

26th Meeting of Harbourfront Commission
held at 4:00 pm on 23 January 2017 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 Eric MA	Acting Secretary for Development, Vice Chair
Mrs Margaret BROOKE	Representing Business Environment Council
Prof Becky LOO	Representing Chartered Institute of Logistics and Transport in Hong Kong
Mr NG Cho-nam	Representing Conservancy Association
Mrs Karen BARRETTO	Representing Friends of the Earth
Mr Freddie HAI	Representing Hong Kong Institute of Architects
Mr Evans IU	Representing Hong Kong Institute of Landscape Architects
Mr Ivan HO	Representing Hong Kong Institute of Urban Design
Ir Prof CHOY Kin-kuen	Representing Hong Kong Institution of Engineers
Mr Paul ZIMMERMAN	Representing Society for Protection of the Harbour
Mr Walter CHAN	
Ms Kelly CHAN	
Mr Hans Joachim ISLER	
Mr KAN Chak-fun	
Mr Vincent NG	
Mr NGAN Man-yu	
Mr Michael WONG	Permanent Secretary for Development (Planning and Lands)
Ms Emily MO	Assistant Commissioner for Tourism, Tourism Commission (TC)
Mr Wilson PANG	Assistant Commissioner/Urban, Transport Department (TD)
Mr Alfred WONG	Chief Engineer/ Hong Kong (1), Civil Engineering and Development Department (CEDD)
Ms Michelle LI	Director of Leisure and Cultural Services
Mr CHEUK Fan-lun	Assistant Director/Planning & Services, Marine Department (MD)
Ms April KUN	Chief Town Planner/ Studies and Research, Planning Department (PlanD)

Miss Christine AU

Secretary

In Attendance

Mr Thomas CHAN

Deputy Secretary (Planning and Lands)¹,
Development Bureau (DEVB)

Ms Connie MAN

Secretariat Press Officer (Development)

Mr Larry CHU

Assistant Secretary (Harbour)¹, DEVB

Ms Jenny WONG

Assistant Secretary (Harbour) Special Duties,
DEVB

Miss Emily SOM

Assistant Secretary (Harbour) 2, DEVB

Mr LEUNG Kong-yui

Chair, Task Force on Water-land Interface

Absent with Apologies

Prof TANG Bo-sin

Representing Hong Kong Institute of Planners

Sr Emily LI

Representing Hong Kong Institute of Surveyors

Mr Louis LOONG

Representing Real Estate Developers Association
of Hong Kong

Mr CHAN Ka-kui

Ms Vivian LEE

Mr Alan LO

Welcoming Message

The Chair welcomed all to the meeting, in particular Mr Eric MA, Acting Secretary for Development, who would brief the Commission on new initiatives on harbourfront development shortly. He further informed Members that Ms Emily MO, Assistant Commissioner for the Tourism Commission, was attending on behalf of Miss Cathy CHU; Mr Wilson PANG, Assistant Commissioner of TD, was attending on behalf of Mrs Ingrid YEUNG; Mr Alfred WONG, Chief Engineer of CEDD, was attending on behalf of Mr LAM Sai-hung; Mr CHEUK Fan-lun, Assistant Director of MD, was attending on behalf of Ms Maisie CHENG and Ms April KUN, Chief Town Planner of PlanD, was attending on behalf of Mr Raymond LEE.

Item 1 New Initiatives on Harbourfront Development (Paper No. HC/01/2017)

1.1 **The Chair** said he was disappointed with the Government's announcement in the 2017 Policy Address (PA) that a statutory

Harbourfront Authority (HFA) would not be established at this stage. He did not agree with the Government's conclusion that it was premature to do so. He thought that the two rounds of public engagement (PE) exercises had already conveyed a very clear message that the community was dissatisfied with the current state of play with the development and management model for harbourfront development. Against this background did the Commission submit a report to the Chief Executive in January 2016 recommending the establishment of HFA. He opined that the Commission should have been informed of the Government's decision in advance of its announcement in the 2017 PA. Looking forward, he stated that he saw merit in the enhanced role to be played by the Harbourfront Commission (HC), but added that \$500 million was a small sum for harbourfront enhancement works.

- 1.2 **Mr Eric MA** expressed his tremendous gratitude for HC's steadfast support and efforts on harbourfront development works in the past years. He emphasised that harbourfront development and enhancement was a core vision shared by both the Government and HC. As learnt from the two stages of PE, there was a general consensus in the community for the need of a new mindset in taking forward harbourfront enhancement. However, there was admittedly a divergence of views on the process and pace of the transition from the current model to HFA; and also on the statutory function, composition, authority and finance of the proposed HFA. Taking into account the many different views gathered, including the likely reaction from the community, the Government considered that it was premature to establish a HFA as an independent statutory body with its own financial and executive powers at this stage. However, the Government also noted that there were limitations with the current model for harbourfront development and management, and shared the vision of HC in seeking to remove existing restrictions where appropriate. The Government had thus decided to take the work relating to harbourfront development and enhancement to the next level before further deliberations on the proposal of establishing a statutory HFA. The new initiatives announced in PA sought to enhance the role and involvement of HC on the implementation of harbourfront projects. The Government intended to partner

with HC through the setting up of a dedicated team and dedicated funding to implement harbourfront enhancement initiatives. In a spirit of partnership underpinned by a shared mission and goal, he appealed for Members' support for the new initiatives.

- 1.3 **The Chair** then asked **Miss Christine AU** to introduce Paper No. HC/01/2017 with the aid of a PowerPoint.
- 1.4 As the Chairman of HC's Core Group for Public Engagement, **Mr Vincent NG** said he was also disappointed with over the Government's decision not to set up HFA at this stage. He added that the Government announced in the 2013 PA that it would take forward the proposed establishment of HFA by commencing two stages of PE, but the policy direction suddenly changed at the last PA within the same term of the Government. He also disagreed that it was premature to set up HFA as the proposal already attained general support during the PE and was supported by HC. He considered that this was a matter of commitment and policy continuation of the Government. Having said that, he still welcomed the Government's new initiatives as a first step forward.
- 1.5 **Mr LEUNG Kong-yui** said that he shared the disappointment of Members who had worked towards the establishment of HFA for years. However, he was not optimistic about getting Legislative Council's support for the HFA proposal under the current political climate. He believed that, as an immediate goal, HC should make the most out of the earmarked funding of \$500 million under existing circumstances.
- 1.6 **Prof Becky LOO** commented that the proposal for HC to assume the role of a "project proponent" to advocate and help explain harbourfront enhancement initiatives would involve substantial workload which required a team of full-time staff. She suggested that the proposed Harbour Office (HO), which was actually similar to the proposed office which would serve as the executive arm of the HFA under the proposal that was raised in PE, should take up this responsibility with HC retaining its advisory role. Furthermore, she would like to know more about the proposed milestones for the current

proposal, as well as the size of the proposed HO and details of the working relationship between the future HC and HO. She opined that the \$500 million might only be barely sufficient to cover about six projects.

1.7 **Mr Paul ZIMMERMAN** made the following comments and enquiries –

- (a) it was a pity that the Government were still unable to resolve the issues over the setting up of HFA after so many years of discussion. However, given the significant discrepancies between the expectation of the Government and the Commission on the proposed HFA and the public's disappointment with the work of the West Kowloon Cultural District Authority, the latest development might be a blessing in disguise;
- (b) the amount of funding set aside for the first stage of development was nothing but small. To facilitate Members' deliberation on the prioritisation of the sites to be developed, Members should be provided with a full list of harbourfront sites with their development parameters, site availability and cost of enhancement/ development; and
- (c) referring to the role of the Energizing Kowloon East Office (EKEO), which often worked through motivating the Leisure and Cultural Services Department (LCSD) to modify and change its way of managing parks rather than simply acting as a project proponent, he believed the role of Harbour Office versus LCSD and/or other departments could be further discussed.

1.8 **Mr Ivan HO** expressed his disappointment with the Government's decision and the way in which the decision had been communicated to HC. He had reservations on the feasibility for HC to assume the role of "project proponent" and suggested setting up a Task Force to study the feasibility of the current proposal. He expressed an interest to know more about the size of the proposed HO and how it would perform its role;

1.9 **Mr Walter CHAN** expressed his disappointment that HC had

not been informed of the Government's decision in advance of the PA announcement. In addition, he asked how the sum of \$500 million had been arrived at and whether LCSD had already determined how the \$3 billion for the development of harbourfront open spaces would be used in its five-year plan.

- 1.10 **Mr Freddie HAI** expressed disappointment on behalf of the Hong Kong Institute of Architects as the Institute had been hoping that the proposed HFA would be able to reduce the existing bureaucracy with harbourfront development works and implement initiatives flexibly. In this connection, he was concerned that the current proposal for HC to assume the role of "project proponent" could not replace the role of LCSD. He was also of the view that some of the proposed projects like signage improvement were not so important and urgent.
- 1.11 **Mrs Margaret BROOKE** said that the Business Environment Council was disappointed with the Government's decision not to establish HFA at this stage, particularly given that the Harbour Business Forum had devoted a lot of time and effort to push forward the HFA proposal. On the way forward, she asked whether Members who had been giving advice on harbourfront related issues for years would still be permitted to contribute towards the new HC despite the six-year rule, and which body would be the decision-making authority in the future. She would like to have more information on issues such as land ownership or management model in respect of the proposed sites.
- 1.12 **Mr Evans IU** considered that the Government's decision could have been better communicated to HC. He remarked that the \$500 million funding would be a large sum for landscape works but only a modest sum for civil engineering works. He questioned the feasibility of having HC taking up the role of a project proponent as this would require a lot more inputs from Members.
- 1.13 **Mr Eric MA** stressed that harbourfront development and enhancement was a core vision shared by the Government and HC. HC had all along been a valuable partner with the Government for the implementation of harbourfront

enhancement initiatives and he looked forward to the continuous input and advice from HC. He would like to reassure Members that the Government had not given up on the vision of setting up a statutory HFA and would continue to work with HC for the emergence of favourable conditions to reconsider the proposal. He considered that the current proposal could take the work of harbourfront enhancement to the next level before further deliberations on the proposal of establishing a statutory HFA. With the dedicated funding, DEVB and HC would no longer need to compete for resources for proposed projects each and every year and hence harbourfront enhancement works could be expedited for earlier public enjoyment.

1.14 On the detailed mode of operation and financial arrangement of the proposal, **Mr Thomas CHAN** supplemented as follows -

- (a) the proposal for HC to assume the role of project proponent was to confer greater decision-making power to HC. The Government would look upon HC to provide guidance and inputs to the formulation, study, prioritisation and implementation of harbourfront enhancement projects;
- (b) the amount of \$500 million was just an initial injection for enabling a number of meaningful projects to be taken forward. As to the selection of projects, Members' suggestions and comments would be welcomed. Moreover, the Government would not prejudge the ultimate management model for the time being, and HC would be involved in the process of ironing out the details. This could show the public that the proposed approach was a step forward in furthering some key objectives of the HFA proposal, including more flexibility for HC to implement harbourfront projects; and
- (c) as for manpower requirements, the Harbour Unit had been expanding in the past year by bringing in necessary professional staff such as an engineer. Depending on the projects eventually endorsed by HC, other professionals such as architect, landscape architect or leisure services manager could be brought into the team to support the

work of HC.

1.15 **Miss Christine AU** also supplemented that -

- (a) HC recognised and set out in its Phase I Public Engagement Consultation Digest for the Proposed Establishment of a HFA some current constraints on harbourfront development including that the development cycle of a promenade took time and resources, and that existing arrangements were not conducive to creative design and the Pleasure Grounds Regulation might limit the vibrancy and diversity of the waterfront. To respond to these challenges, the Secretariat proposed to use part of the \$500 million to commission a consultancy study for the formulation of a new model to plan, manage, operate and maintain future harbourfront development works. HC could then decide on the future operation and management modes and specific rules for each individual project;
- (b) the Secretariat had put forward six projects for Members' deliberations for use of the dedicated fund of \$500 million. The main selection criteria included the timing for site availability and the amount of public enjoyment that could be brought about with the completion of the project concerned. Detailed information on harbourfront sites could be circulated to Member for information. Other suggestions on better use of the dedicated funding from Members were also welcomed;
- (c) among the suggested projects, while the Urban Park in front of the Hung Hom Ferry Pier and the Open Space at Eastern Street North of Sai Ying Pun were capital works projects which required funding approval from the Legislative Council, the advance promenade from Central to Wan Chai and the waterfront pedestrian walkway at Tsuen Wan could be implemented as minor works projects. In both scenarios, the setting up of a dedicated funding would help save time as it would no longer be necessary to compete for allocation of resources within the Government;
- (d) HC had already taken up the role of a project proponent in

existing projects such as the Urban Design Study for the Wan Chai North and North Point Harbourfront Areas in which HC had given tremendous advice and input in the process. In the future, HC would work closely with HO and spend more time and effort in explaining to the community why the proposed projects were worth implementing and how they were prepared to respond to the community's aspiration. She further clarified that works departments such as the CEDD and the Architectural Services Department could still be engaged as works agent of HC's projects in the future while HC would have a bigger say on project implementation details; and

- (e) the manpower for the proposed HO would be related to the decision of HC on the list of projects to be selected, as well as the management approach to be adopted. Having said that, it could be envisaged that it would include staff with the professional background such as quantity surveyor, building services surveyor and leisure services manager.

1.16 **Mr Paul ZIMMERMAN** had some further comments as follows

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- (a) there were some differences between the proposed sites under the HFA proposal and the current proposal. He suggested that there should be further discussion on the responsibility of the future HC and the Government should work with HC on drawing up the strategy for developing the entire waterfront and working out the development parameters of sites concerned;
- (b) the \$500 million funding did not reflect the expenses for enhancing the water edges, and expected that at least a similar level of funding as that required by LCSD and MD on waterfront site development should be available;
- (c) the two proposed consultancy studies were very important and should be done as soon as possible. He further enquired what ordinance the future HC or HO would base on to manage and maintain the proposed sites; and

- (d) relevant DCs should be closely engaged so as to develop the proposed sites properly.

- 1.17 **Mr Thomas CHAN** responded that the major considerations for selecting the proposed sites include the timing of such sites becoming available, whether the project cost could be covered by the dedicated funding and whether completion of the project could provide timely public enjoyment. He suggested taking the proposed list of projects to respective Task Forces for further comments on its formulation and prioritisation before reporting back to HC on a more holistic overview on the use of the \$500 million funding. He added that there were readily available checklists for each Task Force, and reassured Members that other harbourfront sites or projects which had a longer time frame of development would continue to be under the radar screen of respective Task Forces.
- 1.18 In conclusion, **the Chair** said that the new initiatives as proposed by the Government could present an opportunity. HC would certainly be willing to make contributions but the suggestion that HC should then act as a project proponent, and should assume an enhanced role and additional responsibility, should be more thoroughly discussed. Importantly, if the new model could not deliver the comprehensive solution that HC was looking for, the setting up of HFA should be brought back to the table for discussion. He invited the Government to prepare a list of harbourfront sites and projects with site availability and cost for Members' further discussion at the Task Force level, and suggested that a working group should be set up in the future to co-opt more Members to share the burden of HC's role as a project proponent.
- 1.19 There being on other business, the meeting ended at 5:40 pm.