

(Translation)

**Minutes of the 19<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the 4<sup>th</sup> Wan Chai District Council**  
**Hong Kong Special Administrative Region**

Date: 11 November 2014 (Tuesday)

Time: 2:30 p.m.

Venue: District Council Conference Room, Wan Chai District Office,  
21/F Southorn Centre, 130 Hennessy Road, Wan Chai, H.K.

**Present**

**Chairperson**

Mr SUEN Kai-cheong, SBS, MH, JP

**Vice-Chairperson**

Mr Stephen NG, MH, JP

**Members**

Ms Pamela PECK

Ms Yolanda NG, MH

Ms Kenny LEE

Ms Peggy LEE

Mr Ivan WONG, MH

Mr David WONG

Ms Jacqueline CHUNG

### **Representatives of Core Government Departments**

Ms Angela LUK, JP	District Officer (Wan Chai), Home Affairs Department
Mr Alfred LEUNG	Assistant District Officer (Wan Chai), Home Affairs Department
Ms Daphne CHAN	Senior Liaison Officer (Community Affairs), Home Affairs Department
Mr PAU Chung-on	Chief Health Inspector 2 (Wan Chai), Food and Environmental Hygiene Department
Mr NG Shan-ho	District Commander (Wan Chai), Hong Kong Police Force
Ms Dorothy NIEH	Police Community Relation Officer (Wan Chai District), Hong Kong Police Force
Mr NGAN Man-por	District Social Welfare Officer (Eastern & Wan Chai), Social Welfare Department
Mrs Isabel LUK	Acting Chief Transport Officer /Hong Kong, Transport Department
Mr Samson LAM	Chief Engineer/HK(2), Civil Engineering and Development Department
Mr Simon LIU	Chief Leisure Manager (Hong Kong East), Leisure and Cultural Services Department
Ms Brenda YEUNG	District Leisure Manager (Wan Chai), Leisure and Cultural Services Department
Mr Alex KWOK	Senior Estate Surveyor/LC & LE (District Lands Office/Hong Kong East, West & South), Lands Department

### **Representatives of Other Government Departments and Organisations**

Ms Carol YIP, JP	Director of Social Welfare	} for agenda item 1
Mr LAU Shing-lam	Senior Professional Officer (Signboard Control 2), Buildings Department	} for agenda item 3
Mr Nicholas BROOKE, SBS, JP	Chairman of the Harbourfront Commission	} for agenda item 4
Mr Vincent NG	Chairman of the Harbourfront Commission's Core Group for Public Engagement	
Mr LEUNG Kong-yui	Member of the Harbourfront Commission's Core Group for Public Engagement	



the Wan Chai District Council (WCDC) Standing Orders. Moreover, Dr Jeffrey PONG was unable to attend the meeting because he needed to take care of his wife who was going to give birth. Although there were no special guidelines on the provision of paternity leave in the WCDC Standing Orders, noting that civil servants were granted paternity leave at present, the Chairperson expressed his understanding of Dr PONG's need and decided not to consider him being absent from the meeting. Besides, Mr CHAN Chung-chi, District Environmental Hygiene Superintendent (Wan Chai) of the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD), was unable to attend the meeting due to training and was replaced by Mr PAU Chung-on, Chief Health Inspector 2 (Wan Chai).

2. The Chairperson asked Members to note the papers on the conference table and the suggested speaking time. As usual, each Member would be allotted a maximum of three minutes to speak in respect of each agenda item.

#### **Meeting with Head of Department**

##### **Item 1: Visit by Director of Social Welfare**

3. The Chairperson invited Ms Carol YIP, JP, Director of Social Welfare, to introduce the work of the SWD.

4. Ms Carol YIP, JP, with the aid of PowerPoint presentation, briefed Members on the new initiatives of the SWD for 2014-15. The areas covered included social security, services for the elderly, rehabilitation services, family and child welfare, services for young people and services for offenders. She also introduced the work on community collaboration.

(Mr Ivan WONG, MH joined the meeting at 2:50 p.m.)

(Ms Pamela PECK joined the meeting at 2:57 p.m.)

5. The Chairperson invited Members to express their views on the

areas of work of the SWD or raised other concerns.

6. Mr David WONG raised the following comments and enquiries:

- (i) Professor Nelson CHOW submitted the study report on a universal retirement protection scheme two or three months ago. He enquired about the latest progress of the scheme, and asked if the SWD was the department responsible for administering the scheme.
- (ii) A number of places in Hong Kong had been affected by the large-scale Occupy movement. Many residents expressed that they watched with a heavy heart the news on TV every day. As mentioned by the Director of Social Welfare, the mental health of the whole community was being affected. Although occupiers might have broken the laws, they were, after all, members of society. He enquired if the SWD had any plan to provide occupiers with psychological counselling, with a view to understanding their needs and showing care for them. Such efforts might help heal the rift in the community and restore social harmony.

7. Ms Jacqueline CHUNG raised the following comments and enquiries:

- (i) She was told by fellow social workers that every year during summer vacation, many parents enrolled their children for activities organised by Integrated Family Service Centres (IFSCs), leading to a surge in workload for social workers working in those centres or responsible for family and child services. They were fully occupied with arranging games and training for children. Sometimes they were too busy to have any rest time. She enquired if additional manpower could be provided as appropriate, such

as employing part-time workers, to ease the pressure on social workers during the summer period. She understood that IFSCs were given a lump sum grant. She hoped that efforts could be made to alleviate the burden on social workers if there were additional resources.

- (ii) The services provided by the SWD covered a wide range of areas, such as services for women, services for young people, services for ethnic minorities, etc. However, there were rarely any services based on the concept of family. Thus, the function of the family council could not come into play. Noting the split in inter-generational communication, she enquired if the SWD could enhance its efforts in improving inter-generational communication or make enhancing inter-generational communication its future development direction.
- (iii) In regard to outreaching services, she enquired if more information about different pathways could be provided for young people to help them set their direction when they entered into society.
- (iv) Regarding collaboration between the medical and social sectors, she enquired if the SWD could enhance its support for new parents. She noted from a previous visit to Against Child Abuse that a home visit project for families with new born babies had been implemented. Despite having significant results, the project was not further developed due to limited resources. She enquired about the views of the Director of Social Welfare in this respect.
- (v) As regards services for ethnic minorities, she hoped that the SWD would organise Chinese literacy courses to assist them to integrate into society. After all, Hong Kong was a

Chinese society. They might find it difficult to secure a job if they were unable to read and write Chinese.

8. Ms Peggy LEE raised the following comments and enquiries:
- (i) She thanked staff of the SWD's district offices for their cooperation with the Community Building Committee (CBC). They had rendered tremendous support for the activities organised by the CBC. The CBC would also make every effort to facilitate the SWD in disseminating the relevant positive messages.
  - (ii) She was pleased to note that the Improvement Programme of Elderly Centres (IPEC) would continue. Some improvements had been made to a number of elderly centres in Wan Chai District under the IPEC. In the past, the facilities, lighting and physical setting of these centres might not meet the needs of the elderly. Through the subsidies granted under the IPEC, the facilities of these centres had been made more suitable for the elderly.
  - (iii) Regarding the mental health of working people and their stress issues, working people in Hong Kong needed to face tremendous mental stress. Many hidden sufferers of depression were in need of appropriate counselling. She hoped that the future plan of the SWD would include enhancing the work and publicity in this respect.
  - (iv) In regard to the support for working mothers, she was told by many working mothers that they found it very hard to juggle work and family life. On the other hand, because of insufficient child care services, some women could not return to work after giving birth. Huge stress might arise from child caring, leading to domestic violence cases. She

enquired if the problem could be addressed at source by providing working mothers with more support and assisting them in improving family relations. This would also help reduce domestic violence cases.

9. Ms Kenny LEE raised the following comments and enquiries:

- (i) The recent Occupy movement had caused great damage to family harmony. Over half of her friends told her that their circles of family and friends had been torn apart due to conflicting political views. She hoped that prompt action would be taken to enhance the training for social workers in family service centres. Given the far-reaching effects induced by the Occupy movement, social workers should help members of the public gain an understanding of different communication skills including those for inter-generational communication. She hoped that the SWD would organise talks within a short time, inviting psychologists to speak on how to deal with inharmonious relations within family.
- (ii) She was of the view that the SWD should consider how to enhance the power of volunteers. Some professional retirees aged between 50 and 60 in the district wished to serve as volunteers. Though they were working as part-time consultants, they wanted to participate in volunteer work given their good health. She enquired if the SWD had any plan to make use of the power from these retirees. They should be trained to provide higher-level services, so that they could continue to serve the community.
- (iii) Regarding the needs of young people, there were many opposing voices among them and they had great

dissatisfaction with the present social conditions. She asked if social workers would be provided with necessary training to enable them to understand the frustrations and needs of young people.

- (iv) She thanked the SWD for the additional 450 places and the recurrent expenditure of \$40 million under the Bought Place Scheme for Private Residential Care Homes for Persons with Disabilities. Some volunteers had disabled family members. It was hoped that they would also be benefited. The SWD had made remarkable achievements in this respect and she hoped that the SWD would keep up its excellent efforts.

10. The Chairperson invited the Director of Social Welfare to give responses to the questions raised by Members who spoke in the first round.

11. Ms Carol YIP, JP made the following responses:

- (i) The issue of universal retirement protection was taken up by the Commission on Poverty, which was led by the Chief Secretary for Administration. The Commission had suspended its meetings due to the Occupy movement but kept doing the preparatory work. After Professor Nelson CHOW's study report had made public, mixed views were raised in the community over the proposal on requiring both employers and employees to make contributions to the scheme, reflecting that the issue was highly contentious. The Government sought to identify the future direction through discussions/consultations. It would consider the authority for administering the scheme after the proposal was finalised.
- (ii) The SWD and the social sector were greatly concerned

about the mental health issue brought about by the recent Occupy movement. Relevant assistance was being provided. Various organisations, such as the Red Cross and the Hong Kong Family Welfare Society, had set up additional hotlines to provide emotional support and psychological counselling for those in need, in particular young people. Social workers in IFSCs would provide counselling services for people in need and refer those cases in need to Clinical Psychology Units for follow-up action. The SWD would closely monitor the development of the events and make every effort to assist those young people in need.

- (iii) As stated in this year's Policy Address, in addition to the lump sum grant, the social sector would be allocated an additional sum of \$470 million to enable relevant subvented organisations to recruit additional staff, with a view to enhancing central administration and supervisory support. The additional funding was recurrent expenditure. The SWD acknowledged the fact that people's aspirations for social welfare services had been increasing, and the duties of social workers would be more complicated. The additional funding would help enhance the supervisory support for frontline workers, thus assisting them in coping with the increasingly complicated demands. This would in turn help the public in need more effectively.
- (iv) Inter-generational communication, social divide and family rifts were the concerns of the Government, district councillors, Legislative Council (LegCo) Members and the community. She thanked Members for their views on these issues. The SWD would consider enhancing family and youth services. She believed that family relations and communication with young people would be the major

development directions of future social services.

- (v) On collaboration between the medical and social sectors, the SWD, in collaboration with the Hospital Authority and the Department of Health (DH), had launched the Comprehensive Child Development Service, which aimed to provide comprehensive and timely support for needy children (aged 0 to 5) and their families. The Maternal and Child Health Centres (MCHCs) under the DH would start providing the relevant services since childbirth, which included the immunisation programme, assessment of children's physical and mental development and identification of the social welfare needs of their families. The service covered not only child care, but also sought to identify their special learning needs, such as whether they were suffering from hyperactivity/attention deficit disorder. The aim was to achieve early identification of children's special needs during the first round of checks at MCHCs, and refer them to appropriate units for follow-up services. Noting that the period from aged 0 to 5 was the golden period for child development, the Government strived to identify children with special learning needs at an early stage, so that the needy children and their families could be provided with suitable and timely support.
  
- (vi) She thanked Members for their views on the services for ethnic minorities. Ethnic minorities, who accounted for about one-fourth of Wan Chai's population, were the major target group of IFSCs under the SWD. The SWD and the support service centres funded by the Home Affairs Department provided various programmes/activities for ethnic minorities in an effort to facilitate their early integration into society.

- (vii) On the support for hidden sufferers of depression and working mothers, Integrated Community Centres for Mental Wellness (ICCMWs) had been set up in various districts to provide one-stop community support services, which included preventive and risk management services, for early identification of people in need. ICCMWs provided suitable services through case management. The Government would consider allocating additional resources for these centres to enhance the services.
- (viii) In regard to the issue of domestic violence, a great deal of publicity had been made to enhance public understanding of domestic violence. For example, a series of promotional videos in the form of cartoon had been made to promote positive parenting with a view to avoiding child abuse. A drama series on the issue recently completed had even won international acclaim. Amid the considerable publicity efforts made by the SWD, the number of reported cases of domestic violence had increased. The SWD would continue to enhance its publicity efforts in this regard, with a view to raising public awareness of domestic violence. Moreover, the SWD would continue to hold regular meetings with non-governmental organisations to formulate preventive measures having regard to the trend of domestic violence cases.
- (ix) The SWD attached great importance to the power of volunteers. Apart from youth volunteer teams, there were senior volunteer teams under the Support Teams for the Elderly attached to the District Elderly Community Centres. Besides, the Elderly Commission had been actively encouraging senior members of the community to become volunteers to serve the elderly. Positive results had been achieved. Members' views on this issue were in line with

the work of the Government in this regard.

- (x) On how to address the emotional issues of young people, the Integrated Children and Youth Service Centres and ICCMWs would provide more suitable services for young people, with a view to enhancing communication with them and understanding their needs. It could be seen from the recent social movement that social media could exert considerable influence on young people. The SWD would continue to review the mode of support for young people and provide them with suitable services.

12. The Chairperson thanked Ms Carol YIP, JP, for her consolidated reply. He said that government departments had their own functions and duties. The SWD and the social sector played a key role in establishing social harmony. Law enforcement departments would take action in accordance with the laws after an incident had happened; whereas the SWD and the social sector aimed to provide timely counselling and assistance. Hong Kong was a civilised society, and caring for the living of the grassroots was of utmost importance. Tasked with these missions and responsibilities, the SWD and the social sector played a very important role in this regard.

### **Confirmation of Minutes of Meeting**

#### **Item 2: Confirmation of Minutes of the 18<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Wan Chai District Council**

13. The Chairperson said that the Secretariat did not receive any proposed amendments before the meeting. As Members did not propose any amendments at the meeting, the minutes of the 18<sup>th</sup> meeting of WCDC were confirmed after a motion was moved by Ms Jacqueline CHUNG and seconded by Ms Peggy LEE.

### **Written Questions**

**Item 3: Urging the Administration to Address the Issue of Abandoned Signboards**  
**(WCDC Paper No. 82/2014)**

14. The Chairperson welcomed Mr LAU Shing-lam, Senior Professional Officer (Signboard Control 2) of the Buildings Department (BD), to the meeting. Since Dr Anna TANG, BBS, MH, who raised the written questions, was unable to attend the meeting due to sickness, the Chairperson asked Mr LAU to give a response to the written questions, and then other Members could raise follow-up questions.

15. Mr LAU Shing-lam made the following responses to the written questions raised by Dr Anna TANG, BBS, MH:

- (i) Regarding the number of abandoned signboards in Hong Kong, the consultant engaged by the BD completed a stock-taking exercise on the unauthorised structures at the exterior of private buildings in 2013, during which the number of signboards on the streets in various districts were counted, regardless of whether they were approved or unauthorised signboards. According to the preliminary results of the stock-taking exercise, there were about 120 000 signboards in Hong Kong, most of which were unauthorised. Since abandoned signboards were mainly generated by shop closures and the situations kept changing from time to time, the BD was unable to provide the exact number of abandoned signboard in Hong Kong.
- (ii) If abandoned or dangerous signboards were found, regardless of whether they were unauthorised or not, the BD would, in accordance with the Public Health and Municipal Services Ordinance, serve a Dangerous Structure Removal Notice to the signboard owners, requiring them to take prompt action to remove the signboards. During

emergency situation, the BD would arrange for the removal of the signboards by government contractors and asked for the payment of the costs incurred from the signboard owners later.

- (iii) Staff of the BD and its consultant conducted periodic inspections to various districts, in particular to those streets with heavy pedestrian flow. Enforcement action would be taken if abandoned or dangerous signboards were found. Moreover, the BD conducted large-scale clearance operations every year. If abandoned or dangerous signboards were found during the operations, follow-up action in accordance with the laws would be taken.
- (iv) The BD also invited District Councils to refer to it cases of dangerous and abandoned signboards for prompt follow-up action. The BD also received reports from the public frequently. The BD would continue to address the issue of unauthorised and abandoned signboards through the established ways, and would review the relevant policies from time to time. The BD would consider revising the policies as appropriate to meet the actual situations and future developments of society.

16. The Chairperson invited Members to raise follow-up questions.

17. Mr Ivan WONG, MH was of the view that the reply given by the BD could not clearly answer the question on the number of abandoned signboards. He pointed out that it was common to have signboards left behind for years after the companies and shops had been closed. Such an objective fact showed that the existing mechanism could not effectively address the problem. He queried what would be done by the BD if the signboard owner was nowhere to find and there was no response after notification was given. He asked what would be done by the BD to

improve the existing mechanism and plug the loopholes, making it effective enough to address the existing situation. He opined that in order to tackle the existing problem, the term “abandoned signboard” should be clearly defined under the relevant mechanism.

18. Ms Jacqueline CHUNG said that in defining an abandoned signboard, three questions should be considered, i.e. for whom the signboard was erected, who was using the signboard and who owned the signboard. She asked if a signboard, which was not claimed by anyone, could be considered an abandoned signboard after the property owner confirmed that it was not owned by him having regard to the three questions. She also asked if the BD could take enforcement action when such a case was referred to it, and if such a signboard could be included as an abandoned signboard.

19. Mr Stephen NG, MH, JP said that the issue of abandoned signboards was an old, big and difficult problem. It could not be resolved despite years of discussions. There were some improvements under the new legislation, such as requiring a signboard to be approved by competent persons when the signboard needed to be reconstructed. He asked if the BD would consider introducing a registration system, requiring all signboards, regardless of whether they were new or old, to be registered. This would help identify the signboard owners and facilitate action to hold them liable.

20. Ms Peggy LEE raised the following comments and enquiries:

- (i) The BD stated in its written reply that it would serve the Dangerous Structure Removal Notice to the signboard owner in accordance with the Public Health and Municipal Services Ordinance, and during emergency situation, the BD would take proactive action to remove the relevant signboard. She enquired about the circumstances under which the BD would take action to remove a signboard if

there was no response after notification was given and the signboard posed no imminent danger.

- (ii) She had referred cases of abandoned or dangerous signboards to the BD before. However, after years of follow-up action, they remained there because they were considered not to have imminent danger or they were not claimed by anyone. This showed that despite its good intent, the relevant policy could not be put into implementation, rendering it almost useless. She hoped that the relevant policy could really help owners' corporations to resolve the problem of illegal and abandoned signboards.

21. Ms Yolanda NG, MH raised the following comments and enquiries:

- (i) It could be clearly seen along the tram track in Wan Chai District that the problem of abandoned signboards was very serious. The BD stated in its written reply that abandoned signboards were mainly generated by shop closures. However, in reality, the abandoned signboards in bustling areas were not generated by shop closures. They were advertisement signboards from enterprise groups. Enterprise groups left signboards behind after making money or receiving repeated complaints. Since the signboard owners had left, the established practice of giving notice to the signboard owner was no longer effective in addressing the problem.
- (ii) As regards inviting district councillors and members of the public to refer or report cases of abandoned signboards, past experience showed that after making such reports, one could only receive a reply from the Administration stating that the case was being followed up or the abandoned signboards

concerned did not pose imminent danger. The abandoned signboards were still there without being removed. She hoped that the BD would step up its enforcement action and take more proactive actions to remove abandoned signboards under emergency situation.

- (iii) The signboard registration system was not a measure good for the public. In fact, under this system, illegal signboards would become legalised. Once registered, infringing signboards were given the approval by the BD, rendering it impossible for minority property owners to lodge a complaint. She urged the Administration to review the signboard registration system as soon as possible.

22. Mr LAU Shing-lam gave the following consolidated response:

- (i) He clarified that the 120 000 signboards mentioned in the written reply were a rough estimate, which included abandoned and dangerous ones. Abandoned signboards included those generated by shop/company closures, or those without an owner, or unclaimed ones. In dealing with an abandoned signboard, the BD would normally make a company search at the Companies Registry or check for business registration to see if the company concerned still existed. If the company or the owner concerned no longer existed, under emergency situations, the BD would take proactive action to remove the signboard. The cost incurred would not be passed on to the innocent owners' corporation or the owners.
- (ii) The BD would deal with abandoned and dangerous signboards in accordance with the Public Health and Municipal Services Ordinance, whereas unauthorised signboards would be dealt with in accordance with Section

24 of the Buildings Ordinance. If an unauthorised signboard was found, the BD would conduct a prompt investigation. First, efforts would be made to find the signboard owner. If the signboard owner could not be found, the BD would try to find the rental agent for signboards under lease. The BD would only consider issuing an order to the owners' corporation or the owners concerned if both the mentioned parties could not be found. In most cases, the BD was able to find the signboard owners and would issue a removal order to them. If the signboard was not removed when the removal order was due, the BD would institute prosecution, or even arrange for government contractors to remove the signboard, and then recover the costs from the parties concerned.

- (iii) The Buildings Ordinance aimed to ensure that buildings and construction works were in compliance with the safety standards on planning, design and construction. Having building works approved under the Buildings Ordinance or under the minor works procedures did not necessarily mean that the person erecting the signboard was empowered to erect a signboard at the property. Regarding building management, since interests, rights and obligations between property owners were defined in the deed of mutual covenant, it was necessary for the person erecting the signboard to discuss with the owners or owners' corporation concerned to ensure that the deed of mutual covenant was complied with.
- (iv) The implementation of a signboard registration system was first proposed in 2000, which drew much negative reaction from shop owners and signboard owners. There were views that the registration system would have an impact on the operating cost and considerable administrative resources

would be involved. As a result, the system was not put into implementation. The BD held that with building safety as the foremost principle, the multi-pronged approach for the control of new and unauthorised signboards was a pragmatic way to tackle the problem.

23. The Chairperson made the following comments:

- (i) The issue of abandoned signboards was discussed by WCDC about 20 years ago. After 20 years, it had become not merely an issue of abandoned signboards. It could be seen along the tram track in Causeway Bay that there were a large number of unauthorised signboards. There would be no abandoned signboards if the problem of unauthorised signboards was properly dealt with.
- (ii) Although the signboard registration system was not adopted, the Government had introduced a voluntary reporting system, under which a signboard owner should engage a competent architect to validate that the signboard concerned did not post any risk and report to the Administration once every five years. However, the crux of problem was that no one would make such a report under the voluntary system since they did not want to get themselves into trouble. If a signboard was about to collapse after typhoon, the Government would arrange for its removal.
- (iii) The issue of abandoned signboards had turned into a problem caused by large unauthorised advertisement signboards. Such issue was a major discussion item for the District Management Committee (DMC) chaired by the District Officer (Wan Chai). If Members wanted to further discuss the issue, they could raise it at DMC.

**Discussion Items****Item 4: Proposed Establishment of a Harbourfront Authority –  
Phase II Public Engagement Exercise  
(WCDC Paper No. 81/2014)**

24. The Chairperson welcomed Mr Nicholas BROOKE, SBS, JP, Chairman of the Harbourfront Commission, Mr Vincent NG, Chairman of the Harbourfront Commission's Core Group for Public Engagement, Mr LEUNG Kong-yui, Member of the Harbourfront Commission's Core Group for Public Engagement, Miss Christine AU, Principal Assistant Secretary for Development (Harbour) and Mr Frederick YU, Assistant Secretary for Development (Harbour) Special Duties/Core Group Secretary, to the meeting.

25. Miss Christine AU thanked Members for their participation in the discussion of the proposed establishment of a Harbourfront Authority (HFA). She briefed Members on the purpose and background of the Phase II Public Engagement (PE) Exercise, and then invited Mr Frederick YU to introduce the details of the proposals.

26. Mr Frederick YU, with the aid of PowerPoint presentation, briefed Members on the details of the proposals, including the public's vision on Victoria Harbourfront, definition of "Victoria Harbourfront", objectives and functions of HFA, public accountability measures, land matters, financial matters, the way forward, etc. He told the meeting that a questionnaire was attached to each Phase II PE Consultation Digest, and hoped that Members could further give views for the Commission's consideration by completing the questionnaire.

27. Mr Nicholas BROOKE, SBS, JP thanked WCDC for giving them an opportunity to brief Members on the proposed establishment of an HFA. He remarked that the clear message from Phase I consultation was that there was a need for reform, with a view to doing a better job. The proposals come up at this stage aimed to deliver a quality waterfront that

Hong Kong deserved.

28. The Chairperson invited Members to give their views.
29. Mr David WONG raised the following comments and enquiries:
- (i) He was pleased to note that the detailed proposals and arrangements were taking shape. He believed that the whole community would recognise the objectives of HFA and give their support for more effective use and protection of the harbourfront.
  - (ii) Noting that some sites would be allocated to HFA, he enquired about the actual operation and remit of HFA. If the matters under its remit included planning and tendering, its functions might be overlapped with those of the Town Planning Board (TPB).
  - (iii) If a park was to be built in the harbourfront, the Leisure and Cultural Services Department would need to carry out law enforcement work, while the FEHD would need to carry out cleaning work. He enquired about the division of responsibilities among government departments and what executive powers HFA would possess.
30. Mr Ivan WONG, MH raised the following comments and enquiries:
- (i) The proposed accountability measures included a value for money audit to be conducted by the Audit Commission. He held that the audit standards adopted by the Audit Commission for general government departments might be different from those adopted by HFA. Since the work of HFA was not solely for financial returns, and its roles were somewhat different from those played by other government

departments, further consideration in this regard should be given.

- (ii) He queried the proposal on the submission of a corporate plan and a business plan for approval by the Government. He was of the view that if all business plans were required to be carefully considered by the Government, bureaucratic red-tape might arise. He therefore asked what would be done by the Government in approving such plans.
- (iii) He remarked that how HFA used the income obtained and the expenditure items to be borne by HFA should be clearly defined. Given its vast area, the harbourfront would incur a significant maintenance fee. If HFA was responsible for a large number of expenditure items, it would be unable to become self-financing, even with profits from the activities. Due consideration should therefore be given to the income for its use and the expenditure items to be paid.
- (iv) Over the past decade, the most common activities organised in the harbourfront area were dragon boat races, which were rather boring. The future waterfront should be in flexible design with necessary hardware in order to deliver the expected results. He hoped that more commercial activities with creativity and commercial elements could be held in the harbourfront area, such as concerts and bazaars, so as to make financial returns.

31. Ms Kenny LEE raised the following comments and enquiries:

- (i) With respect to land matters, the Harbourfront Commission (HC) proposed that by keeping a balanced portfolio of harbourfront projects and sites, a careful balance of commercial return and social objectives could be

maintained, with a view to achieving overall financial sustainability and independence in the long run. At the same time, HC also proposed that sites allocated to HFA should not be privatised and HFA should not be empowered to sell the sites and the property within the sites. She remarked that these two proposals seem to be contradictory. The sites should not be privatised but HFA should maintain commercial return. She enquired if this implied that HFA would not have ownership of the sites but was responsible for overseeing them.

- (ii) Regarding management, if suitable talents were not readily available in the civil service, HFA could recruit professionals from the private sector for carrying out executive or professional duties. She raised concern over the integration between government officials and outside professionals.

32. Ms Jacqueline CHUNG raised the following comments and enquiries:

- (i) She agreed that the composition of the governing board should have broad-based representation. Some committees should be set up under the governing board because it was not possible for a single governing board to perform all the tasks. There should be some appropriate committees to provide assistance.
- (ii) According to the consultation paper, a public officer would be appointed into the governing board. She enquired about the rank of such public officer. She considered that this public officer would play a very important role and should be competent in securing and coordinating the support of various government departments.

- (iii) She agreed that the harbourfront sites should not be privatised since they were the most expensive sites in the whole territory. Since HFA would not have much operating capital during its early years of establishment, it should be provided with funding. However, commercial elements should be introduced into its operations in later years with a view to achieving economic efficiency. Its development direction should be enhancing its profitability and reducing the burden on the Government.
- (iv) It was stated in the questionnaire that the governing board's meetings should be conducted openly except for confidential or commercial sensitive issues, and all members of the board should disclose their interests. She considered that disclosure of interests was of particular importance in a society with free flow of information like Hong Kong. She suggested that rules on disclosure of interests should be formulated, stipulating clearly the definition of disclosure of interests and the matters required to be disclosed.
- (v) She was of the view that good efforts should be made in launching publicity and public consultation so as to prevent members of the public from raising concerns only when the consultation period was about to end. She suggested that HC should consult DCs on the work under discussion as appropriate.

33. Ms Yolanda NG, MH raised the following comments and enquiries:

- (i) During HC's previous visit to WCDC for briefing Members on the proposed establishment of an HFA, she raised some enquiries on the urgency and necessity of establishing an

independent authority. She reiterated her hope that the Administration would make reference to the mode of operation of Energizing Kowloon East Office.

- (ii) The Phase I PE Exercise reflected that the public had high aspirations for the independence, operational flexibility, creativity of HFA as well as the effective use of the harbourfront area. However, the present consultation paper did not set out the operational flexibility of HFA. It was hoped that HC would provide more details in this respect.
- (iii) It was proposed in the consultation paper that HC would be disbanded in the future. She agreed with this proposal which could avoid multi-layering. She enquired which department would act as the partnering authority for the independent HFA after HC had disbanded. For example, the Hong Kong Council on Smoking and Health which she sat on had Tobacco Control Office as its partnering authority. They complemented with each other.
- (iv) Revitalising the harbourfront was not confined to the use of the port area. At present, there were offensive facilities placed along the harbourfront area in Wan Chai. It was hoped that through revitalising the harbourfront, the harbourfront sites could be made accessible for public enjoyment.

34. Ms Pamela PECK pointed out that the harbourfront area was a great attraction for tourists. Even though substantial demolition works were being carried out in the harbourfront area in Wan Chai, a large number of people could be found there every day. It was therefore imperative to establish an HFA. She held the view that HFA should carefully plan the daytime and night-time activities to be held in the harbourfront area.

Careful planning should be made even in areas including hawking activities, businesses and harbourfront shops.

(Mr CHENG Ki-kin joined the meeting at 4:38 p.m.)

35. Miss Christine AU made the following responses:

- (i) In regard to the executive functions of the proposed HFA, after its establishment, HFA should work closely with government departments or statutory bodies to achieve quality harbourfront planning. It would not derogate from the existing powers and functions of relevant government bureaux and departments as well as statutory bodies.
- (ii) At present, TPB was responsible for town planning under relevant legislation. This would remain unchanged in the future. In other words, HFA would oversee planning, design, construction, operation and management according to the land uses and other requirements prescribed in statutory plans made under the Town Planning Board Ordinance. Any change to the land uses should be approved by TPB.
- (iii) The executive functions of HPA also included collaboration with other parties, and planning, design, operation and management of the harbourfront facilities in designated sites such as auxiliary measures for retailing, catering and recreational facilities. HFA would also oversee the implementation progress and management of projects in sites allocated to HFA, and would be involved in transitional, short term or other harbourfront projects.
- (iv) On financial matters, HC did not suggest providing an upfront endowment for HFA. Instead, HC proposed

setting aside a dedicated fund within the Government for HFA to meet its operating expenses for a certain period, say, for the first five years of operation. When a project was ready for implementation, HFA could seek approval from LegCo for using the fund. The provision of a dedicated fund for harbourfront development could not only save HFA from competing for resources with other livelihood-related items, but also ensure that all funding applications would be scrutinised by LegCo.

- (v) On the long term financial arrangements for HFA, the Government would adopt a two-pronged approach to provide assistance. First, a dedicated fund would be set aside for HFA. Second, proposed sites would be allocated to HFA at nominal or reduced premium as a major in-kind support for HFA. She reiterated that harbourfront development should not only pay regard to commercial elements, but also bear major social responsibilities. As HFA was not a profit-making organisation, making profit should not be its sole purpose. Also, it was not possible for all harbourfront sites to generate income. HFA would ensure prudent use of operating resources while introducing suitable commercial elements into its operation, with a view to achieving self-financing in the long run.
- (vi) Regarding the composition of the governing board, it was proposed that a public officer be appointed as Chairman or Vice-Chairman. This proposal was made having regard to the existing arrangements of HC, which allowed the participation of both private professional and high-level government official, thus ensuring effective support for the matters under discussion by HFA.
- (vii) As regards the privatisation of sites, she clarified that under

its executive functions, HFA was empowered to operate, manage or even develop the sites allocated to it, but it was not allowed to sell the sites. HFA was allowed to make new rules with a view to operating the sites with a more flexible and market-oriented approach, but it should never sell the sites.

- (viii) Regarding the mechanism for disclosure of interests, reference would be made to the codes on disclosure of interests of other similar public organisations and statutory bodies, in a bid to assure the public that HFA was committed to serving the public.

36. Mr Nicholas BROOKE, SBS, JP made the following responses:

- (i) The proposed HFA was an independent statutory body with sites vested to it. HFA would be responsible for planning, design, implementation, management and operation. The mode of division of responsibilities was similar to that adopted by the Housing Authority.
- (ii) The advantage of setting up a separate authority was that it could make its own by-laws and regulations so that the harbourfront areas could be managed under a new mindset and a more flexible mode. The activities which used to be prohibited such as cycling, fishing and walking the dog might be allowed under the new management mode.
- (iii) Since HFA had its own powers, there should be check and balance and accountability measures to ensure that HFA would exercise its powers prudently and sensibly.
- (iv) He invited WCDC to give views on how to ensure that HFA could ultimately be self-supporting. Since HFA had its

social agenda and the commercial side would not be dominant, it was a big challenge for it to become self-sufficient.

37. Mr Vincent NG supplemented the following:

- (i) It was noted from the previous collaborations with WCDC that WCDC shared the same vision with HC, which was to create a vibrant and attractive harbourfront.
- (ii) The proposed HFA would take up the holistic planning, design, construction and operation of harbourfront sites. This would enable it to overcome the constraints of managing the harbourfront as a park. The harbourfront would not be merely a park, but a district of vitality, which included commercial, cultural and arts facilities. Diversified activities would be organised in the areas. The shared vision could then be achieved.
- (iii) HC had all along attached great importance to the participation of DCs. Collaboration with DCs would be sought in respect of any district projects and local views would be collected. Through joint efforts, each district would have its own harbourfront area with local characteristics.

38. The Chairperson made the following comments:

- (i) Recognising the importance of harbourfront development, WCDC had been actively participating in the exchange activities organised by HC in support for the establishment of HFA. Harbourfront areas should be open for public enjoyment and should not be over-commercialised. With dissatisfaction over the present harbourfront, WCDC held high hopes for the future harbourfront development.

- (ii) The Phase II PE Exercise would come to an end on 24 December 2014. He appealed to Members and local organisations to give active responses. It was believed that through concerted efforts and active exchanges of views, a good harbourfront could be built to the satisfaction of the public.

39. Mr Nicholas BROOKE, SBS, JP remarked that the Government would collaborate with HC in conducting a city design study on the new reclamation area in Wan Chai. This was a long term project and the sites concerned might be taken on by the new authority. HC hoped to work in partnership with WCDC in carrying out the study.

40. Mr Frederick YU supplemented that if any other local committees were interested in giving their views on the establishment of an HFA, they could contact the Secretariat.

41. Miss Christine AU said that WCDC was a partnering organisation for My Victoria Harbourfront Mini-movie Competition. It was hoped that Members would assist in promoting the competition so as to encourage more students to participate.

42. The Chairperson responded that WCDC would give its full support and thanked all representatives for attending the meeting.

#### **Information Items**

**Item 5: Report of Wan Chai District Fight Crime Committee (August to September 2014)**  
**(WCDC Paper No. 83/2014)**

43. The Chairperson asked Mr NG Shan-ho if he had anything to add.

44. Mr CHAN Shan-ho replied that he had nothing to add. As no

Members raised follow-up questions at the meeting, the Chairperson asked Members to note the paper.

**Item 6: Progress Report of the 196<sup>th</sup> Meeting of Wan Chai District Management Committee**  
(WCDC Paper No. 84/2014)

45. The Chairperson asked Members to note the progress report.

**Information Papers**

**Item 7: Progress Reports of Promotion Committees/Working Groups/Organising Committees Directly under WCDC**  
(WCDC Paper No. 85/2014)

46. As no Members raised follow-up questions at the meeting, the Chairperson asked Members to note the progress report.

**Item 8: Progress Reports of Committees of WCDC**

- (a) **Community Building Committee**  
(WCDC Paper No. 86/2014)
- (b) **Cultural and Leisure Services Committee**  
(WCDC Paper No. 87/2014)
- (c) **District Works and Facilities Management Committee**  
(WCDC Paper No. 88/2014)
- (d) **Development, Planning and Transport Committee**  
(WCDC Paper No. 89/2014)
- (e) **Food and Environmental Hygiene Committee**  
(WCDC Paper No. 90/2014)
- (f) **Funding and Finance Committee**  
(WCDC Paper No. 91/2014)

47. The Chairperson asked Members to note the six progress reports.

**Item 9: Financial Statement of WCDC Funds for 2014/15**

**(WCDC Paper No. 92/2014)**

48. The Chairperson asked Members to note the financial statement.

**Item 10: Summary of Meetings of Area Committees**

**(WCDC Paper No. 93/2014)**

49. The Chairperson asked Members to note the summary of meetings of area committees.

**Item 11: Any Other Business**

50. Members did not raise any other discussion items.

**Date of Next Meeting**

51. The next meeting would be held at 2:30 p.m. on 6 January 2015 (Tuesday).

**Adjournment of Meeting**

52. There being no other business, the meeting was adjourned at 4:55 p.m.

Wan Chai District Council Secretariat  
December 2014

These minutes of meeting were confirmed on 6 January 2015.