

立法會
Legislative Council

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LegCo Panel on Home Affairs

Minutes of meeting
held on Friday, 20 April 2001 at 4:00 pm
(immediately after the House Committee meeting)
in Conference Room A of the Legislative Council Building

Members present : Hon Andrew CHENG Kar-foo (Chairman)
Hon Cyd HO Sau-lan
Hon Andrew WONG Wang-fat, JP
Hon Timothy FOK Tsun-ting, SBS, JP
Hon Tang Siu-tong, JP
Hon Henry WU King-cheong, BBS
Hon Albert CHAN Wai-yip
Hon WONG Sing-chi
Hon IP Kwok-him, JP

Members absent : Hon CHOY So-yuk (Deputy Chairman)
Hon Albert HO Chun-yan
Hon James TO Kun-sun
Hon LAU Wong-fat, GBS, JP
Hon Emily LAU Wai-hing, JP

Public Officers Attending : Item IV
Prof H K CHANG
Chairman
Culture and Heritage Commission

Mr NGAI Wing-chit
Secretary of the Culture and Heritage Commission

Item V

Mr Jonathan McKinley
Principal Assistant Secretary for Home Affairs
(Recreation and Sports)

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

Staff in Attendance : Mr Stanley MA
Senior Assistant Secretary (2)6

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I. Confirmation of minutes

The minutes of the special meeting held on 9 January 2001 were confirmed.

II. Information paper issued since the last meeting

2. Members noted that the Administration's written replies to the United Nations Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights on issues to be taken up in connection with the consideration of the Initial Report of the Special Administrative Region of the People's Republic of China in the light of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights was circulated to members vide Paper No.CB(2)1162/00-01 on 28 March 2001.

III. Items for discussion at the next meeting

[Appendices I and II to LC Paper No. CB(2)1424/00-01]

3. Members agreed to discuss the following items at the next regular meeting scheduled for Tuesday, 8 May 2001 –

- (a) proposed amendments to licence fees under the Hotel and Guesthouse Accommodation Ordinance; and
- (b) study on the requirements for major new sports and recreation venues

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[*Post-meeting note* : At the request of the Administration, discussion of agenda item 3(b) was subsequently deferred to the regular meeting scheduled for Tuesday, 12 June 2001.]

4. Members also agreed to hold a joint meeting with the Panel on Public Services to discuss the proposed merger of the Amenities Officer and Recreational and Sport Officer Grades immediately after the regular meeting of the Panel on 8 May 2001.

5. At Mr Andrew WONG's suggestion, members agreed that the Panel should follow up the discussion on rural elections when a concrete proposal to be put forward by the Administration was available.

IV. Culture and Heritage Commission (the Commission) Consultation Paper

[Consultation paper entitled Gathering of Talents for Continual Innovation issued vide CB(2)1156/00-01 on 23 March 2001]

6. The Chairman welcomed Prof H K CHANG, the Commission Chairman, and Secretary of the Commission to the meeting. At the invitation of the Chairman, the Commission Chairman introduced the consultation paper with the aid of a video presentation.

Role and Composition of the Commission

7. In response to members' enquiries about the role of the Commission, the Commission Chairman said that there were certainly some overlapping areas between culture and arts, but in general culture covered a broader spectrum of activities of which the arts was a major component. The work of the Commission in cultural development should be viewed from an overall perspective, although part of its work would inevitably overlap with those of the Antiquities Advisory Board (AAB), Hong Kong Academy for Performing Arts (HKAPA), Hong Kong Arts Centre (HKAC) and Hong Kong Arts Development Council (HKADC). The key responsibility of the Commission was to formulate a set of principles and strategies to promote the long-term development of culture in Hong Kong. Its recommendations would be considered by relevant bureaux such as the Home Affairs Bureau (HAB) for implementation by relevant government departments and statutory bodies as appropriate. As culture was an all-embracing term, the work of the Commission would have an impact on a wide spectrum of areas including education, housing, city planning, broadcasting and information, social welfare, industrial and economic development, etc. Accordingly, the work of cultural development should affect a number of bureaux and departments. He believed that relevant bureaux and statutory bodies would consider the recommendations of the Commission in their policy

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formulation, and that the role of the Commission should not be in conflict with that of the local communities in cultural development.

8. Mr IP Kwok-him asked about the correlation between cultural development and trade and economic development. He also invited the Commission Chairman to elaborate on the holistic approach for the promotion of cultural development. The Commission Chairman explained that cultural development was closely related to many policy areas such as education, urban planning, tourism, creative industries, trade and economic development and others. He cited the significance of the Silk Road in the evolution and formation of Chinese culture, and said that the major trading cities along the Silk Road had served as a gateway for cultural exchanges between China and central Asian, Indian and Persian cultures.

9. Mr Albert CHAN questioned how the Commission could promote and develop local culture without a wide representation from relevant departments and stakeholders such as the education, housing and city planning sectors. He considered that transforming Hong Kong from a cultural desert to a "cultural greenland" would take considerable time and involve a lot of resources and efforts. Given that the Commission would not involve in the management of cultural facilities and activities, he expressed reservations about the effectiveness of the Commission in fostering community culture.

10. In response, the Commission Chairman said that while the Commission should include representatives from different fields as far as possible, he believed that the present composition was an appropriate and manageable size. He added that Hong Kong was a special administrative region of China and 97% of its population were Chinese. As an international city with a knowledge-based economy, the strength of Hong Kong in cultural development lied in its foundation of Chinese culture and its open and receptive attitude towards other cultures. It was the consensus of the Commission that the long-term goal of the Commission was to expand the global cultural vision on the foundation of the Chinese culture, drawing on the essence of other cultures to develop Hong Kong into an international cultural metropolis known for its openness and pluralism.

11. The Commission Chairman further pointed out that local culture could take different forms to develop in different walks of life. To play a supportive role, Government should encourage the whole community to appreciate and participate in cultural activities. To materialise its policy commitments, Government should be responsible for developing adequate cultural facilities and allocating sufficient resources to facilitate formation of cultural groups and organisations. The Commission Chairman believed that when the average age of the population and its disposable income increased, the community as a whole would look forward to better quality of life and more varieties of cultural and recreational activities. He considered that culture was an important ingredient of a society's human capital. The Administration should consider how Chinese characters in the best known novels such as Protean "Monkey King" in "Journey

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to the West" should be promoted and became popular human capitals. Mr Timothy FOK shared the view, saying that Hong Kong should make better use of its cultural assets so as to become economically successful in the future.

People-oriented and community-driven cultural development

12. The Chairman expressed concern that as the Commission was a non-statutory body appointed by the Chief Executive, the new structural framework might create an environment conducive to domination of cultural services by the Government as well as bureaucratic interference. He asked how the Commission could function independently and execute its strategies for people-oriented and community-driven cultural development in the long term.

13. The Commission Chairman responded that he did not see that the existence of a government-appointed institution would have any contradiction to cultural development. He pointed out that it was quite common in overseas countries to have similar government-appointed bodies for the promotion of cultural policies and directions in cultural development, and yet the local communities there were able to take the lead in planning and organising cultural activities. In fact, the formulation of policies for cultural development needed active participation and support of the community. The Commission Chairman added that the Commission had 17 members including the Chairman and only two government officials were appointed as ex-officio members. Other members were appointed in their personal capacity, including four ex-officio members who were Chairmen of AAB, HKAPA, HKAC and HKADC.

14. Mr Albert CHAN expressed support for the principle of community-driven cultural development. However, given that local communities and cultural organisations such as Chinese opera and drama groups were unable to find suitable venues to stage performances, many people simply did not have the opportunity to appreciate and participate in these arts and cultural activities. He considered that the Leisure and Cultural Services Department (LCSD) had failed to provide sufficient cultural programmes and venues for the community to nurture an interest in arts and culture. The Chairman said that although he supported that cultural development should be community-driven, he was concerned that the Government's resources to support culture and arts services would be decreased. He stressed that availability of venue was of paramount importance for non-governmental organisations to promote the development of culture and arts.

15. The Commission Chairman responded that "community-driven" in the context of cultural development should be interpreted from a wider perspective. Basically, the active participation of the community in proposing cultural programmes and organising cultural activities should to some extent reflect the existence of community-driven cultural development. There was no conflict between Government's provision of resources and community driven cultural development. He believed that the Government had no intention to reduce the

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resources to be provided for culture and arts services even though the future cultural development would be community-driven. He stressed that the Commission had only recommended the Government to reduce its direct involvement and management in the long run and in a progressive manner.

16. Dr TANG Siu-tong noted that the Commission was not an executive body for organising cultural activities and its key responsibility was to formulate a set of principles and strategies which would be implemented by relevant government departments and statutory bodies for promoting long-term cultural development. Dr TANG queried whether it would be tantamount to indirect Government domination in contradiction with the principle of community-driven cultural development.

17. The Commission Chairman responded that cultural development in every community was an arduous task which needed active participation and consensus of both the Government and the public. He did not consider that the Government was taking a dominant role since local communities and performance groups could proactively seek funding support and apply for use of performance venues for organising cultural activities from LCSD and HKADC, etc. In particular, increasing autonomy of the three performing companies, namely the Hong Kong Chinese Orchestra, the Hong Kong Dance Company and the Hong Kong Repertory Theatre, by way of corporatisation was proceeded in the light of enhancing community-driven development of cultural programmes in these areas.

18. The Chairman and Mr WU King-cheong were of the view that the Administration should adopt a non-interventionist policy to enhance community-driven cultural development. The Commission Chairman responded that the six principles and strategies highlighted in the consultation paper were interdependent among each other and equally important for the purpose of cultural development. They were recommended to be implemented in a well coordinated manner.

19. Miss Cyd HO considered that corporatisation of performing companies should aim at enriching the community-driven element in statutory bodies for providing cultural services. Allocation of cultural resources should not be reduced. She cited the example of the Hong Kong Philharmonic Orchestra to illustrate that corporatisation without proper consultation might lead to a lot of management problems.

20. The Commission Chairman opined that the proposal to corporatise was mainly to achieve management independence and self-financing. While the Administration and the community as a whole appeared to be in favour of gradual corporatisation of the performing companies, the Commission had not reached a conclusion on the issue.

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Overseas experience

21. Mr WU King-cheong declared interest as Chairman of the Hong Kong Dancing Company Limited. He expressed support for the principles and strategies put forwarded by the Commission for long-term cultural development. He cited the National Ballet of Canada as an example to illustrate that cultural development did require government funding support to thrive. He pointed out that the career span of a performing artist was relatively short. The Administration should provide adequate incentives and work arrangement after retirement to attract young talents to engage in dance performances.

22. The Commission Chairman responded that through coordination of community efforts, a national-wide network had been established in Canada to facilitate the fostering of young talents in ballet performance. With sufficient funding support from the local governments, junior schools in each province would train and recommend students with an aptitude for ballet to the National Ballet of Canada for advanced professional training. The success of Canada was mainly the result of a national favour and support for ballet performance, which demonstrated that cultural development could not be separated from the needs of the people and the community at large. He added that unlike Canada, Hong Kong did not have a well-formulated policy for cultural development yet. Hopefully, the Commission would be able to fulfill the mission by advising the Government on the issue.

Coordination of efforts

23. Miss Cyd HO said that as a Legislative Council member, she was concerned about the powers and functions of the Commission in the context of cultural development, and how the Commission would strengthen coordination among relevant government departments and public bodies. The Chairman added that the Administration had delayed time and again making a decision on the construction of Tai Po Civic Centre on the excuse that its consultation with the Commission was still underway.

24. The Commission Chairman clarified that the Commission was only an advisory body and would not interfere with the formulation and execution of cultural policies for the construction of individual civic centres. He understood that the Administration was reviewing the policy of providing civic centres and might take the Commission's advice into consideration before deciding the standard and policy for the provision of civic centres.

Preservation of heritage

25. Dr TANG Siu-tong considered that the Government should provide reasonable compensation to owners and bear the maintenance cost for conservation and preservation of historical buildings and archaeological sites. The Commission Chairman responded that while the Commission would

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recommend strategies for better preservation of local heritage, the Chairman of AAB, an ex-officio member of the Commission, was also working closely with the Administration in this regard. The amount of government allocation available would be determined by various stakeholders.

The way forward of the Commission

26. Mr Timothy FOK expressed appreciation of the Commission Chairman's dedication to the Commission's work. Given limited resources, Mr FOK suggested that the Commission should liaise with the Government on how to establish a fair and transparent funding mechanism to provide a level-playing field to various stakeholders in the cultural sector. The Commission Chairman responded that he would consider the suggestion.

27. Miss Cyd HO enquired about the Commission's plans after the consultation exercise. The Commission Chairman responded that the next move of the Commission would depend on the results of the current consultation. So far the response to the consultation had been favourable and the Commission would make its final recommendations to the Administration. He informed members that the Commission would hold a retreat meeting in end of May to review work progress and decide the way forward.

V. Upgrading of Hong Kong's sports facilities
[Paper No.CB(2)1301/00-01(01)]

28. At the invitation of the Chairman, Principal Assistant Secretary for Home Affairs (Recreation and Sports) (PAS(HA)R&S) briefed members on the latest progress in planning to enhance the choice of major sports venues in Hong Kong as highlighted in the Administration's paper. In response to the Chairman, PAS(HA)R&S confirmed that a consultancy study report on the requirements for major new sports and recreation venues including the need for a major stadium in Hong Kong would be available for discussion in June 2001.

Construction of a new stadium

29. Mr Albert CHAN was of the view that the new stadium to be constructed should be able to cater for the needs of major new sports events for two to three decades. The new stadium should be planned and designed in a cost-effective manner. It should be able to cater for the long-term needs of the community in sports facilities and provide flexibility in seating configurations for different purposes, taking into account the environmental constraints on stadium operation such as noise problems. Mr CHAN considered that the South East Kowloon Development at the former Kai Tak airport was not a suitable place for construction of the new stadium, having regard to its location and the surrounding environment. Mr IP Kwok-him also asked whether the West Kowloon Reclamation Development was one of the options under consideration.

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30. PAS/(HA)R&S clarified that the Administration intended to complete the planning of a comprehensive construction programme for a major stadium and other requirements which could cater for the needs for major new sports and recreation venues over the next twenty to thirty years. The appointed consultant should consider all feasible locations for the new stadium and recommend the most suitable sites in terms of accessibility, supporting infrastructure, surrounding environment, size of site area, etc. Both the South East Kowloon and the West Kowloon Reclamation sites should be carefully examined for such purpose. The range of facilities to be provided would be decided after a detailed feasibility study including an in-depth cost-benefit analysis. Mr Albert CHAN urged the Administration to conduct a comprehensive planning for the range of necessary facilities to be provided in the new stadium. He stressed that the Administration should include sufficient complementary and ancillary facilities necessary for the Government to host international sports events.

Purpose and cost of a new stadium

31. Miss Cyd HO asked about the main purpose of constructing a new sports stadium and the cost and schedule for the consultancy study. PAS/(HA)R&S responded that the need for a new stadium arose mainly from the problems with the current Hong Kong Stadium and the potential for Hong Kong to host major events in the future. As with other major construction projects, the Administration would carefully explore the financial viability of managing the operation of the new stadium. As regards expenditure for the consultancy study, the Administration had been able to keep the expenditure below the \$3 million budget. The schedule for the tendering, commencement and completion of the consultancy study would be specified in the consultancy report available in June 2001.

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32. Miss Cyd HO expressed concern that the Administration might allocate huge amount of resources for constructing major sports and recreation facilities at the expense of sports and recreation facilities at community level. At her request, PAS/(HA)R&S undertook to provide information on resources allocation to constructing major sports and recreation facilities vis-à-vis sports and recreation facilities at community level.

Long-term policy and strategy for sports development

33. Members were of the view that the consultancy report on upgrading of sports facilities should be discussed in the light of the long-term policies and strategies for sports development. The Chairman suggested that the Administration should provide the consultancy report and appropriate information for discussion at the regular meeting in June 2001.

34. PAS/(HA)R&S responded that as highlighted in the 2000 Policy Address, HAB had established a Sports Policy Review Team in April 2001 to start

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working on formulation of a long-term strategy for sports development. The team was currently consulting local and overseas sports organisations and other interested parties on issues related to sports policy, with a view to issuing a report before the end of this year. He undertook to provide relevant information for discussion of the consultancy report in June 2001.

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VI. Any other business

35. There being no further business, the meeting ended at 6:00 pm.

Legislative Council Secretariat

4 September 2001