

40th Meeting of Harbourfront Commission
held at 3:00 pm on 27 January 2022 at the Conference Room
15/F, North Point Government Offices, 333 Java Road, Hong Kong

Minutes of Meeting

Present

Mr Vincent NG	Chairman (also Chairman, Task Force on Kai Tak Harbourfront Development)
Mr Ivan HO*	Chairman, Task Force on Harbourfront Developments on Hong Kong Island
Mr LEUNG Kong-yui*	Chairman, Task Force on Water-land Interface and Harbourfront Activation (also representing The Chartered Institute of Logistics and Transport in Hong Kong)
Prof Becky LOO*	Chairlady, Task Force on Harbourfront Developments in Kowloon, Tsuen Wan and Kwai Tsing
Mrs Margaret BROOKE	Representing Business Environment Council Limited
Mr Benny CHAN*	Representing Hong Kong Institute of Urban Design
Mr Winston CHU*	Representing Society for Protection of the Harbour
Dr Rico WONG*	Representing The Conservancy Association
Mr Anthony CHEUNG*	Representing The Hong Kong Institute of Architects
Ms Paul CHAN*	Representing The Hong Kong Institute of Landscape Architects
Mr Edward LO*	Representing The Hong Kong Institute of Planners
Sr Francis LAM*	Representing The Hong Kong Institute of Surveyors
Ir Victor CHEUNG*	Representing The Hong Kong Institution of Engineers
Mr Jeff TUNG*	Representing The Real Estate Developers Association of Hong Kong
Mr Mac CHAN*	Individual Member
Ms Kelly CHAN*	Individual Member
Mr Karl KWOK*	Individual Member
Ir Janice LAI*	Individual Member
Ms Christina LEE*	Individual Member
Mr Alan LO*	Individual Member
Ms Angela SO*	Individual Member
Hon Tony TSE*	Individual Member

Official Members

Ms Bernadette LINN	Permanent Secretary for Development (Planning and Lands), Development Bureau (DEVB)
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Mr Adrian CHAN*	General Manager/Planning, Development & Port Security, Marine Department (MD)
Mr Victor CHAN*	Project Manager (South), Civil Engineering and Development Department (CEDD)
Mr Michael CHIU*	Chief Executive Officer (Planning) 1, Leisure and Cultural Services Department (LCSD)
Mr Patrick HO*	Assistant Commissioner/Urban, Transport Department (TD)
Mr Tom YIP*	Deputy Director of Planning/District, Planning Department (PlanD)
Miss Rosalind CHEUNG	Secretary

In Attendance

Mr LIU Chun-san	Under Secretary for Development, DEVB
Mr Vic YAU	Deputy Secretary (Planning and Lands)1, DEVB
Mr William LEUNG	Assistant Secretary (Harbour) 1, DEVB
Mr Steven LEE	Assistant Secretary (Harbour) 2, DEVB
Ms Jenny CHAN	Project Manager (Harbour), DEVB
Mr Peter MOK	Project Manager (Harbour) Special Duties, DEVB
Mr Carlos FUNG	Senior Engineer (Harbour) 1, DEVB
Mr NG Shing-kit	Senior Engineer (Harbour) 2, DEVB
Mr Rick TSANG	Senior Estate Surveyor (Harbour), DEVB
Mr KING Kwok-cheung*	Deputy Head of Energizing Kowloon East Office, DEVB

Absent with Apologies

Mr Michael WONG	Secretary for Development
Ms Anny TANG	Senior Manager (Tourism) 21, Tourism Commission (TC)
Dr Vivian WONG	Representing Friends of the Earth (HK) Charity Limited
Hon Frankie NGAN	Individual Member

Agenda Item 4

Mrs Margaret BROOKE	Member of Best Practice Committee, Harbour Business Forum (HBF)
Mr Ian BROWNLEE	Member of Best Practice Committee, HBF
Ms Heather YUEN	Member of Best Practice Committee, HBF

* Denotes attending online

Welcoming Message

The Chairman welcomed all to the meeting. He informed the meeting that –

- (a) Mr Adrian CHAN, General Manager/Planning, Development & Port Security of the Marine Department (MD), attended on behalf of Ms Carol YUEN, Director of Marine.; and
- (b) Mr Victor CHAN, Project Manager (South) of the Civil Engineering and Development Department (CEDD), attended on behalf of Mr Albert LEE, Director of Civil Engineering and Development (Atg);
- (c) Mr Michael CHIU, Chief Executive Officer (Planning) of the Leisure and Cultural Services Department (LCSD), attended on behalf of Mr Vincent LIU, Director of Leisure and Cultural Services;
- (d) Mr Patrick HO, Assistant Commissioner of the Transport Department (TD), attended online on behalf of Miss Rosanna LAW, Commissioner for Transport;
- (e) Mr Tom YIP, Deputy Director of Planning/ District of the Planning Department (PlanD), attended on behalf of Mr Ivan CHUNG, Director of Planning.

Item 1 Confirmation of Minutes of the 39th meeting

- 1.1 **The Chairman** said that the Secretariat had circulated the draft minutes of the 39th meeting to Members on 26 January 2022. There being no further proposed amendment, the minutes were confirmed at the meeting.

Item 2 Matters Arising

- 2.1 No matters arising were raised at the meeting.

Item 3 Review and Preview of Harbourfront Development

- 3.1 **The Chairman** informed Members that with the close of 2021, the Development Bureau (DEVB) would like to give Members a brief account of the latest harbourfront development by reviewing the work in 2021 and previewing the initiatives in 2022.
- 3.2 **Ms Bernadette LINN** said that the Harbourfront Commission (HC) had always been working hand in hand with the DEVB. In 2021, a total of 16 harbourfront venues had been opened for public enjoyment, exceeding the target of 15 venues as pledged in the 2021 Policy Address.
- 3.3 **Ms Bernadette LINN** was delighted that the total length of harbourfront promenades had been extended to about 25 km in 2021. With the opening of the first harbour steps at Victoria Harbour, the continuous waterfront promenade length in Hong Kong Island North had been extended from 5.5 km to 7.4 km (34.5%), allowing visitors to walk along the harbourfront area from Shek Tong Tsui all the way to Fortress Hill. In addition, construction work had commenced for the Boardwalk underneath the Island Eastern Corridor, which was expected to be completed in full by 2025. Upon completion, it would further extend the longest waterfront promenade in the north of Hong Kong Island to 12 km.
- 3.4 **Ms Bernadette LINN** said that the harbourfront on both sides of Victoria Harbour had become tourist hot spot in 2021. She would like to express special thanks to the Chairman and the Chairmen of the Task Forces for dedicating valuable time and advice on harbourfront development and management, as well as paying frequent visits to the harbourfront, attending various activities and media interviews to promote the harbourfront softly from a professional perspective. In 2022, the DEVB looked forward to continuing to work with the Chairman and Members to provide new experiences for the public and actively engage the community in building a vibrant

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harbourfront.

- 3.5 **Ms Bernadette LINN** informed the meeting that in the 2021 Policy Address, the Chief Executive proposed that Directors of Bureaux should be given more commissioner posts to promote their individual work, with particular reference to the creation of the post of Commissioner for Harbourfront. It showed that the Chief Executive and the Government attached great importance to the vision of connecting the harbourfront and recognised that a quality harbourfront was an important part of making Hong Kong a liveable city.
- 3.6 **Ms Bernadette LINN** announced that the post of Principal Assistant Secretary for Development (Harbour), the Secretary to this Committee, would now be designated as “Commissioner for Harbourfront” to underscore the Government's commitment to promoting the beautification of the Victoria Harbour. She added that the post holder would continue to carry out the mission of harbourfront enhancement with enthusiasm and guidance with the support from the HC.

Briefing by the Development Bureau

- 3.7 **Miss Rosalind CHEUNG** gave a presentation to Members with the aid of a PowerPoint.

General Comments

- 3.8 **The Chairman, Mr Ivan HO, Mr LEUNG Kong-yui, Mr Anthony CHEUNG, Ir Victor CHEUNG, Mr Jeff TUNG, Ms Kelly CHAN, Mr Alan LO, Mr Winston CHU, Sr Francis LAM** thanked for the concerted effort of DEVB, relevant departments and Members in advocating harbourfront development on both sides of the Victoria Harbour despite the challenges arising from the pandemic.
- 3.9 Appreciating the diversity of the themed installations along the promenades, **Mr Ivan HO** and **Mr LEUNG Kong-yui** would like to thank the relevant departments including the Leisure

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and Cultural Services Department, Civil Engineering and Development Department and Highways Department, etc., for delivering the projects in a timely manner and DEVB for bringing innovative ideas to life which had gained overwhelming public support.

- 3.10 **Mr Winston CHU** and **Mr LEUNG Kong-yui** were delighted to see the great variety of installations along the promenades, particularly the children play equipment in the Water Sports and Recreation Precinct where kids and adults could enjoy the sea view while playing freely.

Experimentation

- 3.11 **Mr Ivan HO** said that both complaints and compliments had been received from the public on various sites such as the Belcher Bay Promenade where an experimental harbourfront shared space approach was adopted. He supported continuing such experiment and considered it a precious trial and error process.
- 3.12 **Mr LEUNG Kong-yui** said that the spirit of experimentation, empowerment and engagement (“3Es”) were the key factors for recent success at the Belcher Bay Promenade and the East Coast Park Precinct (Phase 1). He hoped that the HC could keep up with such remarkable achievement.
- 3.13 **Miss Rosalind CHEUNG** agreed that experimentation was a challenging yet rewarding process. Taking the first harbour steps at the Wan Chai harbourfront as an example, despite that compliments had been received on the innovative design of the site, some members of the public were a bit concerned about the possible risk that might be brought about by the absence of railings since its opening in December 2021. In response, HC Members and DEVB colleagues had been visiting the site from time to time to observe the activities there with a view to assessing whether additional facilities should be installed to provide a safer and better experience to the visitors. Such efforts would continue.

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25th Anniversary of the Establishment of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (25A)

- 3.14 To allow celebrations to be enjoyed by all members of public, **Mr LEUNG Kong-yui** suggested putting up 25A celebratory installations along the various sites of the harbourfront.
- 3.15 In response, **Miss Rosalind CHEUNG** informed Members that a series of celebratory events including pop-up installations, publicity events and place-making activities would be organised at the promenades along the Victoria Harbour.

Promotional Effort

- 3.16 **Ms Kelly CHAN** opined that Members should also play a part to promote the excellent projects along the harbourfront. She further suggested the DEVB to disseminate harbourfront news and latest project progress to Members so that they could share with their families and friends promptly and hence help members of the public better understand HC's vision.
- 3.17 **Mr Winston CHU** agreed and suggested that the important achievement and improvement of the harbourfront made by DEVB and HC should be made known to the Legislative Council (LegCo) Members so that they could help share HC's great work with the public.
- 3.18 **Miss Rosalind CHEUNG** agreed that it was important to promote the messages and vision of the HC to professional bodies. She added that the HC and DEVB would reinforce the work on publicity and public education. Recently, the HC had created a website introducing the concept of "Harbourfront Shared Space" which could help promote the work of the HC.

Boosting Hong Kong's International Image

- 3.19 **Mr Alan LO** pointed out that the HC could be more ambitious by working with world-class creative talents and cultural

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organisations, such as M+ Museum and Tai Kwun, to diversify the themes of art installations along the harbourfront and boost Hong Kong's image as an art and cultural hub in Asia or even in the world.

- 3.20 **Miss Rosalind CHEUNG** explained that the collaboration with local artists aimed at reinforcing the ideas that the Victoria Harbour belonged to Hong Kong people. The HC and DEVB also welcomed collaboration opportunities with overseas artists. A recent example would be the installations at the Central Harbourfront Event Space, which was arranged by the Hong Kong Design Centre through collaboration with international artists.

Review of the Protection of Harbour Ordinance

- 3.21 **Mr Winston CHU** opined that over the years, the Protection of Harbour Ordinance (PHO) had provided a balance between development and preservation of harbour, which is a public asset, for public enjoyment. He considered that the existing management system of the harbourfront had been working well and that the implementation of PHO had contributed to the extensive improvements to the harbourfront over the decade.
- 3.22 Noting that there were views to amend the PHO, **Mr Winston CHU** stressed that the Society for Protection of Harbour (SPH) supported the minor amendments or small-scale reclamation that could facilitate the works projects. In contrast, the SPH strongly opposed to abolish and amend the PHO for reclamation purposes which would allow detrimental works project to be carried out, resulting in permanent destruction of the harbour.
- 3.23 **The Chairman** said that the PHO had long been playing an important role and had provided rooms and opportunities for implementation of harbourfront enhancement initiatives. The HC was committed to protecting and preserving the harbour and enhancing it for public enjoyment. He agreed that

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without the PHO, Hong Kong would never have a permanent shoreline for planning and development.

- 3.24 **Ms Bernadette LINN** noted the concern of the SPH and said that the Government would not abolish the PHO but had no objection to reviewing this ordinance which had been implemented for more than two decades. She further assured that the purpose of any amendments and proposed relaxation of restrictions to the PHO would aim at improving the accessibility and connectivity of the harbourfront and increasing public space, but not for reclamation to provide land for sale or housing development. She also supplemented that the proposed amendment bill of the PHO would not be tabled for the LegCo's discussion within the current legislative year.

Site 3 of the New Central Harbourfront

- 3.25 Upon enquiry, **Miss Rosalind CHEUNG** responded that before commencing construction, the future developer of Site 3 was required to submit a Master Layout Plan (MLP) to the Town Planning Board (TPB) for approval in which the public, including the HC, would be consulted. The MLP had to be premised on the design submitted by the successful tender and once the MLP was approved by the TPB, the developer would be abide by it.

Way Forward

- 3.26 **The Chairman** explained that the HC had been striving to open harbourfront sites as early as possible for public enjoyment. In this connection, upon handing over of the site from works departments, the DEVB would promptly conduct minor works to provide basic ancillary facilities. To streamline and expedite the opening of sites, enhancement and beautification works such as street painting were conducted after the opening of site so that the public could experience how the site was decorated along the way.

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- 3.27 **The Chairman** pointed out that in 2021, the HC had been focusing on implementation of new management approach. The new initiatives announced in the 2021 Policy Address, including the adoption of fence-free stepped-down water edge design (i.e. the Harbour Steps), had been well implemented at the newly opened harbourfront shared space at Wan Chai.
- 3.28 Looking ahead, **the Chairman** said that 2022 would be a year of consolidation of what the HC had learnt so far and would continue to strive for improvement and breakthrough. It would all count on the continuous support from Members and stakeholders.

Item 4 Making Partnerships Work - Public Private Community Partnership Framework by Harbour Business Forum (Paper No. HC/01/2022)

- 4.1 **The Chairman** informed that the Harbour Business Forum (HBF) had made a submission to share with Members their key findings and recommendations of their recent paper on driving forward public-private-community projects in Hong Kong.

Briefing by Harbour Business Forum

- 4.2 **Mr Ian BROWNLEE** and **Mrs Margaret BROOKE** gave a presentation to Members with the aid of a PowerPoint.

Discussion

Profit-making Approach

- 4.3 **Mr Benny CHAN** said that the proposal would bring substantial changes in the present management mode of harbourfront. He opined in general that charitable or non-profit making organisations might not be able to afford huge expenses to participate in large-scale activities. While he agreed that the Government should allow flexibility for operators at harbourfront venues to generate revenue, it should

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also be mindful that the pricing should be affordable to the general public, in particular the grass-roots families.

- 4.4 **Mr Ivan HO, Mr Anthony CHEUNG and Mr Jeff TUNG** said that the introduction of business elements could encourage the use of harbourfront space for various purposes, thereby bringing a more vibrant and diversified harbourfront.
- 4.5 **Mr Ivan HO** pointed out that for a long time, some developers had been insisting that commercial elements were not entirely suitable for the harbourfront. He hoped that the HBF could liaise more frequently with developers and the business sector to let them better understand HC's vision of making the harbourfront vibrant.
- 4.6 **Mr LEUNG Kong-yui** said that he did not object the introduction of commercial elements subject to the suitability of the sites and the public interest. At this stage, he considered it more important to offer more opportunities for Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) to organise events and activities for the public by making use of the existing public space.
- 4.7 **Ms Bernadette LINN** said that it might be worth considering to allow the operators to make profit to maintain business viability. She added that the HC could advocate the idea of profit-making to make it more acceptable to the public.

Granting of Land to Operators

- 4.8 **Sr Francis LAM** considered the current mechanism of which the government identified land followed by granting it to organisations for working on the design, commencing construction of the space an effective one in making the sites on both sides of the Victoria Harbour available for development.
- 4.9 Regarding the ownership of land, **Ms Bernadette LINN** stressed that the harbourfront was an important public asset and thus the Government was required to retain control over

the use and ownership of the land. Also, stipulations and clauses must be put in place to regulate the use of land by private developers.

- 4.10 **Ms Bernadette LINN** added that currently, there were different arrangements of handing over vacant sites to non-government operators, such as by way of Short Term Tenancy (STT), management agreements or simply collaboration between Government Departments and NGOs to launch various activities.

Management and Operation Mode

- 4.11 **Mr Ivan HO** opposed applying a single management and operation model for all the harbourfront sites given their unique local features. Instead, a site-specific management approach was more appropriate to cater for public's needs and make the site vibrant and energetic.
- 4.12 **Mr Alan LO** concurred and opined that it was premature to draw a conclusion on the most appropriate model to manage the harbourfront at the moment. He suggested drawing reference to local example of Tai Kun and PMQ, which was granted to and operated by non-profit organisation. He added that the High Line in New York City, which was maintained and operated through public-private-partnerships, was worth referencing.
- 4.13 **Mr Jeff TUNG** echoed and said that there were plenty of overseas examples which adopted different management modes. He supported having different management modes so that there could be more room for innovation.
- 4.14 **The Chairman** added that there was no single model meant to be perfect. Yet, the HC was now at an exploratory stage with a view to identifying ways for improvement in recent years.

Setting up of a new Management Agency

- 4.15 **Mr Ivan HO** and **Mr Alan LO** pointed out that the community had been engaged in discussions of whether a statutory Harbourfront Authority (HA) should be established back in 2013 and 2014. The proposal put forward by the HBF seemed to be repeating the points and issues of setting up the HA which had been discussed in early years.
- 4.16 **Mr Jeff TUNG** did not look forward to the setting up of another management authority which would lead to redundancy in the harbourfront development plans. Instead, he suggested reinforcing the function of the HC as and when necessary.
- 4.17 **The Chairman** explained that the HC had expanded in terms of functionality over the years. The HC used to focus on planning and design of the sites in the past and had been advancing to taking forward more initiatives such as implementation, operation, management and promotion of the harbourfront in recent years.

Way Forward

- 4.18 **Ms Bernadette LINN** held a different view towards the term 'fragmentation' used in the discussion paper to describe the existing harbourfront design and experience. She explained that on a positive side, it could be interpreted as "variety".
- 4.19 **Mr Ian BROWNLEE** agreed to the suggestion and pointed out that the framework proposed by HBF in the discussion paper aimed at ensuring that a variety of elements and activities could be provided at the harbourfront.
- 4.20 **Ms Bernadette LINN** added that the DEVB and HC had been experimenting and exploring suitable designs and management modes for the harbourfront in recent years, including the new concept of "Harbourfront Shared Space". The HC and DEVB could afford to experiment because there

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were many harbourfront venues for conducting different experiments. She said that it was best not to disturb and change the overall framework at this exploratory stage.

- 4.21 **The Chairman** agreed with **Ms Bernadette LINN** and thanked the HBF for giving a detailed report which involved thorough research and collection of views. He said that the HC and DEVB would take HBF's comment and suggestion into account. He assured that the discussion, which was a continuous process of brainstorming to strive for a better harbourfront for public enjoyment, would certainly continue.

Item 5 Progress Reports from Task Forces

(Paper No. HC/02/2022) (Paper No. HC/03/2022)

(Paper No. HC/04/2022) (Paper No. HC/05/2022)

- 5.1 **The Chairman** informed the meeting that four progress reports had been circulated to Members for perusal prior to the meeting. Members noted and had nothing to raise.

Item 6 Any Other Business

- 6.1 Members raised no further comment on the matter. There being no other business, the meeting ended at 5:40pm.

Secretariat
Harbourfront Commission
June 2022