

HEC Sub-committee on Harbour Plan Review

Minutes of Special Meeting

Date : 9 March 2005
Time : 3:00 pm
Venue : Conference Room
15/F, North Point Government Offices
333 Java Road, North Point

Present

Mr Vincent NG (Chairman)	Representing Hong Kong Institute of Architects
Mr Kim O CHAN	Representing Hong Kong Institute of Planners
Mr Steve CHAN Yiu-fai	
Dr Alvin KWOK	Representing Conservancy Association
Mr LEUNG Kong-yui	Representing Chartered Institute of Logistics and Transport in Hong Kong
Mr Louis LOONG	Representing Real Estate Developers Association of Hong Kong
Mrs Mei NG	Representing Friends of the Earth
Mr Paul Zimmerman	Representing Business Environment Council
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
Mrs Agnes LEUNG	Chief Executive Officer (2)1, Home Affairs Department
Mr NG Tak-wah (Secretary)	Senior Town Planner/Sub-Regional 3, Planning Department

In Attendance

Dr CHAN Wai-kwan

Miss Christine CHOW

Principal Assistant Secretary (Planning & Lands) 2, Housing, Planning and Lands Bureau

Mr Raymond WONG

Chief Town Planner/Sub-Regional, Planning Department

Mr CHAN Ming-kwong

Senior Marine Officer, Marine Department

Absent with Apologies

Mr Charles Nicholas BROOKE

Mr Bernard CHAN

Representing Hong Kong Institute of Surveyors

Mr Leslie CHEN

Representing Hong Kong Institute of Landscape Architects

Mr Jimmy KWOK

1 PURPOSE

Action

The Chairman welcomed Members, Dr Chan Wai-kwan, Mr MK Chan of Marine Department, and members of the public to the meeting. The meeting was a follow-up to HEC's discussion of 13 January 2005 on CE@H's proposal of a 'Living Harbour Review'. The purpose was to enable PlanD to make a comprehensive presentation of the findings of various planning studies pertaining to water-based activities in Victoria Harbour and other water areas in Hong Kong, to facilitate Members' consideration of the way forward.

2 WATER-BASED ACTIVITIES IN VICTORIA HARBOUR

2.1 At the invitation of the Chairman, **Mr Raymond Wong** presented Paper No.4/2005 with the aid of visual presentation. Key points of the presentation included:

- (i) Victoria Harbour was economically vital to Hong Kong with its inner harbour fairways intensively used by vessels associated with various harbour/port functions, marine activities, and recreational/tourism uses;
- (ii) the Government was open and receptive to different water-based activities provided that the safety and functional integrity of the Harbour were not compromised;
- (iii) provisions of buoys and anchorage areas in the Harbour aimed to balance land-based and water-based facilities in support of a wide range of marine uses;
- (iv) various water-based activities had been planned within and outside Victoria Harbour as well as in the New Territories districts to fully utilise the natural setting of the countryside and associated waterbodies under several planning studies; and
- (v) the proposals outlined in the Harbour Plan had undergone extensive public consultation in March to May 2001.

2.2 **Dr WK Chan** said that efforts should be made to maximize public leisure use of Victoria Harbour. He suggested proposals such as bathing shed, floating museum similar to the HMS Belfast at River Thames of London, etc, be considered in the Harbour. **Mr Augustine Ng** informed that the Harbour Plan Study had looked into similar proposals. However, owing to the busy marine traffic, some activities such as swimming were not

recommended in the Harbour on safety grounds. **Mr Raymond Wong** said that the Study had proposed water activity areas that were not in conflict with the fairways in the harbour, and specifically a floating museum along the North Point waterfront. However, he remarked that taking such planning concept further for detail assessment and implementation would depend on private initiatives.

2.3 In reply to **Dr Chan's** query, **Mr Raymond Wong** said that the demand for public cargo working areas (PCWA's) was still high as evidenced by the fact that non-container throughput made up 30% of the total freight throughput of Hong Kong. Furthermore, relocation of PCWAs was always a difficult task as it was subject to site availability, acceptance by the local community and the industry.

2.4 **Mr Zimmerman** said that the agenda of the meeting was to consider the way forward of a marine use review within the framework of integrated harbour planning. He noted that the PCWAs in Kwun Tong and Yau Tong associated with the recycling industry were generating considerable traffic to the fairways. He commented that he did not notice any information on the future marine uses, such as improvement to landing steps, superyacht berthing facilities, etc in the Harbour from the presentation. Hence, he suggested that a marine traffic assessment be made with a view to exploring opportunities for improving both the recreational and economic activities in the Harbour. **Mrs Mei Ng** said that the assessment should also take into account the new Recovery Park in Tuen Mun, the cruise terminal proposal, and future demand of PCWA's and ferry services in Hong Kong. She remarked that the merits of centralization of marine uses should be weighed against those of decentralization, and the advantages of enhancing existing facilities against

those of creating new ones. In reply, **Mr MK Chan** informed that operators of the Kwu Tong and Cha Kwo Ling PCWAs in their recent meeting with the Planning Department had stated that they needed to remain in the areas close to the source of goods and supply in support of their trade. He added that a Study on Marine Traffic Risk Assessment for Hong Kong Water was undertaken in 2003-04. The assessment revealed that, in general, the risk environment of Hong Kong waters was anticipated to remain relatively static over the next decade, and had the potential to fall if safety improvement were realised. **Mr Augustine Ng** supplemented that similar concerns from the operators were raised during consultation conducted under the Harbour Plan Study, and the interests of the trade was taken into account in formulating the Harbour Planning Framework.

- 2.5 In light of the decline of local fishing industry, **Mrs Mei Ng** said that the utilization and need for typhoon shelters warranted an assessment. **Dr Chan** and **Mr Leung** opined that typhoon shelters formed part of our heritage, and opportunities should be explored for revitalisation in a way similar to urban renewal projects.
- 2.6 In response, **Mr MK Chan** informed that the demand for typhoon shelters was assessed annually based on the number of locally licensed vessels. He explained that although fishing vessels now made up less than 30% of the total fleet, Hong Kong had seen a marked increase in vessels' size and the number of vessels engaged in the river-trade sector. As such, the demand for typhoon shelter space remained high. He explained that despite the advanced meteorological technology, during the approach of a typhoon, cargo and passenger vessels were still in operation until higher typhoon warning signal was

hoisted. To maintain necessary services to the public, many vessels could only seek refuge at typhoon shelter within a short period of time after services were suspended, and therefore had to seek refuge in the nearest possible typhoon shelter. For practical and safety reasons, a centralized typhoon shelter was thus not desirable as it would mean longer distance and an increased risk.

- 2.7 On the future demand of various marine facilities, Mr **Augustine Ng** informed that Port Development Strategy Review was conducted every two years. Whilst issues related to typhoon shelters had been examined and discussed under the Harbour Plan Study. According to the feedback from the stakeholders, typhoon shelters and related facilities were essential to a wide range of marine users. He further suggested that a visit could be arranged for Members to familiarize with typhoon shelter occupants and related operations.
- 2.8 **Mr Leung** stated that a working Harbour was important to the economy of Hong Kong providing employment opportunities to both marine and transport industries. He further suggested that effort should be made to improve the use of the Harbour, water quality and navigation safety.
- 2.9 **Dr Kwok** opined that accessibility and the land-water interface were key issues in planning harbour and marine uses. **Dr Chan** echoed the above view and suggested that existing open space; waterfront promenade and piers should be reviewed for further enhancement. Mr **Raymond Wong** informed the meeting that information had been prepared under the Sub-committee to monitor waterfront land uses and identify possible enhancement.

2.10 Upon invitation from the Chairman, **Mr Kwok Kam-tung** from the Hong Kong and Kowloon Motor Boats and Tug Boats Association Limited stressed that the provision of and access to typhoon shelters were important to the industry. As siting of typhoon shelter would be governed by numerous geographical and navigational factors, he stated that the Government should promulgate more information to members of the public on marine uses and operations. In conclusion, **Mr Kwok** indicated that both industrial and recreational uses could co-exist in the Harbour and within typhoon shelters.

3 WAY FORWARD

3.1 **Mr Zimmerman** opined that a marine use review was necessary as part of the integrated harbour planning, and suggested that professional services be engaged to undertake a review based on the findings of relevant studies.

3.2 **Mr Kim Chan** commented that commissioning a consultancy agreement might take considerable time. **Mr Chan** and **Dr Kwok** suggested PlanD to consider relevant study findings to ascertain the need for further review.

3.3 **Mr Augustine Ng** said that public participation was an integral part of planning study, and consequently the planning process would be protracted. He considered it more pragmatic and cost-effective to undertake the marine use review as an integral part of the on-going district-based studies.

3.4 **The Chairman** stated that there was inarguably a need for integrated planning for the Harbour. However, with the Harbour Plan Study completed only two years ago, and having regard to the presentation made by PlanD, he cautioned that the

proposed marine use review would subject stakeholders to yet another planning and consultation process within a short period of time. In conclusion, he said that given the current circumstance, there were no strong reasons to initiate another review.

- 3.5 **The Chairman and Mr Leung** opined that Members could make reference to the information and findings from previous studies. The Meeting agreed. **Mr Steve Chan** suggested PlanD to inform Members of the views gauged from stakeholders through previous consultation exercises. **Messrs Zimmerman and Loong** proposed PlanD to compile a summary, including relevant study briefs and parties/communities involved, on relevant previous planning studies. **Mr Raymond Wong** stated that relevant information were available at PlanD's website; nevertheless, summary table outlining the titles and access to such information would be compiled for Members' easy reference.

PlanD

- 3.6 There being no other query, **the Chairman** thanked Members for their attendance. The meeting closed at 5:30pm.