

Development Bureau
and
The Harbour Front Commission
c/o 17/F, West Wing,
West Wing Government Offices
2 Tim Mei Avenue
Tamar
Hong Kong

27th November 2013

Dear Sirs,

Re: Proposed establishment of a Harbour Front Authority

1. With reference to the draft Common Public Aspirations for the Harbour Front at page 16 of the Booklet, this is a reasonable beginning.
2. However, the Advocacy element needs to be made specific with express priority or emphasis on championing the protection of the Harbour and implementing the Protection of the Harbour Ordinance.
3. There needs to be a specific objective reflecting the fact that the Harbour is a natural asset, therefore requiring the implementation of international principles for conservation of natural and cultural Heritage in the course of its administration and protection.
4. In relation to the harbour there should be connectivity to protect the last remaining hills and trees, coastlines, beaches and islands.
5. The emphasis should be on preserving the harbour as a living marine habitat. The sea and its uses, water quality, conservation of nature are all vital towards keeping our harbour alive. This fits with the Ecosystem Approach in conservation where this is best achieved by examining and protecting in a holistic manner, looking at whole landscapes, and in this case, sea scapes.
6. Such matters need to be part of the statutory objectives and duties of the Harbour Front Authority. There must be specific objectives and duties to implement the Protection of the Harbour Ordinance and to enhance the harbour as a natural centre of our history and future.
7. Participation is the key concept, not just consultation and appointment. The proposed Governance and Management Functions not only requires broad based representation but requires processes so that the Authority remains focused on its duties and objectives. This includes a system to have actual participation through meetings and membership so that the Authority retains in contact with the grassroots origins and independent thinking of the original

Harbour Front Commission. In such a way the Harbour has many champions, at different levels.

8. As regards the Advisory and Advocacy Functions, it is only appropriate to disband the Harbour Front Commission if the new authority does actively take on the advisory and advocacy roles and this is enshrined in its objectives and duties. It is easy for such Government appointed authorities, after a few years, to slip into establishment-type thinking and be complacent and fail to carry out their original objectives. This is especially a risk if pro-establishment persons are appointed.
9. I agree there is a perceived conflict of interest between the future authorities role in developing sites and its advocacy functions. This is why it is necessary to have a process whereby regular meetings with the public take place so that the authority itself has participation from the people.
10. As regards the Executive Function, I agree that an independent executive arm will be more pro-active and provide room for more public involvement.
11. With my best wishes, for your continued work.

Yours sincerely,

Ruy Barretto S.C.

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