

立法會
Legislative Council

Ref : CB2/DC/KC/01

**Minutes of Meeting between
Legislative Council Members and Kowloon City District Council Members
on Thursday, 14 March 2002, at 10:45 am
in Conference Room A of the Legislative Council Building**

Members present : Hon James TO Kun-sun (Convenor)
Hon Jasper TSANG Yok-sing, JP
Hon Abraham SHEK Lai-him, JP
Hon Henry WU King-cheong, BBS
Hon MA Fung-kwok
Hon Tommy CHEUNG Yu-yan, JP
Hon IP Kwok-him, JP

By Invitation : **Kowloon City District Council**

Mr LAU Wai-wing (Vice Chairman)
Mr WEN Choy-bon
Mr WONG Siu-yee
Ms LI Lin
Mr CHU Chor-sing
Mr WONG Yee-him
Ms MOK Ka-han
Mr CHAN King-wong
Mr IP Che-kin
Mr LAU Ting-pong
Mr LAU Tat-chor
Mr CHIANG Sai-cheong
Mr JIM Fun-hin, MH

Staff in Attendance : Miss Flora TAI
Chief Assistant Secretary (2)2

Mr Stanley MA
Senior Assistant Secretary (2)6

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Long-term development of public markets

22. Mr WONG Siu-ye of KCDC expressed concern about the long-term viability and development of public markets/cooked food centres given the prevalence of superstores which sold similar commodities at very competitive price and in a better shopping environment. Mr WONG informed LegCo Members that he had conducted a survey on public markets and found that the business of stall lessees in many public markets, including the public markets in Hung Hom and To Kwa Wan, were not satisfactory. He said that under the pressure of LegCo Members, the Administration would soon submit its funding proposal for improving the ventilation of 19 existing public markets and cooked food centres managed by the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD). He urged the Administration to re-assess the cost-effectiveness of the improvement measures in the light of its policy on the long-term development of public markets/cooked food centres. Mr WONG added that many DC members held the view that redevelopment was preferable to improvement works such as retrofitting of air-conditioning (A/C) system.

23. Mr IP Che-kin said that public resources should be used in a cost-effective manner. He pointed out that there were both management and operational problems in public markets. He cited a number of management problems in public markets and requested the Administration to reinforce supervision of the operation of stall lessees. He considered that the design and facilities in some old markets could hardly be upgraded to meet present-day expectations. He added that the new superstore in Ho Man Tin had attracted a lot of residents from Hung Hom and To Kwa Wan and caused serious traffic congestion within the area.

24. Mr WEN Choy-bon said that DC members were facing a dilemma in resolving the problems about public markets. He pointed out that in order to improve the shopping environment in old design markets, the two former Provisional Municipal Councils had identified a total of 19 existing public markets and cooked food stalls for retro-fitting with A/C system. However, the capital and recurrent costs of establishing and running an A/C system would have to be borne by the stall lessees concerned. Mr WEN was worried whether these public markets after retrofitting would be able to compete with private superstores, and about the additional costs which would be imposed on stall lessees. Mr WEN added that the Administration should review its overall policy to facilitate long-term development of public markets.

25. Ms LI Lin said that there were other factors affecting the viability of public markets. Given that many public markets were built a long time ago and their design and facilities had imposed limitations on upgrading works, Ms LI considered that redevelopment should be the long-term solution. She pointed

out that stall lessees were facing the same dilemma. They were also unsure whether to support or oppose the proposed A/C retrofitting works. Ms LI added that maintenance and improvement works in public markets were not coordinated in a cost-effective manner, and the engineering works had adversely affect the business of stall lessees. Mr LAU Ting-pong supplemented that the in-house ventilation in the two public markets in Hung Hom and To Kwa Wan were so poor that people simply would not wish to stay there for long.

26. Mr CHU Chor-sing said that each public market might have some unique problems inherent from its design. The Administration should examine the conditions of individual market in detail and propose appropriate improvement works. He suggested that the Administration should appoint consultants to assess the long-term viability of individual markets and recommend redevelopment or upgrading work as appropriate.

27. Mr LAU Tat-chor said that public markets under the management of the Housing Authority were facing the same situation. In fact, more and more public estate residents, particularly the younger generation, would prefer to shop in superstores because of the poor environment of the public markets. Mr IP Kwok-him informed the meeting that at a meeting of the LegCo Panel on Housing held earlier today, the Housing Authority had agreed to arrange retrofitting of A/C system for public markets under its management.

28. Mr Tommy CHEUNG said that poor design and ventilation in public markets was largely a legacy of the past policy of the two former municipal councils to relocate on-street hawkers to indoor markets as many as possible. To improve ventilation, the two former municipal councils proposed retrofitting of A/C system after thorough deliberations and comprehensive consultation with DCs. He expressed understanding of the dilemma faced by DC members and stall lessees that they had to consider the high electricity cost of A/C system and the long-term viability of public markets. However, Mr CHEUNG pointed out that the results of segregating the sale of live quails and live chickens in public markets with A/C system were favourable. In addition, some large private superstores operated in refurbished premises previously used as public markets under the Housing Authority were neat and tidy.

29. Mr Tommy CHEUNG further said that the Liberal Party had in 1998 proposed a rental reduction for public market stalls to reduce the financial burden of stall lessees. He assured KCDC members that the Liberal Party would carefully examine the Administration's financial proposal on retrofitting works for the 19 public markets in due course. He undertook to urge the Administration to provide a favourable business environment for stall lessees when the funding proposal was discussed by the relevant LegCo committee. Mr CHIANG Sai-cheong said that he doubted about the effects of A/C retrofitting works and rental reduction. He held the view that privatisation of public markets should be the way forward. Mr CHEUNG expressed reservation about privatisation of public markets, saying that the benefits of stall lessees might be at stake. Mr IP Kwok-him and Mr Henry WU also considered that there would

be stall lessees who needed to continue business in public markets. Closure of a public market would require compensation to stall lessees and the issue would need years of negotiation to settle.

30. Mr IP Kwok-him advised that the Subcommittee to follow up on the outstanding capital works projects of the former municipal councils would continue to monitor the progress of A/C retrofitting projects for 19 existing public markets/cooked food centres managed by FEHD. As a follow-up to the proposal of the two former municipal councils, LegCo Members had urged the Administration to expedite the progress of the 19 retrofitting projects. Mr IP cited the case of the Central Market to illustrate that there were also conflicting views on whether public markets should remain to exist in the long term. He pointed out that according to the Administration, retrofitting projects would only be proceeded with if a 85% majority consent from stall lessees was obtained. The Administration was consulting the Market Management Consultation Committee (MMCC) and lessees of the 19 markets/cooked food centres, as well as the relevant DCs. Mr IP suggested that in view of KCDC members' views, it might be appropriate for the 18 DCs to re-consider the issue with a view to putting forward a consensus for LegCo Members to consider.

31. Mr Henry WU enquired about the role and functions of the MMCC in public market management. Mr LAU Ting-pong and Mr LAU Tat-chor explained that MMCC met regularly to discuss measures to improve market operation and resolve problems encountered by stall lessees. It seldom discussed the policy issues in public market management.

32. The Convenor pointed out that most DCs had expressed support for speeding up the proposed retro-fitting projects for the existing 19 public markets. Mr WEN Choy-bon and Ms LI Lin stressed that KCDC members did not disagree with retro-fitting projects as a short-term measure to improve ventilation of the 19 public markets. However, they considered that redevelopment should be the long-term strategy for old markets to survive in the face of fierce competition from superstores. Mr WEN suggested that when considering the relevant funding proposal, LegCo Members should request the Administration to give due regard to the operational difficulties of stall lessees in determining the rentals. He also suggested that LegCo should request the Administration to provide in its funding proposal the benefits of A/C retrofitting works and recommend measures to reinforce supervision and enhance competitiveness of public markets.

33. Mr WONG Siu-ye reiterated that modernisation of public markets was the only way to ensure long-term viability of public markets. Mr IP Che-kin suggested that apart from consultancy work, the Administration should consult DCs in deciding the design and provision of facilities in new public markets to be constructed in the future.

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34 The Convenor suggested that the views and suggestions expressed by KCDC members should be referred to the LegCo Panel on Food Safety and Environmental Hygiene and the Subcommittee to follow up the outstanding capital works projects of the former municipal councils for consideration.

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Legislative Council Secretariat

24 April 2002