

# **Task Force on Harbourfront Developments on Hong Kong Island**

## **Minutes of First Meeting**

Date : 16 September 2010  
Time : 9:30 a.m.  
Venue : Conference Room, 15/F, North Point Government Offices  
333 Java Road, North Point

### **Present**

Mr Nicholas Brooke	Chairman
Dr Andrew Thomson	Representing Business Environment Council
Prof Becky Loo	Representing Chartered Institute of Logistics and Transport in Hong Kong
Mr Lam Kin-lai	Representing Conservancy Association
Mr Andy Leung	Representing Hong Kong Institute of Architects
Mr Patrick Lau	Representing Hong Kong Institute of Landscape Architects
Mr Tam Po-yiu	Representing Hong Kong Institute of Planners
Dr Paul Ho	Representing Hong Kong Institute of Surveyors
Dr Peter Cookson Smith	Representing Hong Kong Institute of Urban Design
Mr Louis Loong	Representing Real Estate Developers Association of Hong Kong
Mr Winston Chu	Representing Society for Protection of the Harbour
Mr Chan Hok-fung	
Mr Eric Fok	
Mr Vincent Ng	
Mr Chris Fung	Principal Assistant Secretary (Harbour) (Acting), Development Bureau (DEVB)
Mr Vincent Fung	Assistant Commissioner 2, Tourism Commission
Mr H L Cheng	Chief Traffic Engineer/Hong Kong, Transport Department
Mr Eric Fung	Chief Engineer/Hong Kong 1, Civil Engineering and Development Department (CEDD)
Miss Olivia Chan	Assistant Director (Leisure Services)2, Leisure and Cultural Services Department (LCSD)
Ms Brenda Au	District Planning Officer/Hong Kong, Planning Department (PlanD)
Mr Tony Chan	Secretary

### **Absent with Apologies**

Dr Frederick Lee	Representing Friends of the Earth
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Mr Walter Cheung  
Mr Clarence Ching

Estate Surveyor/Shaukeiwan, Lands Department  
Executive Officer (Planning)5, LCSD

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**Mr Nicholas Brooke**, Harbourfront Commission (HC) Chairman, welcomed all to the meeting.

**Item 1 Election of Chairman**

1.1 **Dr Andrew Thomson** nominated and **Mr Louis Loong** seconded that Mr Nicholas Brooke to be the Chairman of the Task Force. There being no other nomination, Mr Brooke was elected Chairman of the Task Force.

**Item 2 Terms of Reference of the Task Force on Harbourfront Developments on Hong Kong Island (Paper No. TFHK/01/2010)**

2.1 **The meeting** endorsed the proposed terms of reference of the Task Force as set out in Paper No. TFHK/01/2010.

**Item 3 Exterior Design of Tunnel Buildings of the Central-Wan Chai Bypass (CWB) and Island Eastern Corridor Link (Paper No. TFHK/02/2010)**

3.1 Before discussion, **Dr Peter Cookson Smith**, Messrs **Louis Loong** and **Winston Chu** declared conflict of interest in the item. Dr Smith worked as a Director of Urbis Ltd which was being employed by IFCDL as a consultant for its alternative proposal for the location of the West Ventilation Building (WVB) of the CWB. Mr Loong said that IFCDL's shareholders were members of the Real Estate Developers Association of Hong Kong. Mr Chu's legal firm had been an advisor to Sun Hung Kai Properties Ltd, which was one of the major owners of International Finance Centre (IFC). **The Chairman** proposed and **the Members** agreed that they could continue to stay in the meeting but should refrain from participating in the discussion of the item.

3.2 **Mrs Apollonia Liu** of THB and **Mr Conrad Ng** presented the background of the CWB project and the exterior design of the various tunnel buildings, with the aid of a PowerPoint. In view of earlier media reports that there was public concern over the

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location of the WVB, and IFCDL and DHK had put forward an alternative proposal for relocating the building to a roundabout about 300 metres (m) west of the original location proposed by HyD, they took the opportunity to brief members on the views of the Administration on the matter. In gist, after detailed consideration, the alternative proposal was considered not feasible taking into account the following considerations:-

- (a) high construction risk would arise from building the two ventilation and electrical and mechanical (E&M) cable tunnels of some 30m below the ground level within very confined space to connect the CWB tunnel with the alternative site. There would also be safety concerns in carrying out repair and maintenance inside the narrow and deep tunnels;
- (b) as the underground of the western part of the roundabout had already been occupied by some major public facilities, the usable area of the alternative site would be significantly reduced and much less than that of the original site. In addition, due to the need to set back from the carriageway for road safety, there was not sufficient usable space at the ground level of the alternative site to accommodate the safety-related E&M, fire services, escape and rescue equipment and facilities which must be housed above the ground;
- (c) the numerous existing public utility facilities in the vicinity as well as along Man Kwong Street would be affected by the construction of the two tunnels, and the diversion works required for those facilities would result in serious disruption to traffic and possible disruption of services to the public at the area;
- (d) the ventilation system under the alternative proposal would raise the energy consumption by 20%;
- (e) the tunnels would pass through Sites 1 & 2 in the new Central harbourfront, thus posing constraints to the design and development of the buildings within the sites; and
- (f) the completion of the CWB would be delayed by at least two years as the project would have to be re-designed and re-gazetted, and another environmental impact

assessment (EIA) was also be required.

3.3 **Messrs Eric Tung, David Dumigan** of IFCDL, **Alan MacDonald** of Urbis and **Raymond Yau** of ARUP presented the proposal for the alternative location of the WVB, with the aid of a PowerPoint. They made the following points:-

- (a) the current location for the WVB was not consistent with Government's objectives of creating a world class harbourfront as announced by the Secretary for Development and the Chief Executive last year. A large tunnel exhaust building in such a prominent location immediately adjacent to public open space would not occur in other world harbourfront cities, such as Singapore. The location of the exhaust building was a very important decision that would have a significant effect on the enjoyment of the harbour by future generations;
- (b) HyD was relying on an EIA carried out in 2001. There had been significant changes in the area since 2001 including the completion of the IFC public open space and Discovery Bay Footbridge in 2003, Four Seasons in 2005, and the future harbourfront landscape deck. In terms of air pollution there were only two "Air Sensitive Receivers" identified in 2001: 'A67' at the waterfront promenade behind Pier 5 and 'A68' at Finance Street. There was no Air Sensitive Receiver identified at the current Discovery Bay Footbridge, public open space at IFC, and future harbourfront landscape deck. In the 2001 EIA the nearest "Noise Sensitive Receiver" was N2 at the City Hall Garden. As such, there was no noise sensitive receiver identified at the Discovery Bay Footbridge, public open space at IFC and the future harbourfront landscape deck. The high level of noise anticipated could be experienced by standing close to the existing Cross Harbour Tunnel vent buildings;
- (c) in the case of the East Ventilation Building (EVB), the Government did in fact relocate the exhaust vent building to a more remote location following objection by the public;
- (d) the alternative proposal was considered technically feasible by ARUP and the additional construction cost

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was estimated to be around \$70 million, which was a small percentage of the total CWB cost of \$28,000 million;

- (e) re-gazettal of the project could be taken in parallel with construction of other parts of the CWB, thus causing no delay to the completion of the project, as advised by Senior Counsel, Benjamin Yu; and
- (f) the additional construction cost could be compensated by the rise in land value of Sites 1 and 2 if the WVB was relocated to the alternative site to the order of \$1,000 million (10% of the estimated value). The proposed tunnel alignment avoided Sites 1 and 2 and would have no effect on these sites.

3.4 **Messrs Willy Kwong and Paul Zimmerman** of DHK presented their views with the aid of a PowerPoint. They objected to HyD's proposed location for the following reasons:-

- (a) HyD's proposal was next to existing and planned public open space;
- (b) HyD's proposal, as compared with the alternative proposal, was larger and would cause more visual impact blocking all levels of IFC and the public podium;
- (c) HyD's proposal would result in unacceptable levels of air and noise pollution;
- (d) the alternative location was not a public open space, and would be 10% smaller in size;
- (e) the alternative location would mean the presence of the WVB could be easily mitigated by suitable landscaping;
- (f) the alternative location's tunnel should be about 13m below the ground level instead of 30m as mentioned by HyD and was safe to construct using standard construction methods;
- (g) the alternative location would not result in a delay in the construction of the CWB; and
- (h) DHK had collected over 10,000 verifiable signatures indicating preference for the alternative location over

HyD's proposed location.

- 3.5 **Mr William Mackay** of Four Seasons Hotel Hong Kong said that while the alternative proposal would create some problems and disruption of services to the public in the short term, the public would benefit in the long run. As one of the highest quality hotels in Hong Kong, the Four Seasons attracted many of the city's most senior corporate and leisure visitors. The size and nature of the WVB in its currently suggested location would give an appalling impression of the city to guests and visitors alike and make them question whether the Government had seriously considered the impact of this on the harbourfront.
- 3.6 **Mr Mark Kinvig** of PURE Group said that they had collected about 1,000 signatures from their patrons who were very concerned about the WVB's location and had worked with other IFC tenants who similarly felt concerned about the issue. The feedback from these patrons had been that the WVB had not had adequate public consultation. To avoid affecting Hong Kong's competitiveness as Asia's world city, the Government should review the location of WVB.
- 3.7 In response to the arguments in support of the alternative proposal as well as comments on the WVB proposed by the Administration, **Mrs Apollonia Liu** made the following points:-
- (a) IFCDL grossly underestimated the costs for the alternative proposal, e.g., according to the Administration's understanding, the additional E&M cost, which should be considerable in amount, had not been taken into account;
  - (b) the WVB had a slanting slope design and its zenith was 25m above Principal Datum (+mPD), instead of +31mPD as cited by IFCDL; hence, the visual impact of the building as shown in the powerpoint presented by IFCDL was not a true reflection of the actual situation;
  - (c) the ventilation system under HyD's proposal would consume less energy than the alternative proposal;
  - (d) the environmental impact due to the CWB project, including the WVB, had been fully assessed in accordance with the EIA Ordinance. With the

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implementation of the mitigation measures set out in the approved EIA report, the environmental impact would be acceptable. To further improve the air quality, HyD would introduce a new air purification system at the CWB on a pilot basis;

- (e) taking into account actual works processes that would be involved, it was not feasible to re-design and re-gazette the WVB in parallel with the construction of other parts of the CWB;
- (f) the Administration had already conducted extensive public consultation and gone through the required statutory processes for the CWB project; and
- (g) unlike the alternative location proposed, HyD's proposal would not affect Sites 1 & 2 in the new Central harbourfront.

3.8 As regards the signature campaign conducted by DHK, **Mrs Apollonia Liu** pointed out that the facts regarding the WVB as shown on DHK's leaflet for collecting signatures were not correct, and hence the indication of the respondents should be seen in context.

3.9 In response to the Chairman's enquiry, **Mrs Apollonia Liu** said that taking into account all factors including safety considerations and technical constraints, the Administration did not consider the alternative proposal feasible from the engineering perspective.

3.10 **Mr Lam Kin-lai** commented that the alternative proposal could not solve the fundamental problems but just shifted the problems elsewhere within the harbourfront. Under the alternative proposal, two pieces of land would be used for the WVB and it was not a good utilization of public open space. He was also of the view that congested road traffic at peak hours would cause air and noise pollution. He suggested the Government to consider reducing the size of the WVB as far as possible; enhancing the air quality by means of air purification system; and using ventilation system of variable speed to lower the noise level at non-peak hours.

3.11 **Prof Becky Loo** opined that the alternative proposal required a much larger ventilation system which would consume more



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energy and generate more noise. She requested the Government to provide more information on the analysis of air quality and noise impact as it was different from that of IFCDL's analysis. Without a careful study on the social and economic impacts, she objected to adopting the alternative proposal as the two-year delay in the completion of the CWB would entail high cost for the community in terms of longer travelling time, air pollution and delay in the development of Sites 1 & 2 for public enjoyment.

- 3.12 **Mr Vincent Ng** said he was quite disappointed that the issues concerning the WVB, which was in close proximity to Sites 1 & 2, had not been discussed at the former Harbour-front Enhancement Committee (HEC). Unless there was clarification of data, Members could not make a judgment on the different scenarios presented by the two sides.
- 3.13 **Mr Chan Hok-fung** shared Mr Lam's view that the alternative proposal could not solve the problems but would use up more energy and generate more pollution. Consideration should however be given to further integrating the WVB with the landscape deck aesthetically. In the absence of sufficient information, it would be unfair to Members for making a decision to adopt the alternative proposal.
- 3.14 In response, **Mrs Apollonia Liu** and **Mr Daniel Chung** supplemented that:-
- (a) when the former HEC's Sub-committee on Wan Chai Development Phase II Review was consulted on the CWB project, discussion focused on the major issues such as road alignment and whether reclamation was required, etc. rather than the details of the locations of individual ventilation buildings. THB/HyD would continue to communicate with PlanD to ensure the harmony of the WVB's design with the Sites 1 & 2 development;
  - (b) according to the Administration's understanding, in commenting on the impact of the WVB on air quality, IFCDL had not taken into account the fact that the tunnel exhaust from the WVB would be discharged at high speed in a vertically upward manner. In fact, HyD's analysis showed that the air quality in the vicinity, including Sites 1 & 2, could comply with the air quality

requirement; and

- (c) the proposed air purification system, which THB/HyD would introduce in the CWB as a pilot scheme to attain higher air quality of the tunnel exhaust, had been in use in some developed countries, which could filter about 80% of both air suspension particles and nitrogen dioxide.
- 3.15 **Mr Raymond Yau** responded that ARUP used the world's most advanced methodology, instead of the 2001 EIA methodology, to ascertain the true impact of air pollution dispersion on the WVB's neighbourhood. The proposed 300m air duct would run at low speed and it would consume less energy when compared with the electrostatic precipitation system proposed by HyD.
- 3.16 **Dr Andrew Thomson** enquired whether the landscaped deck at Sites 1 and 2 was within the exclusion zone of the EIA assessment; and whether the proposed air purification system would affect the WVB's size and design. He also requested to have more detailed information on the technical feasibility, mitigation measures, safety issues and the air quality impact on Sites 1 & 2.
- 3.17 **Mr Tam Po-yiu** said that it would be unrealistic to expect a major infrastructure project to have no impact on the surrounding environment at all. The road tunnel design including its alignment and its ancillary installations, such as the ventilation tower should preferably have been brought up for public consultation earlier rather than to consult the public on the ventilation building at a late stage when the major part of the project had already been fixed, making mitigation methods very difficult. Mitigation measures were only the last resort and could usually only mitigate the impacts as far as was then practicable instead of removing all impacts totally. These impacts might be lessened with distance between the source and the recipients. The usual mitigation measures dealt with noise, visual impact and air pollution problems. Removal of one problem might however often result in creating other new problems. Relocation would also likely shift the impact on others not so far identified. It would be difficult for a committee to provide the solution or make a choice between the present alternatives but it would rather have to rely on Government to propose suitable mitigation measures with scientific justifications when comparing these alternatives, after

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listening to the committee's concerns.

- 3.18 **Mr Patrick Lau** remarked that a comprehensive landscaping vision of the whole Central harbourfront was needed. To better integrate the WVB with the surrounding area and to add vibrancy to the harbourfront, more innovative design (e.g. video wall installed on the exterior of WVB) should be introduced.
- 3.19 **Mr Andy Leung** and **Dr Paul Ho** both opined that the Government should minimize WVB's visual and environmental impacts as far as possible, and to enhance its integration with Sites 1 & 2.
- 3.20 **Mr Eric Fok** opined that the two options should be examined and compared in terms of cost, visual impact, pollution resulted, impact to the construction of CWB and safety aspects.
- 3.21 **Mrs Apollonia Liu** and **Mr Daniel Chung** assured members that they would work with their consultant, the departments concerned and other parties to refine the WVB design in terms of size and harmony with the vicinity. **Mr Conrad Ng** supplemented that according to their latest noise impact assessment, the maximum noise level at the landscaped deck would only be 48 decibel. **Miss Fiona Lung** of PlanD informed the meeting that the general blocking of the WVB had been included in the physical model and WVB's location had already been shown in the Master Layout Plan and the Site Constraint Plan in the Urban Design Study for the New Central Harbourfront (UDS), though the WVB's detailed design was not available at that time. PlanD would continue to work with THB/HyD to ensure that the WVB's detailed design would be in harmony with Sites 1 & 2.
- 3.22 In response to Dr Andrew Thomson's enquiry, **Mr Daniel Chung** also clarified that the landscaped deck within Sites 1 and 2 was outside the exclusion zone of the EIA assessment.
- 3.23 **Mr David Dumigan** explained to Members that IFCDL and their consultants, ARUP and Urbis, had been discussing the alternative arrangement with HyD since the end of last year. He pointed out that ARUP was the original designer of Hong Kong Station and the associated works, such as the cooling water pipe tunnel, and was very familiar with the technical constraints. Technical reports from the consultants had been

submitted to HyD in February 2010 while HyD and their consultant, AECOM, had at no time said that the alternative proposal was not technically feasible. Their comments were mainly related to possible delay to the CWB if the alternative was adopted.

- 3.24 **Mr David Dumigan** further explained to Members that HyD's artist's perspective was deceiving, as it showed the roof of the WVB at about the same level as the landscape deck. This was not the case. The landscape deck would be at about +13mPD while the roof of the WVB was at +24mPD without the sloping roof above, according to HyD figure. It was clear that the ventilation building was at least 11m higher than the proposed landscape deck. The images provided by Urbis, therefore, gave a more accurate impression of the massive visual impact the WVB would have at the location proposed by HyD.
- 3.25 In response to THB/HyD's explanation, **Mr David Dumigan** said that based on the study carried out by ARUP, there were no significant technical and safety problems with the alternative proposal:-
- (a) in terms of air pollution, much fewer people would be affected if the WVB was relocated to the alternative location (100,000 people per day using the footbridge and landscaped deck compared to just a few people at Pier 2);
  - (b) the ventilation and E&M tunnels required under the alternative proposal should be only 13m below the ground level, which could be constructed by simple cut-and-cover techniques, which had been widely used in Hong Kong for much deeper tunnels. There was no need at all to go to 30m deep as suggested by HyD;
  - (c) any affected traffic at Man Kwong Street could be diverted to the 10m wide tramway reserve at the waterfront, which was no longer needed for the time being; and
  - (d) the exact same safety parameters would be adopted for both schemes and there would be no difference between the schemes in terms of public safety.
- 3.26 **Mr Paul Zimmerman** opined that much more people would be affected under HyD's proposal. The introduction of air

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purification system was proposed by HyD only very lately and the system would take up more space, resulting in a bigger building and higher energy consumption. As regards the public consultation, DHK had conducted their public consultation in a fair manner as both the alternative proposal and HyD's proposal were shown concurrently to the respondents and contrary to comments made by THB, all information about the WVB on leaflets and exhibition materials were correct and accurate.

3.27 **Mr Chris Fung** of DEVB remarked that the serious traffic congestion problem in the vicinity of Central and Wan Chai posed urgency to the completion of the CWB, which Members also shared the same view. Any delay in the CWB's construction would also cause delay to the development of Sites 1 and 2 for public enjoyment. If air tunnels were built under the sites, the design and development of buildings within the sites would be constrained and affected. The Government put a lot of emphasis on the connectivity and accessibility to the Central harbourfront. Any road closure/traffic diversion at Man Kwong Street resulting from relocating the WVB would aggravate the traffic congestion problem at Central and also affect connectivity to the Central piers area.

3.28 After listening to the above views, **the Chairman** concluded that the Task Force was not in a position to make a decision at present as there was not sufficient information concerning the pros and cons and feasibility of the two proposals. He suggested that the two sides should work together to examine the feasibility and constraints of the proposals; and revert with fully tested and compared schemes in two to three months' time. He also suggested THB/HyD to take on board Members' views to reduce the visual, air and noise impact of its proposed WVB. **The Members** agreed with the approach.

THB/HyD/  
IFCDL/  
AECOM/  
ARUP/  
Aedas/  
Urbis

3.29 In closing, **Mrs Apollonia Liu** emphasised that the CWB project, including the location of the WVB, was approved by the Chief Executive in Council in 2009 after due process. It was a matter for the other side to convince the Task Force whether the alternative proposal was agreeable. That notwithstanding, THB/HyD would be pleased to provide them with more information concerning the Administration's views on the alternative proposal. As far as THB/HyD was concerned, they would work with the other departments concerned to refine its proposal, taking into account Members' suggestions.

**Item 4 Hoi Yu Street Temporary Waterfront Promenade (Paper No. TFHK/03/2010)**

- 4.1 **Mr Ko Wai-kuen** and **Mr Daniel Chow** presented Paper No. TFHK/03/2010, with the aid of a PowerPoint.
- 4.2 **Mr Winston Chu** enquired whether any reclamation would be required for the project.
- 4.3 **Mr Chan Hok Fung** commented that the promenade had no parking space for the convenience of pet owners and no rain shelter. **Mr Lam Kin-lai** opined that the pet garden's size should be sufficient to allow bigger dogs. **Mr Vincent Ng** also considered that the promenade's design was too simple, without characteristics.
- 4.4 **Prof Becky Loo** suggested that the advice of the Fire Services Department (FSD) should be sought concerning the gas pigging station's potential fire hazard on the proposed 2m wide corridor as it was quite narrow.
- 4.5 **Dr Peter Cookson Smith** welcomed this quick-win project to enhance the harbourfront. The plan could be considered more holistically in terms of connectivity with the Quarry Bay Park and Tai Koo Shing area.
- 4.6 **Mr Patrick Lau** said that the project had been followed up in the Eastern District Council (EDC) and discussed at the former HEC. The EDC was very concerned about the temporary promenade's connectivity with the Quarry Bay Park and therefore supported early commissioning of the project for public enjoyment by opening the 2m wide corridor behind the gas pigging station.
- 4.7 **Mr Ko** made the following responses:-
- (a) no reclamation was required for the project;
  - (b) suitable lighting, rain shelter and security arrangements would be in place when the promenade was opened to the public;
  - (c) the promenade was temporary in nature, pending the

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long term planning and development of the area which was being reviewed under PlanD's Hong Kong Island East Harbour-front Study (HKIEHS);

- (d) the proposed pet garden was considered to be of optimum size, striking a balance for those users who disliked pets. The EDC also supported the proposed size of the garden. While no parking space was being planned, consideration could be given to using the vacant government land in the vicinity as parking space should there be great demand after the commissioning of the promenade;
- (e) FSD and Electrical & Mechanical Services Department (EMSD) had no adverse comment on the proposed 2m wide corridor behind the gas pigging station; and
- (f) Members' views would be taken into account in working out the promenade's detailed design.

4.8 **Mr Vincent Ng** reiterated that even though the promenade was temporary in nature, it should have a design with characteristics.

4.9 **Mr Patrick Lau** supplemented that the EDC had organized a promenade street furniture design competition and the winning entries would be adopted to introduce non-standard design furniture, e.g. lamp posts and benches, in the promenade.

4.10 **Mr Andy Leung** suggested to use the two adjacent lots of vacant government land to enlarge the promenade's size. In response, **Mr Tom Yip** told the meeting that the two lots were zoned "Other Specified Uses (1)" and "Other Specified Uses (2)" in the OZP. The permanent use and development of the sites were being reviewed under HKIEHS.

4.11 **Mr Daniel Chow** explained that the present design was only a preliminary one as it was the ArchSD's procedure that the detailed design should only be carried out after securing of funding for Minor Works projects. ArchSD and CEDD were willing to seek Members' views on the detailed design of the promenade at later stage.

4.12 **The Chairman** concluded that the Task Force supported the CEDD/Arch

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project in principle to enhance the waterfront of the area. **SD**  
CEDD/ArchSD should take on board Members' comment to refine the proposal; and revert to brief the Task Force once the detailed design was available.

**Item 5 Scope of Works for Development of Site 7 in the New Central Harbourfront (Paper No. TFHK/04/2010)**

5.1 Due to insufficient time, **the Chairman** suggested and **the Members** agreed to defer discussion on the item to later meeting.

**Item 6 Any Other Business**

A Proposal to Develop a Water Pumping Station Site at Sheung Wan into an Open Space (Paper No. TFHK/05/2010)

6.1 **The meeting** noted the information paper and Central & Western Power's letter on the proposal to develop a water pumping station site at Sheung Wan into an open space.

Co-option of Members

6.2 **The Chairman** invited Members to give suggestion on **Members** co-option of members to the Task Force for his consideration.

Date of Next Meeting

6.3 The Secretariat would announce the date of the next meeting in due course. **Secretariat**

6.4 There being no other business, the meeting was closed at 1:00 p.m.

**Secretariat**

**Task Force on Harbourfront Developments on Hong Kong Island**