

**Sixth Meeting of the Harbour-front Enhancement Committee
held at 2:30 pm on 3 March 2005
at 3/F, 3 Edinburgh Place, Central, Hong Kong**

Minutes of Meeting

Present

Professor Lee Chack-fan	Chairman
Mr Paul Zimmerman	Representing Business Environment Council
Mr Leung Kong-yui	Representing Chartered Institute of Logistics and Transport in Hong Kong
Dr Ng Mee-kam	Representing Citizen Envisioning@Harbour
Dr Kwok Ngai-kuen, Alvin	Representing Conservancy Association
Mr Vincent Ng	Representing Hong Kong Institute of Architects
Mr Kim O Chan	Representing Hong Kong Institute of Planners
Mr Chan Kwok-fai, Bernard	Representing Hong Kong Institute of Surveyors
Ir Dr Greg Wong Chak-yan	Representing Hong Kong Institution of Engineers
Mr Louis H B Loong	Representing Real Estate Developers Association of Hong Kong
Mr Hardy Lok	Representing Society for Protection of the Harbour Limited
Mr Charles Nicholas Brooke	
Dr Chan Wai-kwan	
Mr Chan Yiu-fai, Steve	
Professor Lam Kin-che	
Mr Lau Hing-tat, Patrick	
Ms Lee Wai-king, Starry	
Mr Wu Man-keung, John	
Mrs Rita Lau	Permanent Secretary for Housing, Planning and Lands (Planning and Lands)
Mr Thomas Chow	Deputy Secretary (Transport) ¹ for the Environment, Transport and Works
Mr Bosco Fung	Director of Planning
Mr Tsao Tak-kiang	Director of Civil Engineering and Development
Mr Lau Ka-keung	Deputy Commissioner for Transport/Planning and Technical Services
Mr Patrick Li	Assistant Director of Home Affairs
Miss Christine Chow	Secretary

In Attendance

Mr Thomas Tso	Deputy Secretary (Planning and Lands) ¹ ,
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Mr L T Ma	Housing, Planning and Lands Bureau (HPLB) Project Manager/Hong Kong Island and Islands, Civil Engineering and Development Department (CEDD)
Mr Raymond Lee	District Planning Officer/Kowloon, Planning Department (PlanD)
Mr Raymond Wong	Chief Town Planner/Sub-Regional Planning , PlanD

For item 4

Mr Albert Cheng	Assistant Director (Administration), CEDD
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Absent with Apologies

Mrs Mei Ng	Representing Friends of the Earth
Mr Leslie H C Chen	Representing Hong Kong Institute of Landscape Architects
Mrs Aliana Ho	Representing Hong Kong Tourism Board
Mr Chan Tak-chor	
Professor Jim Chi-yung	
Mr Kwok Chun-wah, Jimmy	

Action

Item 1 Confirmation of Minutes of the fifth Meeting

1.1 Members noted that **the HEC Secretary, Miss Christine Chow** had circulated the revised draft minutes of the fifth HEC meeting incorporating comments received. There being no further comments, the revised draft minutes were confirmed.

1.2 **Mr Paul Zimmerman** asked why some discussion items did not have a proper marker to indicate the follow-up parties and actions required. He also asked why the checklist on follow-up actions to items discussed at the HEC meetings was included as an A.O.B. item rather than under matters arising. In response, **Miss Christine Chow** said that she had already explained to Mr Zimmerman but would like to take the opportunity to make further clarifications. Not every discussion item had a “follow-up” action or party as some items were meant for the meeting to note only. Moreover, many items were already being followed up as agreed in previous discussions. As regards the checklist, as that was the first time the idea was

discussed, the Chairman and the three Sub-committee chairmen agreed to put it under A.O.B. for discussion. When the checklist was compiled, it could be circulated to Members for reference.

Item 2 Progress reports from the three Sub-committees (Paper Nos. 8 – 10/2005)

A. Sub-committee on South East Kowloon Development (SEKD) Review (Paper No. 8/2005)

2.1 **The Chairman, Prof CF Lee**, noted that the chairman of the Sub-committee on SEKD Review intended to seek HEC's endorsement on the Sub-committee's proposal to hold a public session in the morning of 19 March 2005 to discuss the development vision, planning principles and the development concepts/proposals received in stage 1 public participation, the development components proposed and the development themes for the coming stages of work. Upon invitation by the Chairman, **Dr Chan Wai-kwan** presented the progress report. Members noted that the forum was initiated by the HEC Sub-committee on SEKD Review to further engage the public in the so-called "stage 1.5" process before embarking on the work under stage 2 in the conventional sense. The forum was aimed to share with the public the comments/proposals collected during the stage 1 public participation and to seek input from the community in the preparation of outline concept plans for the stage 2 public participation to be undertaken in May/June 2005.

2.2 **Mr Charles Nicholas Brooke** said that the proposed forum was an excellent example of public engagement and that the HEC should make full use of this opportunity to raise its public profile.

2.3 **Mr Paul Zimmerman** asked how this could fit in with the overall plan for the Harbour. He enquired whether the Government offices would move to Kai Tak and the location of the future cruise terminal. In response, **Dr Chan Wai-kwan** said that the purpose of the forum was to provide the public further opportunities to express their wishes for various development components in Kai Tak. He agreed that the planning for Kai Tak should take into account issues of a much wider context than the study area itself. **Dr Ng Mee-kam** remarked that the Sub-committee should consider how to

Sub-committee

disseminate the views collected at the forthcoming forum so that the general public could also have access to the discussion results.

Dr. Chan Wai-kwan remarked that a working session amongst the members of the Sub-committee would be held on 5 March to discuss in more details the arrangements for the proposed forum.

B. Sub-committee on Harbour Plan Review (Paper No. 9/2005)

2.4 Upon invitation by the Chairman, **Mr Vincent Ng** presented the progress report. Members noted that the Sub-committee was arranging a special meeting on 9 March open to all HEC members to share the findings of the Planning Department on planning studies relating to marine uses and facilities around the Harbour. He said that in view of the increasing workload of the Sub-committee which was in effect handling nearly all harbour-related issues outside SEKD and WDII, he would review the work of the Sub-committee in consultation with members and consider whether other special task groups should be set up to share the work. He envisaged that, for example, matters on the institutional mechanism might preferably be taken up by a new task group as necessary. **Mr Charles Nicholas Brooke** also said that it might be worth considering whether a small study group needed to be set up to help conduct more in-depth study on harbour-related subjects. On West Kowloon, members noted that works on a temporary waterfront promenade would commence shortly. In response to Messrs Ng and Brooke's concern, **Mr Paul Zimmerman** said that the HEC needed a clear strategy and a transparent plan for the harbour enhancement works in discharging its duties more efficiently. On that he considered it useful to set up a Harbour-front Enhancement Task Force with a clear definition of the harbour-front and the work to be done, so that individual development projects such as the KCRC's redevelopment proposal for Hung Hom freight yard and the proposed Route 4 project, which had implications on harbour-front enhancement, could be closely monitored. On those, **Mr Thomas Chow** cautioned that the merger of KCRC with MTRCL was being discussed among the parties concerned in strict confidence. He did not know from where Mr Zimmerman got the information. Be it accurate or not, it would be improper for Mr Zimmerman to talk about it at HEC. As regards the Route 4 project, LegCo's Panel on Transport passed a motion last May urging the

Government to proceed with it as soon as possible. As the reclamation project off Green Island had been cancelled, two options for building Route 4 had been worked out. However, as the options had negative impacts on the harbour front, either visually or reclamation would be required, he did point out to the Panel on 25 February that, unless there were strong justifications, the chance of pursuing either of the two options would be zero. Therefore, the options that Mr Zimmerman mentioned were not proposals of the Government as such.

2.5 In response to Mr Zimmerman's suggestion, **Mr Thomas Tso** said that while some HEC members liked to have an overall plan for the whole Harbour, he also noticed that HEC had worked out priority follow-up items. As all districts around the Harbour were covered by respective Outline Zoning Plans which were prepared and gazetted after thorough consultation, and that different planning studies were also in progress at different stages, it was not practicable to withhold processing individual developments items until the so-called overall Harbour Plan was worked out. In this connection, **Dr Ng Mee-kam** supported that the constraints and opportunities for development around the harbour-fronts should be systematically set out. She also supported the suggestion to work out a "macro" development perspective instead of focusing on individual projects. On this, **the Chairman** noted that the Planning Department had kept a database of information in these aspects and it was ready to share such information with the Sub-committee.

2.6 On the consultation with the Town Planning Board (TPB) on the draft harbour planning principles, **Mr Paul Zimmerman** noted that the submission to the TPB had been deferred. In response, **Mrs Rita Lau** said that the TPB secretariat would re-arrange another meeting as soon as possible.

2.7 **Ms Starry Lee** enquired about the progress of the improvement works along the Hung Hom waterfront adjacent to the piers. In response, **Mr Raymond Wong** explained that the Hung Hom waterfront was originally proposed as one of the "quick-win" items but as a result of the discussion of the Sub-committee on Harbour Plan Review in August 2004, priority was accorded to other two projects in the list of the potential enhancement areas. However, as the developer of the adjacent hotels was keen to pursue with some enhancement works at the

Hung Hom waterfront, discussion between relevant Government departments and the developer concerning the enhancement works had continued. **Mr Raymond Wong** added that when more details of the proposed enhancement works were available, the HEC would be briefed in due course. Upon request of Ms Lee, the Sub-committee secretariat would include this item in the follow-up list.

**Sub-committee
on Harbour
Plan Review**

C. Sub-committee on Wan Chai Development Phase II (WDII) Review (Paper No. 10/2005)

2.8 Upon invitation by the Chairman, **Mr Leung Kong-yui** presented the progress report. Members noted that the Sub-committee would strengthen the internal communication and expedite its work on the new information kit on the “Harbour-front Enhancement Review (HER) – Wan Chai and Adjoining Areas” project. When the kit was ready, the Sub-committee would consult the Legislative Council (LegCo) and the District Councils (DC) as appropriate.

**Sub-committee
on WDII
Review**

2.9 **Mr Thomas Tso** said that the Government would fully cooperate with the Sub-committee to facilitate the public engagement process. On the Central-Wanchai Bypass (CWB), he explained that the extent of reclamation, if any, would depend on the alignment, layout and level of the CWB. In all events, any reclamation that had to be carried out must fully comply with the PHO and the “overriding public need test” stipulated by the CFA, and the extent of reclamation would be kept to the minimum. For any such reclaimed land, it would be put to public use and no land would be reclaimed for the purpose of land sale. **Mr Thomas Chow** said that there was compelling and present need to build the Trunk Road comprising CWB and the Island Eastern Corridor Link to tackle the traffic congestion problem along the northern shore of the Hong Kong Island. It would, therefore, be important to explain the transport case for the Trunk Road at the earlier part of the new public engagement kit to set the scene. Suitable coverage should be allowed for that, particularly to explain clearly to the public that the Government had examined various traffic management measures and concluded that, even with all those practicable measures in place to relieve traffic congestion and maximize the capacity of existing roads and junctions along the Connaught Road Central/Harcourt Road/Gloucester Road Corridor, the Trunk

Road would still be required. The kit should set out what the Government had done, what more could be done and what the Government would do in terms of traffic management measures, and explain why the Trunk Road would be required. We should also explain the scope of the section of the Trunk Road in WD II including the traffic impact with and without connections in Wan Chai and Causeway Bay.

2.10 **Mr Paul Zimmerman** said it seemed that the focus of discussion was very much on the road and transport needs while the public should be given an opportunity to aspire for harbour-front enhancements. On this, he suggested a proactive approach to tackle the transport issues. For example, TD/ETWB should examine means for “weaving” of lanes inside the Tunnel. Moreover, EPD/ETWB should adopt an open mind on the need to retain the existing infrastructures such as the sewage treatment plant along the harbour-front.

TD/ETWB,
Sub-committee
on WDII
Review

2.11 **Mr Leung Kong-yui** agreed that in setting out the framework for the new kit, the Sub-committee would focus not only on the road but also on other sustainability indicators such as improving the accessibility and vibrancy of the Harbour. **Mrs Rita Lau** supplemented that the WDII project was aimed to forge the “missing link” in the transport network for the northern shore of Hong Kong Island. With the efforts of the Sub-committee members, she looked forward to working out a “win-win” option which could satisfy the transport, economic, social and environmental needs of the community and to attain the goal of bringing the people to the Harbour.

2.12 **Mr Paul Zimmerman** further expressed his wish that while recognizing the constraints we face in the development of Hong Kong, we should work towards the ultimate goal of no more reclamation around the Harbour. For example, instead of the Island Eastern Corridor Link, we should consider other means of solving the transport problem. **Mrs Rita Lau** said that she respected the wisdom of the community in the consensus-building process and she looked forward to safeguarding the principle of sustainability in the public engagement process. **Mr Charles Nicholas Brooke** said that the role of collaborators in fostering the community consensus would be very important. Towards this end, the Sub-committee would have to ensure that the collaborators work towards the

same public motive and goal.

Item 3 Matters arising

A. Central and Western DC's request

3.1 **The Chairman** said that he noted that many matters arising from discussion of the last meeting were being properly followed up by the respective Sub-committees. To save time, he would not go into details of report. On the request from the Central and Western DC for the HEC to vote against the proposed location of the heliport at Sheung Wan. He invited Mr Thomas Tso to update the meeting on the latest development of the heliport issue.

3.2 Reporting on behalf of EDLB **Mr Thomas Tso** said that at the LegCo Joint Panel meeting held on 28 February 2005, a motion was passed urging the Government to expedite the provision of a permanent commercial heliport and associated facilities in the central business district (CBD) of the Hong Kong Island, and, under the principle of no unlawful reclamation, allow the heliport at the Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Centre (HKCEC) to accommodate both commercial uses by helicopter operators and government uses.

3.3 **Dr Chan Wai-kwan** asked whether and when the Government would formulate a clear policy on the location of the commercial heliport. **Dr Alvin Kwok** also asked why the Government had not considered other types of helicopter other than single-engine ones. He would like EDLB to provide the answer in this aspect to the HEC. **Mr Vincent Ng** reiterated that the HEC had a duty to look at the whole Harbour and he agreed that Dr Kwok had posed a very valid question on why twin-engine helicopters could not be used, given the limited land around the harbour-front.

EDLB

3.4 **Mr Paul Zimmerman** said that an open mind should be adopted regarding different types of helicopters. The crux of the issue was that the number of permanent sites should be minimized, the integration and share of use should be optimized, the noise impact should be minimized and that the need for new infrastructure facilities to support the need should be minimized.

3.5 **Mr Leung Kong-yui** said that if necessary, this heliport idea and proposed location at the HKCEC could be further discussed in the course of public engagement under the HER project.

3.6 **Mr Steve Chan** said that the heliport proposal was discussed at Wanchai DC. He hoped EDLB could explore alternative ideas such as the “zeppelin”. Other than restricting the choice of site at the CBD, other locations should also be explored as appropriate.

B. Stock-taking on the known existing and planned developments around the harbour-fronts

3.7 On the sharing of information on the known existing and planned developments around the harbour-fronts, **Mr Steve Chan** asked whether there was a need to set up a “harbour protection zone” so that better protection of the harbour-front could be attained. In response, **Mr Bosco Fung** said that the database on such developments was already in place and had been presented to the Sub-committee on Harbour Plan Review for information. **Mrs Rita Lau** supplemented that the Government was the gate-keeper in safeguarding the developments around the harbour-front and that all relevant bureaux and departments would be ready to brief HEC first-hand on planned developments around the harbour-front at appropriate time. As such, she did not see the need for setting up yet another so-called harbour protection zone to achieve the same function. **Mr Steve Chan** appreciated that existing mechanisms could perform the similar functions.

3.8 **Mr Paul Zimmerman** noted that the Secretary for Housing, Planning and Lands had, in his letter to him, agreed that there was a need for a harbour-front enhancement strategy and that the zoning as set out in the current zoning can be reviewed when necessary. He reiterated the significance of the 4 “Rs” in harbour-related work, i.e. re-think, re-zone, re-provision and re-engineer as appropriate. He reiterated his wish for the Government to work out an integrated harbour plan as it would help to create some new 50,000 jobs generated from an integrated development.

C. Communication with tertiary institutions

3.9 On fostering communication with the local tertiary institutions, **The Chairman** was pleased to note that the secretariat had reached out to the tertiary institutions and extend invitations to them to attend the HEC meetings and briefings as appropriate.

Item 4 Greening Master Plan (Paper No. 11/2005)

4.1 Upon the invitation of the Chairman, **Mr Albert Cheng** from the CEDD presented the paper on Greening Master Plan. **Mr TK Tsao** also shared with Members the experience of greening in Singapore.

4.2 **Prof Lam Kin-che** said that guidelines on tree protection should be mapped out to provide guidance on the types of trees that should be reserved and the compensation for the felling of certain types of valuable trees. To sustain and maintain the greenery in Hong Kong, the plans for greening should be worked out at the early stage of urban renewal and urban planning. Moreover, the greening of slopes should also be carefully worked out. He considered it important that the developers should take a more proactive role in planting more new trees as part of their developments.

4.3 **Mr Charles Nicholas Brooke** said that a comprehensive approach should be adopted to integrate greening with the pedestrian schemes and the layout of the streetscape. **Dr Alvin Kwok** said that he noted that the Greening Master Plan in Central District would interface with the scope of work on the improvement of Central Ferry Piers. He urged the two committees to have more liaison in order to share out findings and optimize resources.

4.4 **Mr Patrick Lau** agreed that to achieve a more effective greening policy it might be advisable if one department could work as the one-point contact and co-ordinate efforts from other departments. Towards this end, CEDD/ETWB should work out the consolidated technical guidelines. Mr Paul Zimmerman and Mr Vincent Ng supported this idea. **Mr Vincent Ng** added that as different departments were championing development schemes under different projects, an integrated development plan and an overall responsible agent should be identified. On this,

Dr Ng Mee-kam said that in Taiwan and France, tree adoption schemes were implemented to encourage a coordinated effort in greening. **Dr Greg Wong** said much reclaimed land under the control of CEDD was left idle due to community's disagreement on land use e.g. Kai Tak and West Kowloon. First, he proposed that areas unlikely to have roads or similar developments should be planted with trees. Even if eventually there were roads to be built, the trees could be cut or relocated. This would provide the city with many mature trees by the time residential buildings and offices were built. It would also render the reclaimed areas less barren and dusty while waiting for development scheme consensus. Secondly he proposed that the perimeter of the temporary bus terminus at the Central Ferry Pier be planted with trees. This would not prohibit future developments. On CEDD's proposal of using concrete planters to grow shrubs, he said that this was not "greening" the Central water front because the planters would be removed once the bus terminus was moved. **Mr Kim O Chan** requested CEDD to provide more detailed drawings on the Greening Master Plan.

4.5 **Mr Paul Zimmerman** said that he seconded Dr Greg Wong's proposal. He also raised concern over the temporary use of land such as that in Kai Tak which was presently filled with construction materials. He urged the Government to consider setting up a Harbour-front Enhancement Task Force with a plan for the temporary use of the harbour-front areas. **Mr Bosco Fung** responded that co-ordination among government departments was already taking place both at the policy and the district level through the existing mechanisms. The Greening Master Plan Committee, for example, was a good demonstration of Government's initiative to pull together the resources and expertise of different relevant departments towards a common goal. **Mrs Rita Lau** supplemented that she agreed with Dr Ng Mee-kam that an overall planning and development strategy should be worked out, not only for the harbour-front but the different districts with respect to the allocation of resources and other support measures.

4.6 **Dr Greg Wong** reiterated the need for Government to seriously consider the planting of trees in existing vacant land along the water front and to impose conditions of tree planting on future water front land to be leased for temporary use. The planting of trees should be carried out soonest to avoid this land

conspicuous to overseas visitors from remaining dusty and barren. His suggestion was supported by Mr Paul Zimmerman and Dr Chan Wai-kwan. **Dr Chan Wai-kwan** said that while there was a black spot task force to combat illegal change of land use in the New Territories, the harbour-front need to be given similar attention to improve greening.

4.7 **Mr TK Tsao** said that he noted Members' comments and requests and would like to remind Members that the greening plans for unallocated land need to be carefully timed and worked out in order to tie in with the long-term developments of the sites. **Mr Bernard Chan** said that he supported the idea of strengthening the guidelines on greening. He further suggested Lands D to add a clause for greening and landscaping in the condition of land use whenever feasible when allocating land for development irrespective of whether the allocation is temporary or permanent. Relevant departments should work together on the greening efforts in the course of land allocation. **Mrs Rita Lau** agreed to follow up with Lands D.

Lands D

(Post meeting note: Lands D would consider imposing appropriate tree preservation and protection clauses in consultation with LCSD and AFCD if trees of particular value are identified. Where appropriate, a tree protection zone will be stipulated in the conditions for preservation and growth for the registered tree only.)

Item 5 Fostering Genuine Partnership from Within (Paper No. 12/2005)

5.1 Upon the invitation of the Chairman, **Dr Alvin Kwok** presented the joint paper with Dr Ng Mee-kam on their ideas on "governance beyond government" with a view to fostering the partnership within HEC and between HEC and other organizations. In short, he noted that there was 'cultural gap' among different HEC members but the gap was closing through increasing engagement and communication. He also noted that with increased openness and participation from the public, the partnership was gradually in place. With more trust in the wisdom of the man in the street instead of relying solely on expert advice, a genuine public engagement could be attained in due course. On the communications with external organizations, he would like the committee to consider setting up a communications task force and an operation standards task

force in order to provide a timely response to media enquiries. On the secretariat support, **Dr Alvin Kwok** appreciated the good efforts of the secretariat and said that he would appeal for more resources to ensure the continual effectiveness of the secretariat support. **Dr Ng Mee-kam** supplemented that the whole idea was to strengthen communications within HEC and with other external organizations such as the TPB so that HEC could better project its image and safeguard the public participatory approach.

5.2 **The Chairman** thanked Dr Alvin Kwok and Dr Ng Mee-kam for the good initiative. On fostering team-building, he suggested that the secretariat to work with Dr Alvin Kwok on the organization of a retreat camp so that HEC members could review the work of the committee in the past year and brain-storm ideas on the coming work plan.

5.3 On the communications with the external organizations such as LegCo, TPB, DC and the media on HEC-related issues, **Dr Chan Wai-kwan** said that while he supported the call for more resources to the HEC and its secretariat, he had reservations on forming yet another task force to respond to the public. Instead of “institutionalizing” the communication channel, he would prefer the secretariat to arrange meetings/briefings to such organizations as and when issues arise. He believed that the HEC Chairman and the other Sub-committee chairmen would be prepared to front up to the media and other organizations to explain and brief them on HEC issues. **The Chairman** agreed and said that with the help of the secretariat, the mechanism was already in place for the HEC Chairman and Sub-committee chairmen to meet on a regular basis to discuss, among other things, the agenda and other HEC related matters. While the four Chairmen would continue to form the ‘core’ discussion group and communicate and meet on a regular basis, other HEC members could be drawn in to discuss the strategy of communications related to specific issues on a need basis.

5.4 **Mr Charles Nicholas Brooke** said that HEC was newly set up and we should guard against attempting to run before we could walk. He cautioned against setting up too many formal meetings with other bodies but agreed that building and sustaining a dialogue with these bodies, including LegCo, was important. As necessary, HEC could consider nominating spokespersons on specific issues. On funding, while he

supported more resources, such funding requests should be considered in view of the role of HEC in an appropriate context. Towards this end, he had reservations on over-expanding the role and purview of HEC. **Prof Lam Kin-che** agreed that HEC need to prioritize its work and that with great sympathy for the secretariat, the workload was very heavy. He supported initiatives to strengthen the team-building and put in place a more resourceful secretariat.

5.5 **Mr Paul Zimmerman** reiterated the need for a clear division of labour and urged the Government to consider setting up a Harbour-front Enhancement Task Force to make clear the different responsibilities of various Government departments on matters related to the Harbour. While he supported the idea of organizing a retreat, he emphasized that a clear harbour strategy should be worked out first with clear time-lines and funding commitments. He also appealed for the secretariat to be answerable to the whole HEC. On the communications front, he had full confidence and support for the four chairmen in handling media enquiries.

5.6 **Mr Bernard Chan** said that while he appreciated the initiatives from Dr Alvin Kwok and Dr Ng Mee-kam, he would like to remind the meeting that the HEC was an advisory but not an executive body. On this basis, the HEC should not attempt to assume the executive function of the Government. For example, the consultants for respective planning studies should be accountable to the relevant departments which commission the studies. He cautioned against the danger of the HEC attempting to take up the executive functions.

5.7 In response, **Mr Thomas Tso** said that speaking personally, given the increasing public expectation for the HEC to deliver something concrete, HEC members should pull ourselves together to project our image in a more positive manner to the public. The problem of communications with the public arose, as he saw it, mainly from the lack of deliverables to the public so far. In order to avoid becoming a mere 'talk-shop', we should focus on our priority tasks and "quick-win" projects. As an advisory body, HEC had made a number of very useful suggestions, particularly in terms of the public participating process. We should therefore build upon such achievements to sustain our positive image and liaison with the community. In

response to Mr Bernard Chan's comment, **Mr Thomas Tso** said that he agreed that the HEC was not an executive body and therefore government departments had to be accountable for spending the funds and be subject to audit enquiries as necessary. Despite such a requirement, he observed that the Government was already working together with the HEC in different aspects of work. On resources, he explained that despite under the tight budgetary situation, the Government had managed to provide effective support to the work of the HEC. While more resources would be welcomed, he cautioned against the HEC trying to do too much work at the same time as this would only fail ourselves in the end if nothing was satisfactorily achieved. He appreciated the various suggestions made by Dr Alvin Kwok and Dr Ng Mee-kam. However, he also expressed some concern as to whether the HEC was the appropriate venue to experiment the particular mode of governance as suggested in the paper. He reiterated that HEC should prioritize our work and gear ourselves up to concrete deliverables.

5.8 In response, **Dr Ng Mee-kam** said that the paper was meant more as a food for thought and inspiration rather than an attempt to introduce new politics to the work of the HEC. It was because of the communication problem arising from the WDII incident that prompted her and Dr Alvin Kwok to come up with ideas on how to improve the work of the HEC. With her research experience, the model of "governance beyond government" was already put in practice in various overseas countries. Though it might sound academic, she saw it time for the HEC to embrace the new mode of work and thinking dimensions instead of feeling threatened. On the respective consultancy studies, she believed that administrative accountability aside, the HEC had the duty to make sure that the outcome was a result of consensus reached within the HEC and to achieve this, direct liaison with the consultants was necessary.

5.9 **Mr John Wu** said that instead of over-expanding the existing structure, he would like to focus on how the relationship between HEC and the DC could be improved. Towards this end, he suggested that the relevant DC Chairmen and members could be invited to attend HEC meetings and briefings and the Sub-committees as and when topics that would affect the relevant DC arose. On informal gatherings among HEC members, he supported the idea but commented that these might not need to be

HEC
Secretariat

too frequent given the fact that the HEC members were busy.

5.10 **Dr Alvin Kwok** thanked members for the useful feedback. He agreed that there was no need for “institutionalizing” the communication channels but that a comprehensive communications strategy and work plan should be worked out. In conclusion, **the Chairman** invited members to further consider the ideas in the paper. He understood that the Government would respond to the paper as necessary for further discussion in coming meetings. Meanwhile, the core group comprising the four chairmen would continue to meet and discuss on regular basis to consider issues relating to the work of the HEC and that other members would be co-opted to participate on a need basis.

Item 6 Any Other Business

6.1 On the proposed checklist on items discussed in previous HEC meetings, **the Chairman** noted that the secretariat would work out the list in consultation with relevant parties and report at the coming meeting. On this, **Mr Paul Zimmerman** said that he would go one step further to request the secretariat to keep track of progress of Government’s initiatives/work around the harbour-front. **Mr Thomas Tso** said that this was not necessary as the mechanism was already in place for government departments to initiate briefings for the HEC members as and when the projects arise. Members agreed.

6.2 **The Chairman** informed the meeting that the quorum was lost and that discussion on the remaining items might need to be deferred to the next meeting. Nevertheless, he invited the secretary to briefly report on the logistics for the coming HEC briefing on 6 April. **Miss Christine Chow** reported that so far, a couple of organizations had indicated preliminary interests in briefing the HEC namely, the Eastern DC harbour-front related work and the Yau Tong Bay development. **Mr Paul Zimmerman** suggested that a workshop should be organized to discuss the overriding public need test and that relevant organizations/personnel should be invited to discuss the subject.

6.3 In closing, **the Chairman** said that in view of the requests by some HEC members to review the mechanism and usefulness of the press release, he had reviewed the situation with

the secretariat and concluded that as the reporters were invited to sit in the HEC meetings, they would report the discussions as they chose to and that they would not rely upon the press release to do their reports. As such, he would recommend to do away with the practice of issuing press release after the HEC meetings. Members agreed.

Date of next meeting

6.4 There being no other business, the meeting was adjourned at 7 p.m. The next meeting would be held on 26 May 2005 (Thursday).

**Harbour-front Enhancement Committee
May 2005**