

立法會
Legislative Council

Ref : CB2/DC/IS/05

LC Paper No. CB(2)856/05-06
(These minutes have been cleared
with the Convenor)

**Extract from the minutes of LegCo Members' Meeting with
Islands District Council Members
on Thursday, 24 November 2005 at 10:45 am
in Conference Room A of the Legislative Council Building**

Members present : Hon LEE Cheuk-yan (Convenor)
Hon Mrs Selina CHOW LIANG Shuk-ye, GBS, JP
Hon LAU Wong-fat, GBM, GBS, JP
Hon WONG Kwok-hing, MH
Hon Daniel LAM Wai-keung, BBS, JP
Hon CHEUNG Hok-ming, SBS, JP

By invitation : **Islands District Council**

Hon Daniel LAM Wai-keung, BBS, JP (Chairman)
Ms CHAU Chuen-heung, MH, JP (Vice Chairman)
Mr LEE Chi-fung, MH
Mr YUNG Chi-ming, MH
Ms LEE Kwai-chun, MH
Mr KWONG Kwok-wai, MH
Mr LAM Kit-sing
Miss YUNG Wing-sheung, Amy
Mr WONG Fuk-kan
Mr LEUNG Siu-tong
Mr LO Kwong-shing, Andy
Mr WAN Tung-lam, Tony
Rev SIK Chi-wai, BBS

**Islands District Office
District Council Secretariat**

Ms CHAN Shui-ping, Esther
Senior Executive Officer

Staff in attendance : Mrs Sharon TONG
Chief Council Secretary (2)1

Miss Josephine SO
Council Secretary (2)1

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II. Fare increase application by New World First Ferry Company Limited

15. Ms LEE Kwai-chun said that all rural committees of the Islands District had once joined hands to request the World First Ferry Company Limited (NWFF) for a freeze of fares. She was disappointed that NWFF had submitted in September 2005 to the Transport Department (TD) an application for fare adjustment for five licensed ferry routes. Ms LEE advised that the residents of the outlying islands had grave concern about the proposed increase of fare. Ms LEE further pointed out that as residents of outlying islands relied heavily on ferry services as their major transport, too high a fare increase would seriously affect their livelihood. She hoped that the Administration would carefully consider NWFF's fare adjustment application.

16. Mr WONG Kwok-hing said that the Complaints Division of the LegCo Secretariat had received a petition from residents in Cheung Chau, Mui Wo and Peng Chau against NWFF's fare adjustment application and had arranged a case conference in early November 2005 to discuss the matter with the authorities concerned. Mr WONG advised that TD understood the concerns of residents of outlying islands, and noted the views of LegCo Members that NWFF's fare adjustment application needed to be carefully considered, and had agreed to revert to LegCo when a decision was made.

17. Mr LAM Wai-keung said that he and some IsDC members had recently met with the Secretary for the Environment, Transport and Works and had suggested to her some measures for improving NWFF's business.

18. Mrs Selina CHOW shared IsDC members' concerns. She pointed out that apart from affecting the residents of outlying islands, fares increase could have a negative impact on the tourism of the Islands District since too high a fare for ferry services, particularly on Sundays and Public Holidays, would discourage local people and tourists from visiting the outlying islands. This would in the end become an impediment to the development of tourism in these areas. Mrs CHOW said that NWFF should explore whether there were means to increase income other than fare increase.

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19. Mr YUNG Chi-ming suggested that NWFF could, in partnership with travel agencies, offer chartered ferry services to outlying islands on holidays for local tours, or make good use of the space of the ferry piers for posting of advertisements. Mr YUNG further said that lowering the fares could help improve the business and bring in higher income.

20. Mr KWONG Kwok-wai said that NWFF should take a more flexible approach in scheduling the ferry services to cater for the circumstances. For example, NWFF could adjust or reduce the frequency of ferry services for off-peak hours so as to reduce the operating cost.

21. Mr LAM Wai-keung was of the view that NWFF should charge passengers the same fee, irrespective of whether normal-speed ferry or speedboat was used, for identical route of ferry services.

22. The Convenor suggested that the Administration should draw reference to the mode of operation of the Cross Harbour Tunnel, i.e. the Government would pay a management fee to ferry service company and contract out the provision of ferry services to transport operator. In his view, this mode of operation could balance the interests of different parties, including the public, the ferry companies and the Government. He further suggested that the financial position of NWFF be thoroughly examined to see if fare increase was justifiable.

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23. The Convenor said that the views and suggestions of IsDC members on NWFF's fare increase application be conveyed to the Members in the case conference referred to in paragraph 16 above.

24. Mr KWONG Kwok-wai said that the Islands District had great potential for tourism development, taking into account of its vast area and scenic environment, with a wealth of cultural heritage and relics. He hoped that the Government could allocate more resources and come up with a systematic plan for promoting tourism in the Islands District. Mr KWONG suggested that an advisory committee on local tourism be set up under Hong Kong Tourism Board (HKTB) for promoting and developing local tourism.

25. Mrs Selina CHOW pointed out that local tourism was outside the purview of HKTB. Mrs CHOW considered that the Government should formulate policies, strategies and plans for promoting local tourism, since Hong Kong did not have any organisation of the like to coordinate the work of different sectors and government departments for promoting local tourism. Mrs CHOW said that the Administration should decide which Bureau should take a leading role in promoting local tourism.

26. Ms CHAU Chuen-heung and Ms LEE Kwai-chun expressed support for Mrs CHOW's suggestion. They considered that a well-coordinated policy on

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promoting local tourism would not only be conducive to the development of Islands District but beneficial to the overall economy of Hong Kong, since it could help create employment opportunities. Ms CHAU also considered that the practice of levying surcharge on ferry services on Sundays and Public Holidays was not realistic and should be abandoned.

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27. The Convenor suggested that the concerns and views of Members and IsDC members on the need to formulate policies and strategies for promotion of local tourism be conveyed to the Panel on Home Affairs for consideration. Members agreed.

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Council Business Division 2
Legislative Council Secretariat
12 January 2006