.

23. Mr LI Ming-yau said that road section was located in a green belt. The project of road expansion into an emergency vehicular access involved a number of works, including slope cutting, reclamation etc. Such works were beyond the technical capabilities of the IsDO. Therefore, they should be handled prudently.

24. Mr Randy YU believed it was unlikely that the various departments present at the meeting would agree today to conduct an inter-departmental group meeting. He agreed to the proposal by Ms WONG Chau-ping that the ultimate goal was to build a direct access road to the three villages and he proposed to make a request to the relevant policy bureau. He hoped that arrangements for a group meeting with the FSD, the Transport Department, the HyD, the LandsD and the PlanD would be made by the IsDO. If necessary, participation by the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department and the Environmental Protection Department could be invited. He said that the fire and ambulance services should tie in with the development of Tung Chung in the coming 8 years. If a fire service depot was to be built in the farthest east end during the development of Tung Chung, a village ambulance could be stationed there. Even though light ambulances could not use the regular roads, they could still reach Pak Mong Village directly via a pedestrian subway at the side. That pedestrian subway was tantamount to an emergency vehicular access of the rural villages and light ambulances could enter the Tai Ho three villages via it. He opined that such an option could be discussed at the group meeting and the advice of the PlanD would be sought to build the fire service depot at the east end without affecting the rescue services of the whole Tung Chung area.

25. Ms Josephine TSANG viewed that it was too long when 7 years were needed to relocate a lamp post. As it was a matter of life and death to the public, it should be handled on an exceptional basis. She opined that very scarce resources were provided to the rural villagers, let alone a proper road for ambulances. She was of the view that the provision of rescue services for the three villages by light ambulances was the only option. She pointed out that light ambulances were used in Peng Chau at present but they could only carry patients, not their families. She hoped that the FSD, the LandsD and other departments would handle the situation of the three villages in a serious manner and hoped that there would be no untimely rescue of patients.

26. Ms WONG Chau-ping said the department concerned should notify the relevant departments before the relocation of the lamp post. She viewed that an ad hoc group should be set up to pay special attention to the rescue approaches and arrangements for remote villages, as well as the rescue services to be provided if there was an incident before the successful relocation of the lamp post.

27. Mr Barkley CHAN supplemented that according to the IsDO's information, the procedure for the relocation of the lamp post started in April this year and had taken five months so far, not seven years. When compared with the previous process for lamp post relocation, the present relocation process was relatively efficient.

28. Ms Grace WONG noted the proposal of Members to conduct an inter-departmental meeting. As the IsDO was working with the FSD on the relocation of the lamp post, a trial run would be conducted after the relocation to ensure that the lamp post would not obstruct the passage of ambulances. The Chairman and concerned Members would be invited to conduct a site inspection. If the access by ambulances was still impossible after the relocation of the lamp post, the IsDO would consider coordinating a meeting with relevant departments to work out other solutions.

(Mr Ken WONG arrived at the meeting at around 10:45 a.m.)

### III. Reports by Working Groups

#### (i) CACRC Vetting Group

29. The Chairman said that at the meeting of the Vetting Group on 23 August this year, 16 funding applications for the community involvement project to be held from November to December this year were processed. The relevant proposals were circulated to the Committee and were approved.

30. The three activity evaluation reports were tabled at the meeting for Members' information.

31. Members unanimously approved the above working group report.

### IV. Any Other Business

32. No other business was raised by Members.

### V. Date of Next Meeting

33. There being no other business, the meeting was adjourned at 11:25 a.m. The next meeting would be held at 10:30 a.m. on 8 November 2021 (Monday).

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