

16th Meeting of Harbourfront Commission
held at 3:00 pm on 29 April 2014 at the Conference Room
on 15/F, North Point Government Offices, 333 Java Road, Hong Kong

Minutes of Meeting

Present

Mr Nicholas BROOKE	Chair
Mr Paul CHAN	Vice-Chair
Mrs Margaret BROOKE	Representing Business Environment Council
Prof Becky LOO	Representing Chartered Institute of Logistics and Transport in Hong Kong
Mr LAM Kin-lai	Representing the Conservancy Association
Mrs Karen BARRETTO	Representing Friends of the Earth
Mr Andy LEUNG	Representing Hong Kong Institute of Architects
Mr Paul CHAN Yuen-king	Representing Hong Kong Institute of Landscape Architects
Dr Peter Cookson SMITH	Representing Hong Kong Institute of Planners
Mr LAU Chun-kong	Representing Hong Kong Institute of Surveyors
Mr Ivan HO	Representing Hong Kong Institute of Urban Design
Ir Peter WONG	Representing Hong Kong Institution of Engineers
Mr Louis LOONG	Representing Real Estate Developers Association of Hong Kong
Mr Paul ZIMMERMAN	Representing Society for Protection of the Harbour
Mr CHAN Ka-kui	
Mr Walter CHAN	
Ms Lily CHOW	
Mrs Ayesha Macpherson LAU	
Mr Raj Sital MOTWANI	
Mr Vincent NG	
Mr Thomas CHOW	Permanent Secretary for Development (Planning and Lands)
Mr LING Kar-kan	Director of Planning
Ms Emily MO	Assistant Commissioner 2, Tourism Commission (TC)
Mr Wilson PANG	Assistant Commissioner/Urban (Acting), Transport Department (TD)
Mr Norman HEUNG	Project Manager (Kowloon), Civil Engineering and

Mr Raymond FAN	Development Department (CEDD) Deputy Director (Leisure Services), Leisure and Cultural Services Department (LCSD)
Mr Raymond CHUNG	Assistant Director/Planning and Services, Marine Department (MD)
Mrs Winnie KANG	Secretary

In Attendance

Mr Allen FUNG	Political Assistant to Secretary for Development
Miss Fannie KONG	Press Secretary to Secretary for Development
Mr Larry CHU	Assistant Secretary (Harbour) 1, Development Bureau (DEVB)
Mr Frederick YU	Assistant Secretary (Harbour) Special Duty, DEVB
Miss Venus TSOI	Assistant Secretary (Harbour) 2, DEVB
Mr Peter MOK	Project Manager (Harbour), DEVB
Mr LEUNG Kong-yui	Chair, Task Force on Water-land Interface

Absent with Apologies

Mr CHAN Hok-fung
Mr Eric FOK
Mr Brian David LI

For Agenda Item 7

Mr PUN Wai-keung	Deputy Head of Geotechnical Engineering Office (Planning and Standards), CEDD
Dr Samuel NG	Chief Geotechnical Engineer/Planning, CEDD
Mr Tony HO	Senior Geotechnical Engineer/Marine and Land Geotechnology, CEDD
Mr Jeffrey WONG	Senior Geotechnical Engineer/Underground Space Development, CEDD
Ms April KUN	Chief Town Planner/Studies and Research, Planning Department (PlanD)
Mr Mann CHOW	Senior Town Planner/Studies and Research 3, PlanD

Welcoming Message

The Chair welcomed all to the 16th meeting of the Harbourfront Commission (the Commission) and informed Members that Mr Michael WONG had taken over the post of Director of Marine from Mr Francis LIU with effect from 27 February 2014 and that Mr Raymond CHUNG, Assistant Director/Planning and Services of MD, was attending the meeting on his behalf. He put on record the Commission's appreciation to Mr LIU for his contribution to its work. He also informed Members that Ms Emily MO, Assistant Commissioner 2 of TC, was attending on behalf of Mr Philip YUNG; Mr Wilson PANG, Assistant Commissioner/Urban (Acting) of TD, was attending on behalf of Mrs Ingrid YEUNG; Mr Norman HEUNG, Project Manager (Kowloon) of CEDD, was attending on behalf of Mr HON Chi-keung; and Mr Raymond FAN, Deputy Director (Leisure Services) of LCSD, was attending on behalf of Mrs Betty FUNG.

Item 1 Confirmation of Minutes of the 15th Meeting

1.1 **The Chair** said that the Secretariat circulated the draft minutes of the 15th meeting to Members on 16 April 2014, and received no comments from Members. The draft minutes were confirmed at the meeting.

Item 2 Matters Arising

A. *Terms of Reference (ToR) of the Task Forces (Paragraph 2.8 of the minutes of the 15th meeting)*

2.1 **The Chair** said that a separate workshop was organised on 11 February 2014 for Members to deliberate on the proposed amendments to the ToR of the Task Force on Water-land

Interface and that the revised ToR were endorsed at the 7th meeting of the Task Force held on 2 April 2014.

B. The New Yau Ma Tei Police Station (Paragraph 5.6 of the minutes of the 15th meeting)

2.2 **The Chair** said that Members' suggestion of providing a public access to the new Yau Ma Tei Police Station at the landscaped deck had been conveyed to the Police.

(Post-meeting note: The Police responded that they had reconsidered Members' comment. Due to security reasons, members of the public would be required to access the new Yau Ma Tei Police Station via the front entrance on ground floor only. The response was reported to the Task Force on Harbourfront Developments in Kowloon, Tsuen Wan and Kwai Tsing at its 16th meeting held on 26 May 2014.)

Item 3 Progress Report from Task Force on Harbourfront Developments on Hong Kong Island (Paper No. HC/05/2014)

3.1 **The Chair**, in his capacity as the Chair of the Task Force, briefed Members on the progress report.

3.2 Regarding the Urban Design Study for the Wan Chai North and North Point Harbourfront Areas, **Mr Paul ZIMMERMAN** suggested fine-tuning the proposed scope of the study to expand the study area to cover the entire area studied under the Harbour-front Enhancement Review – Wan Chai, Causeway Bay and Adjoining Areas conducted by the former Harbour-front Enhancement Committee, and come up with specific proposals for the sites which might potentially be allocated to the proposed Harbourfront Authority.

Item 4 Progress Report from Task Force on Kai Tak Harbourfront Development (Paper No. HC/06/2014)

4.1 **Mr Vincent NG**, in his capacity as the Chair of the Task Force, presented the progress report.

4.2 **Mr Paul ZIMMERMAN** opined that Members did not give support to the proposed Environmentally Friendly Linkage System (EFLS) at the 14th meeting of the Task Force held on 14 January 2014, and suggested reviewing the relevant paragraph of the progress report. While supporting the extension of the cycle track network at Kai Tak Development (KTD), he commented that the network should be fully connected with other residential developments within KTD and that sufficient bicycle parking facilities should be provided for public use.

4.3 **Mrs Margaret BROOKE** recalled that Members did recognise the need for optimising the intra- and inter-district connectivity of KTD and support the Kai Tak Office (KTO) to conduct a detailed feasibility study to look into different aspects of the proposed EFLS, but Members did not give any support to the proposed EFLS at the Task Force meeting concerned.

4.4 **Mrs Winnie KANG** responded that the conclusion stated in the progress report “*the Task Force supported KTO to conduct the feasibility study and requested that the feasibility of alternative modes of transport apart from EFLS should be assessed in the study*” was an accurate reflection of Members’ views expressed at the Task Force meeting.

4.5 **The Chair** suggested that the phrase “while recognising the need for an elevated transport system to enhance the intra- and inter-district connectivity of the KTD” in the progress report might be reviewed.

4.6 **Mr Vincent NG** clarified that Members did recognise the need for enhancing the intra- and inter-district connectivity of KTD, albeit the mode of transport was subject to further

discussion.

Item 5 Progress Report from Task Force on Harbourfront Developments in Kowloon, Tsuen Wan and Kwai Tsing (Paper No. HC/07/2014)

5.1 **Prof Becky LOO**, in her capacity as the Chair of the Task Force, took Members through the progress report.

5.2 On the amendments to the approved South West Kowloon Outline Zoning Plan No. S/K20/28, **Mr Paul ZIMMERMAN** said that apart from interface issues, he had raised at the 15th meeting of the Task Force held on 12 February 2014 that the subject site was close to the existing industrial area and other commercial water-dependent uses. As there was no other site within Victoria Harbour readily available for such water-dependent uses which were in high demand, the site should not be changed to residential use. He said that his views should be conveyed to the Town Planning Board (TPB).

5.3 **The Chair** responded that the extract of confirmed minutes of the meeting for this item would be provided to the TPB for reference.

the Secretariat

(Post-meeting note: The extract of the confirmed minutes of the 15th meeting of the Task Force held on 12 February 2014 was passed to the TPB on 3 June 2014.)

Item 6 Progress Report from Task Force on Water-land Interface (Paper No. HC/08/2014)

6.1 **Mr LEUNG Kong-yui**, in his capacity as the Chair of the Task Force, presented the progress report. Members noted the contents and the endorsed ToR of the Task Force.

Item 7 Pilot Study on Underground Space Development in Selected Strategic Urban Districts (Paper No. HC/09/2014)

7.1 **Dr Peter Cookson SMITH** declared that his company was involved in the study. **The Chair** agreed that he could stay in the meeting but should refrain from participating in the discussion on this item.

7.2 **The Chair** welcomed the study team to the meeting. **Mr PUN Wai-keung** and **Dr Samuel NG** of CEDD presented the paper with the aid of a PowerPoint.

7.3 While giving an in-principle support to the study, **the Chair** enquired whether developing underground space would be practicable as the underground environment of the selected areas might be congested with foundation piles, ducts and cables, etc. Citing examples in other countries, he asked whether the Government would consider levying on those property owners who would benefit from enhanced connectivity and appreciation in property values as a result of the underground space development.

7.4 **Mr Paul ZIMMERMAN** opined that it was generally a good idea to look into the opportunities that might be offered by underground space and added the following comments:

- (a) the existing underground pedestrian network in Tsim Sha Tsui could be enhanced;
- (b) the above-ground pedestrian network instead of underground should be improved in the Wan Chai area;
- (c) to alleviate congestion at street level, all the utility cables could be put into common services ducts to reduce the need to dig up pedestrian pavements for maintenance works of utilities. Efforts should be put on relocating existing utilities underground in order to

release more above-ground space for other uses;

- (a) accommodating more people underground would require additional ventilation shafts, fire safety facilities and exits, etc. which would occupy considerable footprint at the ground level, and therefore aggravating the congestion problem; and
- (e) the Government should provide incentive on land premium for private land owners to connect its development to the network if there was public gain.

7.5 Referring to paragraph 9 of the paper, **Mrs Margaret BROOKE** asked about the details of the reservations expressed by some members of the Wan Chai District Council (WCDC) on the study.

7.6 **Dr Samuel NG** made the following responses:-

- (a) underground obstructions in the areas concerned were anticipated but that should be relatively less problematic underneath those public open spaces like Victoria Park. There should not be much underground obstruction in some areas of the park and it might not be necessary to develop the underground space underneath the entire park;
- (b) there were overseas precedents where the governments offered incentive to private property owners to connect their developments to underground space so as to alleviate the above-ground congestion. The idea of underground network would not be effective if all the exits were provided on government land. To better utilise the space at ground level, the proposed underground space development might be connected to the MTR stations or underground structures at underground level. The study would also explore the need for a mechanism and encouragement to involve

private sector participation;

- (c) the option of going underground would only be considered when the ground level or elevated road network could not meet the increasing needs;
- (d) the study would consider the feasibility of consolidating the utilities into common services ducts when developing underground space underneath major roads especially for those areas with considerable existing underground utilities;
- (e) the locations for the ventilation shafts, exits and access points would be carefully assessed and selected to avoid occupying too much ground level space at some crowded pedestrian walkways; and
- (f) a few WCDC members expressed reservations that it might be difficult and costly to develop the underground space. The study would also look into cost effectiveness and financial viability aspects.

7.7 **Mr LAM Kin-lai** suggested that the study should look into the sustainability aspect, including minimising energy consumption and utilising underground temperature difference to create ventilation. To improve underground environment, he suggested adding more green designs and providing clear orientation signages as people might lose direction after staying a long time in underground space.

7.8 **Prof Becky LOO** said that there had been a lot of efforts to decentralise activities in the core urban areas over the past few decades. As underground space would generate extra trips in the selected areas which were already congested, she enquired whether the study meant to be a change in the overall planning direction.

7.9 **Mr Ivan HO** suggested that the study should also look

into the urban design aspect. He queried whether the public would tolerate the nuisances generated during the construction of Tsim Sha Tsui underground space; and why the proposal should be implemented in these core urban areas. Quoting the example of the West Kowloon reclamation area where over 40% of the above ground space was occupied by infrastructure, and the successful integration of infrastructure into the environment in Japan, he opined that the Government should devote more resources to urban design studies.

7.10 **Mr LAU Chun-kong** questioned whether the study would address the issue of on-street coach parking in the vicinity of tourist attractions, as short-term tenancy car parking sites were phasing out and the utilisation of some major car parks had surged.

7.11 **Mr Paul ZIMMERMAN** opined that the overall objective of the study should address community needs and enhance the street-level pedestrian environment as well as connectivity in the selected areas by putting the incompatible uses underground such as coach parking and refuse collection points, etc. instead of creating additional space for commercial development.

7.12 **Dr Samuel NG** further responded that:-

- (a) the study would look into the sustainable development aspects, having regard to overseas examples and the latest technology;
- (b) one of the key aspects of the study was to make use of the underground space to enhance pedestrian connectivity, and improve urban environment of developed areas where there were shortage of space. The proposed underground space development would not just create commercial opportunities, but also other uses including recreational, cultural and arts activities;

- (c) underground space development would inevitably be costly, and would only be considered when there was a genuine need, and the implementation mode would be cost-effective;
- (d) the urban design aspect would be considered holistically on a district basis;
- (e) closure of some areas and facilities at the ground level would be unavoidable during the construction of underground space, but every attempt would be made to minimise such disruption. The study team would continue to engage the Commission and the relevant District Councils on how best to take forward the study;
- (f) the District Councils consulted had suggested that the study should look into the traffic issues, including using the underground space for coach parking for tourism in order to alleviate congestion at road surface; and
- (g) while time would be a bit tight for conducting a very comprehensive study, it would try to cover areas suggested by Members as far as possible; and the initial findings would be available in a few years' time, together with the territory-wide study which had already commenced and covered some of the technical aspects.

7.13 In closing the discussion, **the Chair** expressed appreciation to the study team's positive attitude in response to Members' suggestion, and asked the team to keep the Commission posted of the study progress. **the Study Team**

Item 8 Any Other Business

Date of Next Meeting

8.1 **The Chair** informed Members that the next meeting had been tentatively scheduled for 19 August 2014.

8.2 There being no other business, the meeting ended at 5:30 pm.

**Secretariat
Harbourfront Commission
August 2014**