

HEC Sub-committee on Harbour Plan Review

Minutes of 1st Meeting

Date : 4 August 2004
Time : 2:30 pm
Venue : Conference Room
15/F, North Point Government Offices
333 Java Road, North Point

Present

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| Mr Vincent Ng (Chairman) | Hong Kong Institute of Architects |
| Miss Daisy Lai | Hong Kong Institute of Planners |
| Mr Bernard Chan | Hong Kong Institute of Surveyors |
| Mr KY Leung | The Chartered Institute of Logistics and Transport in Hong Kong |
| Dr Andrew L. Thomson | Business Environment Council |
| Dr Alvin Kwok | Conservancy Association |
| Mrs Mei Ng | Friends of the Earth |
| Mr Louis Loong | Real Estate Developers Association of Hong Kong |
| Mr Jimmy Kwok | |
| Mr Chan Tak-Chor | |
| Mr Nicholas C Brooke | |
| Mr Thomas Tso | Deputy Secretary (Planning & Lands)1, Housing, Planning and Lands Bureau |
| Mr Augustine Ng | Assistant Director of Planning/Territorial, Planning Department |
| Mr Talis Wong | Chief Engineer/Kowloon, Civil Engineering and Development Department |
| Mr Lawrence Kwan | Chief Engineer/Traffic Engineering (Hong Kong), Transport Department |

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| Mrs Agnes Leung | Chief Executive Officer (2)1, Home Affairs Department |
| Mr TW Ng (Secretary) | Senior Town Planner/Sub-Regional, Planning Department |

In Attendance

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| Mr Raymond WM Wong | Chief Town Planner/Sub-Regional, Planning Department |
| Mr Andrew Cheung | Assistant Secretary (Planning)2, Housing, Planning and Lands Bureau |
| Ms Portia Yiu | Assistant Secretary (Planning)4, Housing, Planning and Lands Bureau |
| Mr Bryan Li | Senior Executive Officer (Planning), Housing, Planning and Lands Bureau |

Absent with Apologies

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| Mr Leslie Chen | Hong Kong Institute of Landscape Architects |
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Action

Item 1 Election of Chairman

- 1.1 **The Secretary** welcomed all Members and Government representatives to the first meeting of the Sub-committee on Harbour Plan Review (the Sub-committee) of the Harbour-front Enhancement Committee (HEC).
- 1.2 For the chair of the Sub-committee, **Dr Andrew Thomson** nominated, and **Dr Alvin Kwok** and **Mrs Mei Ng** seconded, **Mr Vincent Ng**. There being no other nomination nor objection, **Mr Vincent Ng** was elected Chairman of the Sub-committee.
- 1.3 **The Chairman** thanked Members for their support and members of the public and the press for attending the meeting.

- 1.4 At the invitation of **the Chairman, Mr Nicholas Brooke**, a member of the HEC originally attending the Sub-committee meeting as an observer, agreed to join the Sub-committee as a Member.

Item 2 House Rules of the Sub-committee (Paper No.1/2004)

- 2.1 **The Chairman** invited Members to comment on the House Rules set out in Paper No.1/2004. He pointed out that the rules would be further discussed and endorsed by the plenary session of the HEC on 9 September 2004.

Membership and Voting

- 2.2 In reply to **Mrs Mei Ng'** s query about the criteria for co-opting members into the Sub-committee, **Mr Thomas Tso** said that individuals could be co-opted as and when the Sub-committee considered it necessary to have expert input on certain topics or projects.
- 2.3 **Mr Jimmy Kwok** and **Mr KY Leung** shared the view that experts could be invited to the discussion as observers as and when necessary. It was not necessary to go through the appointment procedures.
- 2.4 **Mr TC Chan** commented that the whole of the Sub-committee would be stymied because of the requirements under para 2(d) of the House Rules for appointing individuals as co-opted members.
- 2.5 **Dr Andrew Thomson** was concerned that the House Rules as presently drafted would render the operation of the Sub-committee cumbersome and less efficient.
- 2.6 **Mr Nicholas Brooke** opined that the operation of the Sub-committee should not become too bureaucratic. He suggested that co-opting and appointing members

be handled at the Sub-committee level, instead of by the Chairman of the HEC. He also considered that co-opted members should not have voting right.

- 2.7 **Mr Thomas Tso** explained that co-opting other members was intended to strengthen the membership of the Sub-committee. Being part of the Sub-committee, co-opted members might have voting right. Such members were to be co-opted because of their expertise in certain fields/topics. By nature, they were different from those Members who were already members of the main committee, the HEC, and hence should not be entitled to alternate representation. He highlighted that the total number of co-opted members in a sub-committee could not exceed one-third of the number of those members who came from the HEC sitting on the sub-committee, as mentioned in para 2(d) of the House Rules.
- 2.8 **Mrs Mei Ng** said that she was concerned about giving co-opted members voting right, because for any decisions made it could be for those HEC members to be held fully accountable.
- 2.9 In reply to the query of **Messrs Jimmy Kwok** and **TC Chan** on the capacity of official members in the HEC, **Mr Thomas Tso** explained that the HEC was set up by the Government for building a better harbour front in partnership with the community. For this reason, the six official members of the HEC should be seen in the same capacity as the non-official HEC Members. The Sub-committee would therefore have a total of 18 members as a starting point and it could expand by at most one-third to 24 members.
- 2.10 **Dr Andrew Thomson** considered it undesirable that the size of the Sub-committee could expand endlessly. He suggested limiting its size and stating the restriction explicitly in the House Rules.

Request for Submission of Views to HEC

- 2.11 **Dr Andrew Thomson** considered that Members should be given the chance to look at all submissions and requests received. He was in favour of “no-gate” approach to allow free flow of information and consideration of innovative ideas, especially from the private sector. **Mr Nicholas Brooke** also doubted the need of a “gate” when the Terms of Reference of the Sub-committee were in place. In response, **Mr Thomas Tso** suggested that the word ‘such’ (line 4, 1st para, section 5) be deleted.
- 2.12 **Mr Jimmy Kwok** however opined that without a “gate”, deliberation might go back and forth. He was in favour of a “gate” to alert the HEC and its sub-committees to be prudent in deliberation.
- 2.13 On submission from third party, **Mr Thomas Tso** further explained that para 5(a) was introduced to prevent commercial organisations from making use of using HEC to influence other approval or licensing authorities during the application process. HEC should not be subject to such lobbying efforts.
- 2.14 **Mr Bernard Chan** suggested that the cut-off date as stipulated under para 5(b) be moved forward to before the commencement of works to include the time gap between authorization or funding approval and the commencement of works. **Mrs Mei Ng** agreed, as there might be problems related to the projects that need to be resolved or monitored even after authorisation or funding approval had been given.
- 2.15 **Mr Thomas Tso** clarified that para 5(b) was intended to regulate Government projects. Taking Central Reclamation Phase III as an example, he explained that once funding was approved, project would move to the tendering stage which would have legal implications and hence rendered the situation more

complicated. In response to **Mrs Mei Ng**'s comment, he said that other channels were in place in the Government to resolve issues that might arise during the implementation of the project.

- 2.16 In view of different sentiments over the subject matter, **the Chairman** suggested to refer all comments to HEC for deliberation.

Declaration of Interests

- 2.17 **Mr Nicholas Brooke** considered that the subject matter was not a clear-cut black-and-white matter, on which a lot of guidance should be provided before the HEC could deliberate in depth. He suggested a discussion paper, or a briefing by the Independent Commission Against Corruption (ICAC), be arranged to assist deliberation at the forthcoming HEC meeting. He also suggested making reference to the interests declaration of the Town Planning Board members.

Item 3 Terms of Reference (Paper No.2/2004)

- 3.1 **The Secretary** tabled a replacement for Paper No.2/2004 in which the Membership list was amended to reflect the original HEC Member from the Hong Kong Institute of Landscape Architects.
- 3.2 **Dr Andrew Thomson** suggested deleting the term "quick win" in item (b) as he considered that the term misleading. The focus should rather be set on worthwhile improvement works, regardless how long it would take. The meeting agreed.
- 3.3 In reply to **Mr Nicholas Brooke**'s query on the definition of the physical boundary of the Harbour, **the Chairman** said that the Sub-committee would adopt the same definition as presented at the first HEC

meeting. The meeting agreed.

Item 4 Review on Harbour Planning Principles (Paper 3/2004)

- 4.1 **Mr Raymond Wong** presented the paper and invited Members to comment on the revised Harbour Planning Principles.
- 4.2 **Dr Alvin Kwok** noted that the term “public” had been added to some of the planning principles. Yet, to ensure public views were duly taken on board in the planning process, he reiterated that the six principles put forth by the Citizen Envisioning@Harbour initiative and presented at the first HEC meeting be incorporated, namely (i) inclusive / participatory/ consensus building; (ii) integrated planning/quality of life; (iii) fair game for all; (iv) accountability; (v) precautionary; and (vi) subsidiarity.
- 4.3 **Dr Andrew Thomson** said that the Designing Hong Kong Harbour District initiative had also come up with a set of planning principles, which were presented to HEC at its second meeting. He suggested putting the three sets of planning principles from different parties in a melting pot. He proposed that the next steps were to delineate the boundaries of the Harbour area, devise a set of terminologies for areas under discussion, formulate an overall strategy for the Harbour, divide the Harbour into zones, and identify areas for enhancement.
- 4.4 **Mr Augustine Ng** said that as a starting point, the Harbour Planning Principles were formulated by studying what constituted a beautiful harbour and accommodating all good overseas principles and practice. Yet, he was willing to consider expanding the set of planning principles to suitably include the principles suggested by Dr Kwok. In response to Dr Thomson’ s comments, **Mr Augustine Ng** pointed out

that different areas around the Harbour were subject to different considerations. He was of the view that formulating an overall framework for the Harbour before working on any concrete project would render the whole review process cumbersome and lengthy. Instead, he considered that an integrated area approach should be more appropriate. As the process evolved, Members could offer comments and include specific project areas.

- 4.5 **Mr Raymond Wong** said that a boundary was an abstract line and the transition between the harbourfront and the hinterland was gradual. He considered that a study of the opportunities available and the existing constraints should be the starting point of the review. He added that at the request of a Member, a briefing on land uses and developments on both sides of the Harbour would be given at the forthcoming HEC meeting.
- 4.6 **Mrs Mei Ng** said that she had several concerns. First, she felt that the vision for the Harbour was too restrictive. She suggested that a three-dimensional approach, taking into account building height, airspace and underground areas, be adopted. Second, she felt that transportation, utilities and tourism still weighed heavily in the principles. Third, there was no mention of a management framework nor how the public was to be involved. Lastly, she said that there should be less artificiality and buildings along the waterfront.
- 4.7 **Mr Bernard Chan** reminded that the legal framework, as a result of the court judgment handed down in respect of reclamation works, should also be incorporated in the principles.
- 4.8 **The Chairman** emphasised that the Sub-committee should aim for action. He proposed Dr Alvin Kwok, Dr Andrew Thomson and Planning Department to form a task group to work out the planning principles. **Miss Daisy Lai** said that HKIP also wished to join the task group. **The Secretary** would arrange the meeting

of the task groups towards the end of August. **The Chairman** invited the task group to report its findings to the Sub-committee before presentation to the HEC.

Secretary

Item 5 Potential Enhancement Areas Overview (Paper No. 4/2004)

- 5.1 **Mr Raymond Wong** presented the paper on the potential enhancement projects and **Mr Thomas Tso** introduced the supplementary note on West Kowloon. Members were invited to comment on the potential enhancement areas or suggest any possible area.
- 5.2 In reply to **the Chairman's** query, **Mr Thomas Tso** clarified that funding had not yet been identified for the potential enhancement projects other than the proposed waterfront promenade at south-west corner of the West Kowloon Cultural District (WKCD), which formed part of an on-going project.
- 5.3 **Dr Alvin Kwok** suggested that design competition be held to pool talents from primary and secondary schools as part of the beautification initiative to improve the hoarding along Central waterfront. On improvement proposal at West Kowloon waterfront, he had reservation on disposing of the temporary management right of the WKCD site by way of tender. He counter-proposed that the use of land be granted to a non-government organization. **Mr TC Chan** shared **Dr Kwok's** concern as tendering process did not take account of the competency of the bidders adequately insofar as management and maintenance were concerned.
- 5.4 In response, **Mr Thomas Tso** stressed that the main objective of enhancing the waterfront was to allow public enjoyment. In any tendering exercise, the primary concern would be meeting such objective, and the bidding price would not be the sole factor for

consideration. With the site currently available, **Mr Tso** appealed to Members for support in making the WKCD possible for public use as a matter of urgency.

- 5.5 Regarding the Hung Hom waterfront, **Mr Jimmy Kwok** supported the Government to continue liaising with the developer of the waterfront hotel site in regard of the implementation of the missing waterfront link.
- 5.6 **Mr Nicholas Brooke** was concerned that working on potential enhancement projects without an integrated harbour plan could be seen as a piecemeal approach. He suggested refraining from making judgment until there was an overall strategy established. He also commented that the WKCD site was not easily accessible to members of the public. **Mr KY Leung** shared the view that the Sub-committee should adopt a holistic approach.
- 5.7 **Mr Augustine Ng** explained that currently parts of the Harbour, including Central, Wanchai, and South East Kowloon, were subject to planning studies and construction works. In this regard, a comprehensive plan would not emerge for some time to come. On the other hand, there were small stretches of the harbour front for which improvement works could readily be initiated. These proposals, if planned properly, could contribute to building up the grand plan. **The Chairman** urged the Sub-committee to consider those projects in this light. **Mr Augustine Ng** added that it was unusual in the Government system that funding could be set aside for proposals with no details. However, community consensus would certainly help Government departments seek funding in taking forward proposals for the benefit of the community.
- 5.8 **Mrs Mei Ng** was of the view that the proposed quick enhancement projects and the overall planning framework could be pursued in tandem. Yet, she considered that both of them should follow the sustainability principles.

- 5.9 **The Chairman** noted the request of **Mr Paul Zimmerman** from the public gallery to speak and decided to give him the floor, yet restricting time to one minute.
- 5.10 **Mr Paul Zimmerman** said that he and the interested organizations had been spending six months on the Designing Hong Kong Harbour District project. He urged for the sub-committee to undertake a strategic process for harbour-front enhancement by sub-dividing the Harbour Plan, which covers the entire protected harbour, into Harbour-front Areas based on the general condition of the harbour-front. Then to develop a Harbour-front Area Enhancement Strategy for each area which varies based on the state of the various projects and ownership. Then to identify within each area Potential Enhancement Projects and Priority Enhancement Projects. Noting that what was identified as 'Potential Enhancement Areas' in the materials presented during the meeting, are in fact Projects instead of Areas.
- 5.11 **The Chairman** suggested that the waterfront promenade at WKCD and the beautification of hoarding at Central Pier 7 should proceed first as those proposals were temporary in nature and for which funding was readily available. Other proposals should be further considered having taken discussion on Item 6 into account. The meeting agreed.

**Item 6 Enjoying by Designing Central Harbourfront
Implementation of Step 2 (Paper No.5/2004)** -

- 6.1 **Dr. Alvin Kwok** presented the paper and invited Members to comment on the proposed public engagement process.
- 6.2 **Mr Nicholas Brooke** expressed support to the approach outlined by **Dr. Kwok** in engaging different stakeholders through a variety of events. He

indicated that such approach would be the way to build consensus. **Mr Jimmy Kwok** agreed.

- 6.3 **Mrs Mei Ng** stressed the importance of involving a wider spectrum of people in the planning process, including those who might be indirectly influenced as well.
- 6.4 On funding issue, **Mr Nicholas Brooke** opined that certain activities could be funded by non-government organizations and the detailed funding arrangement should be further discussed at a task group. The meeting agreed.
- 6.5 At the request of **the Chairman**, Dr Alvin Kwok agreed to lead the task force. **Dr Andrew Thomson**, **Mr KY Leung**, **Mrs Mei Ng**, and the Chairman on behalf of **HKIA** also agreed to join the task group, with representation from PlanD and CEDD.

Item 7 Any Other Business

- 7.1 **Mrs Mei Ng** raised concern on communication and information flow among the three sub-committees and the reporting mechanism of the sub-committees to the main committee. In reply, **Mr Thomas Tso** stated that submission of progress reports from all sub-committees would become a standing item of the HEC. With majority of members serving more than one sub-committees, members could bring a wealth of information to the work of each sub-committee. **Mr Tso** noted that the circulation of minutes would also assist dissemination of information.
- 7.2 **Mrs Mei Ng** enquired the need to introduce relevant guidelines to regulate submission and/or presentation to the committee. **The Chairman** opined that open discussion should be encouraged and therefore the urgency of having a set of rules governing

presentation or submission would be less imminent. He noted that the HEC would consider the matter at the coming meeting.

- 7.3 As there was no other business, the meeting closed at 5.50 p.m. The next meeting is scheduled for 6 October, 2004.

**HEC Sub-committee on
Harbour Plan Review
October 2004**