

Summary of Minutes of the 3rd Meeting of Tuen Mun District Council
(2012-2015)

Meeting

The Tuen Mun District Council (TMDC) held its third meeting on 13 March 2012.

Amendment to Tuen Mun District Council Standing Orders (TMDCSO)

2. The TMDC passed the resolutions made by Finance, Administration and Publicity Committee (FAPC) on the proposed revisions made to TMDCSO at its meeting held on 17 February 2012 as follows:

- (a) Consent was given to the proposed change of duration of speech from the so-called “3+1” to “3+3” and proposed revisions stated at Annex I of the document.
- (b) Keeping the practice of allowing Members of the Council and the Committees who were absent or left early to have the right to appoint a proxy to vote, i.e. to keep the existing practice, and
- (c) Consent was given to stating of two more reasons for absence, in addition to sickness or attending meetings/activities on behalf of DC, which might be accepted by DC or committees, i.e.
 - (i) attending funerals or weddings of immediate family members; and
 - (ii) carrying out statutory civic responsibilities, e.g. serving as
) jurors.

3. In addition, the TMDC agreed that “immediate family members” stated in (c)(i) were defined as parents, spouse and children.

Revision of TMDC Funding Guidelines on Implementation of Community Involvement Activities

4. In accordance with the amendments made to the Guidelines on the Use of DC funds by Home Affairs Department in December last year, the FAPC agreed to make amendments to the prevailing TMDC Funding Guidelines on Implementation of Community Involvement Activities accordingly at its meeting held on 17 February 2012. TMDC passed the proposed amendments made to the TMDC Funding Guidelines on Implementation of Community Involvement Activities and measures agreed by the FAPC.

Licensing Scheme for Private Columbaria

5. Representatives of Food and Health Bureau (FHB) and Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD) attended the TMDC's meeting, briefed Members on the Consultative Paper on Licensing Scheme for Private Columbaria and responded to the discussion papers on the issue tendered by Members. The representative of the FHB explained in details the background information of the licensing scheme for private columbaria and other issues, including licensing terms, information of private columbaria held by Development Bureau, exemption from the licensing scheme, temporary suspension from liability and construction of columbarium, etc.

6. Members then gave their views and made enquiries. Members opined that columbaria in Hong Kong should be primarily run by the government, suspected that some of the private columbaria involved irregularities, occupation of government land and illegal structures, and that operators used delay tactics to avoid closing down of columbaria, worried that unscrupulous traders would, during legislation, find loopholes to gain money by establishing large numbers of columbaria and quickly disposing of unlawful niches, thus undermining the rights of consumers, and hence advised that the government should speed up legislation procedures, advised that the government should regularize private columbaria operated under leases, and took over transit stops such as coffin shops so that they could be operated under supervision. Members also hoped that the government could step up effort in increasing supply of niches, that a waiting

system could be introduced as soon as possible and numbers of niches be published annually. They advised that the government should discuss with religious sectors to see how traditional concept of ancestral worship or after-death arrangement could be altered, advised that the authority should take into account supporting road facilities for the columbarium concerned, requested the government to consider high rise public housing as a model type so as to increase the supply of niches, hoped that the authority could consider extending the validity of licences and follow up on matters upon closure of columbaria to protect public interest. Representatives made responses to Members requests.

Calling for Deployment of Fireboats at Castle Peak Bay Typhoon Shelter during Traditional Festivals of Fishermen

7. A representative of Fire Services Department (FSD) attended the TMDC's meeting and briefed Members on marine firefighting equipment in the territory and their locations.

8. The presenter pointed out that fire broke out twice in Castle Peak Bay Typhoon Shelter. Since fishing boats were primarily made of wood, once they were on fire, the fire would spread and nearby vessels would catch fire easily. Though the FSD had deployed fireboats to extinguish the fire immediately, it took 20 minutes to half an hour for the nearest fireboat (No.5 fireboat) deployed at River Trade Terminal, Area 40, Tuen Mun to get to the shelter. Hence, before fireboats arrived, fire had already spread quickly and endangered nearby fishing vessels. Moreover, the No.5 fireboat, currently deployed in Tuen Mun district, needed to provide firefighting and rescue services to the waters in the northwest. Members opined that there was an acute shortage of marine firefighting facilities in Tuen Mun District.

9. The representative of the FSD reiterated the present operation of the No.5 fireboat deployed in Tuen Mun District and said that the FSD had sufficient facilities and information to cope with emergencies.

10. Having discussed, the TMDO decided that it would write to Secretary for Security, Director of Fire Services and the Legislative Council Panel on Security to express that there was an acute shortage of marine firefighting facilities in Tuen Mun District, and to request the FSD to consider deploying fireboats at the Castle Peak Bay Typhoon Shelter during fish moratoria and the Chinese Lunar New Year.

(Post-meeting notes: A letter was sent to the above parties on 30 March 2012.)

Secretariat, Tuen Mun District Council

12 April 2012