

立法會
Legislative Council

LC Paper No. CB(1)2772/08-09
(These minutes have been seen
by the Administration)

Ref : CB1/PL/DEV/1

Panel on Development

**Minutes of special meeting
held on Wednesday, 15 April 2009, at 9:00 am
in the Chamber of the Legislative Council Building**

- Members present** : Hon LAU Wong-fat, GBM, GBS, JP (Chairman)
Prof Hon Patrick LAU Sau-shing, SBS, JP (Deputy Chairman)
Hon Albert HO Chun-yan
Ir Dr Hon Raymond HO Chung-tai, SBS, S.B.St.J., JP
Hon James TO Kun-sun
Hon CHAN Kam-lam, SBS, JP
Hon Mrs Sophie LEUNG LAU Yau-fun, GBS, JP
Hon Emily LAU Wai-hing, JP
Hon Timothy FOK Tsun-ting, GBS, JP
Hon Albert CHAN Wai-yip
Hon Alan LEONG Kah-kit, SC
Hon CHEUNG Hok-ming, SBS, JP
Hon KAM Nai-wai, MH
Hon Cyd HO Sau-lan
Hon Starry LEE Wai-king
Hon Tanya CHAN
Dr Hon Priscilla LEUNG Mei-fun
Hon IP Kwok-him, GBS, JP
Hon Mrs Regina IP LAU Suk-ye, GBS, JP
Dr Hon Samson TAM Wai-ho, JP
- Members absent** : Dr Hon Philip WONG Yu-hong, GBS
Hon WONG Yung-kan, SBS, JP
Hon Abraham SHEK Lai-him, SBS, JP
Hon LEE Wing-tat

**Public officers
attending**

: Agenda item I

Mrs Carrie LAM
Secretary for Development

Mr Laurie LO
Principal Assistant Secretary for Development
(Planning and Lands) 4

**Attendance by
Invitation**

: Agenda item I

Mr Quinn LAW
Managing Director
Urban Renewal Authority

Ms Iris TAM
Executive Director
Urban Renewal Authority

Dr C K LAW
Hong Kong University Research Team

Deputations

H19 Owners' and Tenants' Right Concern Group

Mr David TAM
Representative

Mr Dare KOSLOW
Representative

Civic Party

Mr Thomas YU
Chairman of Kowloon East Branch

關注重建舊區(觀塘)居民協會

Mr YUEN Yan-fai
Chairman

Ms YU Yuk-sheung
Committee Member

Alliance of Kwun Tong's Urban Renewal

Ms Helen WONG
Chairlady

Individual

Mr MA Chi-shing

Community Cultural Concern

Mr Keith AU
Coordinator

People Planning in Action

Mr WONG Ho-yin
Member

Individual

Mr LEUNG Chun-yin

H15 Concern Group

Mrs KAM FOK Lai-ching
Committee Member

重建聯區居民業主聯會

Ms YIP Mee-yung
Representative

The Professional Commons

Mr Stanley NG
Member, Strategy Committee

The Association of Architectural Practices

Miss Audrey MAK
Member

Individual

Mr Brandon YOUNG Kwok-kin

Individual

Ms LAU Shuk-ching

Amoy Street Concern Group

Mr MAK Yin-ping

Member

Mr SIN Yau-kan

Member

Individual

Mr LAI Kin-kwok

Programme Leader, Department of Social Sciences

Caritas Francis Hsu College

深水埗重建關注組

Mr WONG Nai-chung

Member

Miss CHAU Yee-mei

Member

Community Development Alliance

Miss WONG Wing-chi

Member

Miss CHU Kin-yee

Member

The Hong Kong Institute of Landscape Architects

Mr Evans IU

Vice President

The Hong Kong Institute of Surveyors

Mr Lawrence POON

Chairman of General Practice Division

The Hong Kong Council of Social Service

Mr Laurence LAM
Convener of Focus Group on URS Review

Central and Western Concern Group

Mr John BATTEN
Co-convenor

The Lion Rock Institute

Miss Nicole ALPERT
Research Associate

Individual

Mr NG Kam-kiu

v-activist

Miss FAN Shum-yue
Executive Manager

Wan Chai Street Market Concern Group

Mr CHAN Hok-fung
Member

活在觀塘

Mr YUEN Chi-yan
Member

Individual

Mr TSE Tak-man

Clerk in attendance : Ms Anita SIT
Chief Council Secretary (1)4

Staff in attendance : Mr WONG Siu-yee
Senior Council Secretary (1)7

Ms Christina SHIU
Legislative Assistant (1)7

Action

I Review of the Urban Renewal Strategy

- (LC Paper No. CB(1)1240/08-09(01) -- Administration's paper on review of the Urban Renewal Strategy
- LC Paper No. CB(1)570/08-09(08) -- Administration's paper on review of the Urban Renewal Strategy
- LC Paper No. CB(1)570/08-09(09) -- Paper on Urban Renewal Strategy prepared by the Legislative Council Secretariat (Background brief)

Submissions from organizations not attending the meeting

- (LC Paper No. CB(1)1240/08-09(06) -- Letter from The Real Estate Developers Association of Hong Kong dated 30 March 2009
- LC Paper No. CB(1)1240/08-09(07) -- Submission from The Hong Kong Institute of Planners dated 3 April 2009
- LC Paper No. CB(1)1240/08-09(08) -- Submission from Green Sense dated 2 April 2009)

Members noted the following submissions tabled at the meeting --

- (a) submission from Civic Party;
- (b) submission from Alliance of Kwun Tong's Urban Renewal dated 14 April 2009;
- (c) submission from Mr MA Chi-shing;
- (d) submission from People Planning in Action dated 13 April 2009;
- (e) submission from Mr LEUNG Chun-yin dated 15 April 2009;

- (f) submission from H15 Concern Group dated 15 April 2009;
- (g) submission from The Hong Kong Institute of Landscape Architects dated 15 April 2009;
- (h) submission from Wan Chai Street Market Concern Group dated 15 April 2009; and
- (i) submission from Dr CHEN Yun-chung dated 14 April 2009.

(Post-meeting note: The above submissions (LC Papers No. CB(1)1311/08-09(01) to (06),(08), (10) and (12) respectively) were issued on 16 April 2009 by email.)

Session 1

Presentation by deputations

2. The Chairman invited deputations to present their views.

*H19 Owners' and Tenants' Right Concern Group
(LC Paper No. CB(1)1240/08-09(02))*

3. Mr David TAM, Representative, H19 Owners' and Tenants' Right Concern Group, delivered his presentation, the details of which were given in the relevant submission. Mr Dare KOSLOW, Representative, H19 Owners' and Tenants' Right Concern Group, said that only if there was no threat that their properties would be taken away by the Government or Urban Renewal Authority (URA) would owners continue to renovate and maintain their properties. He shared the view that URA should revitalize the district and provide assistance to needy owners but disagreed with it on how it would carry out the project and what should be conserved. The buildings there were not in a state of decay or beyond repair. The Buildings Department had indicated that the building in which his flat was located was in a sound condition. Therefore, saying that those buildings should be demolished because they were in a state of disrepair was untrue. Although not historical, those buildings had some aesthetical values and uniqueness. Many tourists liked such cityscape and visit the district. Developing high-rise buildings was not the only option for urban renewal. Districts with old cityscape like Staunton Street should be preserved for the future generations. While some owners chose to move out, some other owners like himself wanted to stay.

Civic Party

(LC Paper No. CB(1)1311/08-09(01), tabled and soft copy issued on 16 April 2009 by email)

4. Mr Thomas YU, Chairman of Kowloon East Branch, Civic Party, delivered his presentation, the details of which were given in the relevant submission. He added that the experience gained from the Kwun Tong Town Centre project could provide a direction for the Review of the Urban Renewal Strategy (the URS Review). He thus urged URA to conduct a detailed tracking study on the affected owners, residents and business operators.

關注重建舊區(觀塘)居民協會

5. Mr YUEN Yan-fai, Chairman, 關注重建舊區(觀塘)居民協會, said that URA exploited the opportunity of the financial tsunami to make acquisition offers for the Kwun Tong Town Centre project, and misleadingly claimed that the compensation was more than enough for purchasing a similar flat at Laguna City. This might be possible for only some of the owners. URA unreasonably deducted the compensation for some owners out of commercial considerations. Whether ex-gratia allowance for self-occupied owners would be given solely depended on the decision of URA staff by searching personal information of the owners recklessly. Owners could only use the compensation to purchase flats aged 30 to 40 years. The valuations made by the 11 surveyors used incomparable districts and were not comprehensive enough. Residents could not photocopy, photograph, or disseminate in any manner the valuation reports deposited at URA's resource centre. The public could judge by themselves whether the project would benefit elderly residents. He hoped that the Panel would form a subcommittee to follow up the matter.

Alliance of Kwun Tong's Urban Renewal

(LC Paper No. CB(1)1311/08-09(02), tabled and soft copy issued on 16 April 2009 by email)

6. Ms Helen WONG, Chairlady, Alliance of Kwun Tong's Urban Renewal, delivered her presentation, the details of which were given in the relevant submission.

Mr MA Chi-shing

(LC Paper No. CB(1)1311/08-09(03), tabled and soft copy issued on 16 April 2009 by email)

7. Mr MA Chi-shing delivered his presentation, the details of which were given in the relevant submission.

Community Cultural Concern

8. Mr Keith AU, Coordinator, Community Cultural Concern, objected to the idea of expanding URA's functions to include the redevelopment of industrial districts. The intent of URA to redevelop industrial buildings was purely commercial and real estates oriented. It was unrelated to improving the living environment in old districts. He was worried redevelopment of industrial buildings would affect the operators of small industrial businesses and practitioners of the creative industries. Industrial buildings had high ceilings and offered large floor areas. URA's monotonic approach was unsuitable for handling such projects. The private sector was already capable of renewing industrial districts by implementing commercial or residential developments in districts like Kwun Tong. Many creative industries had set up their offices in Kwun Tong and Fo Tan. URA lacked experience in the creative industries and allowing it to redevelop industrial districts would destroy the creative industries network. Redevelopment and revitalization of industrial districts should be led by bureaux/departments responsible for art and cultural matters and research was required for studying their impact. URA's emphasis on the real estates development approach would stifle the creative industries. He was also worried that waterfront industrial districts like Wong Chuk Hang, Yau Tong and Kwun Tong would be redeveloped into luxury residential districts. This would deprive the public of waterfront public space.

People Planning in Action

(LC Paper No. CB(1)1311/08-09(04), tabled and soft copy issued on 16 April 2009 by email)

9. Mr WONG Ho-yin, Member, People Planning in Action, delivered his presentation, the details of which were given in the relevant submission.

Mr LEUNG Chun-yin

(LC Paper No. CB(1)1311/08-09(05), tabled and soft copy issued on 16 April 2009 by email)

10. Mr LEUNG Chun-yin delivered his presentation, the details of which were given in the relevant submission. He added that a subcommittee should be formed and legislative amendments should be introduced to change URA's practices.

H15 Concern Group

(LC Paper No. CB(1)1311/08-09(06), tabled and soft copy issued on 16 April 2009 by email)

11. Mrs KAM FOK Lai-ching, Committee Member, H15 Concern Group, delivered her presentation, the details of which were given in the relevant submission.

重建聯區居民業主聯會

12. Ms YIP Mee-yung, Representative, 重建聯區居民業主聯會 said that although the URS Review was overdue, it was still better than no review at all. URA intended to implement 225 urban renewal projects within 20 years. Up to 2009, URA had only implemented fewer than 40 projects. It had to implement nearly 190 projects in the coming 12 years and this was problematic. Although the URS stated that urban renewal should be people oriented and should preserve the characteristics and social network of the affected districts, she did not consider that URA projects had achieved these goals. In the past, the joint association and the Administration had regular communications. However, the last time that the two communicated was already more than a year ago. She queried whether the Administration considered such communications no longer needed. She considered that flat-for-flat and shop-for-shop compensation should be provided as an option in future to create a win-win situation and social harmony. It was important for the Legislative Council (LegCo) to form a subcommittee to regulate URA's practices.

*The Professional Commons
(LC Paper No. CB(1)1240/08-09(03))*

13. Mr Stanley NG, Member, Strategy Committee, The Professional Commons, delivered his presentation, the details of which were given in the relevant submission. He added that the participation of District Councils was very important when implementing urban renewal projects, but they lacked sufficient powers to coordinate and resolve matters related to urban renewal. Hong Kong lacked long-term district-based planning with sufficient control. Transfer of plot ratio and land exchange should be promoted for URA's urban renewal projects.

The Association of Architectural Practices

14. Miss Audrey MAK, Member, The Association of Architectural Practices said that she would not make any oral presentation.

*Mr Brandon YOUNG Kwok-kin
(LC Paper No. CB(1)1311/08-09(07), soft copy of powerpoint presentation materials issued on 16 April 2009 by email)*

15. Mr Brandon YOUNG Kwok-kin, delivered his presentation, the details of which were given in the relevant powerpoint presentation materials. He added that the Government was manipulating residential property prices directly or indirectly, and voluntarily or involuntarily. URA's redevelopment projects led to an increase in the property prices and rentals in the surrounding areas. It was tantamount to robbing the poor and stealing from the middle-class. The less affluent residents and business operators were driven away from their original neighbourhood. URA was a public body receiving various kinds of Government subsidies. The new URS should mandate URA to provide affordable housing to

the majority of the affected residents instead of inflating property prices. URA should reserve part of the redeveloped flats for sale at a discounted price to affected owners who could not afford to purchase a flat at the marked-up market price. URA should provide the option of offering residential flats for affected residents. He urged that LegCo should form a subcommittee to monitor the operation of URA.

Ms LAU Shuk-ching

16. Ms LAU Shuk-ching said that she was the victim of a redevelopment project in Sham Shui Po. Her shop was resumed compulsorily at a price beyond her control. The existing system was unfair. She depended on her shop to make a living, maintain her children and support her living after retirement. The compensation was insufficient for her to purchase a similar shop and she was offered no assistance to restart her business. This was a severe blow to her and she had to face tremendous pressure. She had to bear the legal fees for the relevant proceedings. URA should review its practices.

Discussion

17. Mr Albert CHAN said that the most controversial issue was that the public could not decide where and when URA's redevelopment projects would be implemented. He invited deputations to give views on the idea that the locations of URA's redevelopment projects should be decided by majority vote of the residents on a district basis, and their views on the appropriate percentage of support required for implementing a redevelopment project.

18. Mr LEUNG Chun-yin said that the rights of the minority would be suppressed by the majority if a voting mechanism was adopted. He counter proposed that redevelopment projects could be implemented in phases. In each phase, the wishes of the residents concerned should be gauged and there should be flexibility for amending the redevelopment plan to accommodate their wishes.

19. Mr Brandon YOUNG Kwok-kin said that if the question of whether a redevelopment project should be implemented in a district was decided by a majority of those who were in favour of it, affected elderly residents would be left in a helpless situation.

20. Mr KAM Nai-wai said that he did not support the idea of deciding whether to implement a URA redevelopment project by voting among the residents concerned because other members of the public should also have the right to voice their views.

21. Mrs Regina IP considered that flat-for-flat and shop-for-shop compensation was fair and queried why such an option was not offered. The Administration should provide an explanation in this regard.

22. Ms Cyd HO considered that as the compensation agreements between the owners and URA were kept confidential, legal protection for the owners was diminished and they had to resort to the media to exert pressure on URA and the Administration. She asked when the Administration would amend the legislation in relation to residents' compensation and rights.

23. Mr Stanley NG, Member, Strategy Committee, The Professional Commons, shared the view that legal amendments relating to compensation and rights should be introduced. He said that a strategy was required in urban renewal, which should include a vertical dimension focusing on small districts, cultural elements, streetscape and building clusters; and a lateral dimension focusing on the overall redevelopment strategy for each large district. District Councils and the local community should be consulted before approval was given. In some overseas cities like New York, if the district councils expressed objection to urban renewal projects approved by the town planning authorities, the higher authorities would adjudicate and make a final decision on whether to implement those projects.

24. Ms YIP Mee-yung, Representative, 重建聯區居民業主聯會, said that the agreement between affected owners and URA should not be kept confidential and there should not be such confidential agreements in future. In implementing redevelopment projects, owners' rights in development were given away to URA. She queried why owner participation was not offered as an option. Affected tenants should be offered public rental housing. When implementing redevelopment projects, URA should not wipe out the streets in the redevelopment sites.

25. Ms YU Yuk-sheung, Committee Member, 關注重建舊區(觀塘)居民協會, said that compensation offered by URA was not people-oriented. The compensation offered was insufficient for purchasing a seven-year flat of the same size. No ex-gratia allowance would be given if the property concerned was not used as the sole residence. The compensation for rooftop structures, which was set by URA at one-eighth of the normal level, was too low and lacked legal basis. URA should explain why the compensation was set at such a low level and should enhance the disclosure of its financial information to the public.

26. Ms Helen WONG, Chairlady, Alliance of Kwun Tong's Urban Renewal, said that for the Kwun Tong Town Centre project, she did not consider that many affected self-occupied owners of the residential flats had accepted URA's acquisition offers. She shared the view that the compensation offered by URA was insufficient for purchasing a seven-year flat. Residents affected by the Kwun Tong Town Centre project disliked the current mode of compensation and Members should listen to their views. The Administration should exercise control over URA.

27. Ms Cyd HO expressed concern about how the Administration would ensure that there would be public engagement when implementing urban renewal

projects and how urban renewal projects would be financed in future. She considered that instead of studying overseas experience in urban renewal, local tracking studies should be conducted to study the changes in the quality of life of the affected parties.

28. Mr David TAM, Representative, H19 Owners' and Tenants' Right Concern Group, shared the view that the Administration should reflect on local experience in urban renewal. Mr Dare KOSLOW, Representative, H19 Owners' and Tenants' Right Concern Group, said that independent parties rather than URA should be engaged to conduct tracking studies to learn about the effects of urban renewal on affected residents because the results would be more accurate if the studies were conducted by independent parties.

29. Mrs KAM FOK Lai-ching, Committee Member, H15 Concern Group, said that social impact assessment and tracking studies should be conducted and they should be well coordinated. If no tracking studies were conducted, whether the life of the affected residents was better after they had moved out would remain unknown.

30. Miss Tanya CHAN declared that she was a non-official non-executive director of the URA Board. She said that the assistance provided by social workers to residents affected by URA's projects was not comprehensive enough.

31. Mr WONG Ho-yin, Member, People Planning in Action, considered that social workers providing assistance to affected residents were not independent resource-wise. He often heard that social workers were asked by their supervisors not to devote full effort to assist affected residents. As some surveys showed that about 40% of the affected residents had moved to another district, he queried the usefulness of conducting social impact assessment only within the redevelopment district. URA should undertake to assist the affected residents if they wanted to remain in the original district. URA should also disclose the details of the social impact assessment reports that it had conducted so that the public could have more information to discuss the URS Review in an interactive manner.

32. Mr LEUNG Chun-yin considered that social workers could not assist affected residents because they were not independent and residents had to move out in the end without an option for them to stay.

33. Mr Brandon YOUNG Kwok-kin said that a tracking study conducted in Sham Shui Po by an independent agency Policy 21 of The University of Hong Kong showed that the participation rate was quite high. If tracking studies were conducted by the Administration, residents might be less willing to participate. According to the URS, social workers providing assistance to affected residents should be independent. The tracking study showed they could not assist residents because they lacked independency and were under pressure from their supervisors. All they could do was to help residents write letters to URA.

34. Mr Alan LEONG said that cooperation was required in conducting tracking studies. He considered that the URS Review should have been conducted much earlier. The URS Review was a must. He did not accept the view that it was conducted in 2008 because there was a need to do so by then. He solicited deputations' views on the financial arrangements for URA to implement urban renewal projects and said that if the Administration had to bear the costs, URA would not be self-sufficient. He considered that the profits or losses of urban renewal projects should be viewed from a territory-wide basis rather than a site by site basis.

35. Mr Stanley NG, Member, Strategy Committee, The Professional Commons, said that urban renewal projects should not aim at making profits and Government input was needed. Mr LEUNG Chun-yin said that URA projects were mainly implemented in downtown sites where the premium was likely to rise. By way of illustration, profitable projects were implemented by URA in Tai Kok Tsui by redeveloping shophouses. Mr Brandon YOUNG Kwok-kin said that according to the URS, URA should not have any surpluses in the long run. Nevertheless, URA had surpluses at present because of the luxury hotels, offices and residential flats that it had developed and the air rights of streets that it had obtained.

36. Mr KAM Nai-wai said that compensation and rehousing were always an issue in redevelopment. Other factors such as conservation and development density had also become a concern recently. The Administration should review the bulldozing approach in urban renewal and consider what approach to adopt in future. The crux was how to secure residents' acceptance of the redevelopment proposals. He considered that the Kwun Tong Town Centre project had some improvements. If development density was too low, no developer would be willing to implement redevelopment projects. He expressed concern about the role of the Administration under such circumstances.

37. Mrs Regina IP considered that for the Staunton Street/Wing Lee Street project, the characteristics of the district should be preserved. Miss Tanya CHAN also expressed concern about the approach that URA would adopt in implementing the Staunton Street/Wing Lee Street project and whether rehabilitation would be carried out to preserve the characteristics of the district.

38. Mr Dare KOSLOW, Representative, H19 Owners' and Tenants' Right Concern Group, said that many owners in the Staunton Street/Wing Lee Street district had renovated their flats to a high standard. Apart from redevelopment, there were many methods to beautify a district and make it an interesting place.

39. Mr Stanley NG, Member, Strategy Committee, The Professional Commons, said that although redevelopment was not the only method in urban renewal, the quality of some old buildings was unsatisfactory and public safety might be at risk. Compared with other cities like Singapore, the per capita living area for grassroots in Hong Kong was much smaller.

40. Ms Cyd HO suggested that a subcommittee should be formed under the Panel to study matters related to urban renewal. Ms Emily LAU solicited deputations' views on whether forming a subcommittee under the Panel would be conducive to the URS Review.

41. Ms YU Yuk-sheung, Committee Member, 關注重建舊區(觀塘)居民協會, Mr WONG Ho-yin, Member, People Planning in Action, Mr Brandon YOUNG Kwok-kin and Mr LEUNG Chun-yin expressed support for forming a subcommittee to follow up the URS Review. Mr Brandon YOUNG Kwok-kin considered that the Legislative Council was empowered by the public to represent them and it should monitor the Administration and URA. Mr LEUNG Chun-yin considered that the Legislative Council should steer the process of the URS Review because the Steering Committee on Review of the Urban Renewal Strategy (the Steering Committee) lacked a democratic element and could not represent the public to monitor the review process.

42. The Secretary for Development (SDEV) responded that the controversies relating to some URA projects were due to changing circumstances and public aspirations for a lower development density. While the URS Review was needed to respond to the rapidly changing external circumstances, the on-going URA projects should not be affected and should continue to proceed, because these projects responded directly to the aspirations and wishes of residents living in the old districts. Whether URA should proceed with all the planned 225 projects included in the current URS would need further consideration though. If it was decided that they should proceed, how to reduce possible conflicts in implementing those projects was important. The current public engagement process was different from that in the past: the Administration noted public aspirations in relation to planning; controls over development density were in place; and the point-line-plane approach was adopted in heritage conservation. As regards compensation options, the suggestion of offering flat-for-flat and shop-for-shop compensation as an option involved technical issues that required detailed consideration and the Administration would continue to explore the matter. In relation to tracking studies, a three-stage tracking study was being conducted on a trial basis for the Hai Tan Street project - 500 affected residents had been invited to participate in the study, and 10 owners and some 90 tenants had agreed to participate. They would be interviewed before they moved out, one month after they had moved out and six months after they had moved out. As pointed out by the Financial Secretary in his Budget Speech for this year, redevelopment was not the only or mainstream option for urban renewal. The relative weighting of each of the 4R strategy for urban renewal was a study focus in the URS Review. The development density of the Staunton Street/Wing Lee Street project had been drastically reduced to conserve the characteristics of the district and the project was expected to incur a loss of several hundred million dollars.

43. SDEV further said that the Administration should focus on reviewing the URS and strive to conduct the URS Review in an open and transparent manner. She welcomed holding meetings to gather public views. She would listen to and

collate the views of deputations and relay them to the Steering Committee for further discussion. As Chairperson of the Steering Committee, she would provide steer to the URS Review, taking into account the views of the community and members of the Steering Committee. The agenda and notes of the Steering Committee would be disseminated through the URS Review website. The report of The Hong Kong University Research Team on overseas experience in urban renewal would also be disseminated through the website. She clarified that the idea for URA to expand its scope of responsibilities to include redevelopment of industrial buildings and harbourfront areas was a suggestion received during the Envisioning Stage of the URS Review, so it was included in the current Public Engagement Stage for further discussions by the public. The Administration had not yet formed a view on this suggestion.

44. Mr Quinn LAW, Managing Director, URA, said that some residents affected by the Kwun Tong Town Centre project had purchased quality flats in Lam Tin, Tseung Kwan O or even Kwun Tong. URA had completed making initial acquisition offers and it would continue to discuss with the affected residents. URA's surveyors had exchanged views with affected residents on matters related to valuation. Social workers would provide assistance to affected residents.

Session 2

Presentation by deputations

Amoy Street Concern Group

45. Mr MAK Yin-ping, Member, Amoy Street Concern Group, said that they objected to the urban redevelopment project affecting the residents of Amoy Street. They queried the way in which the Town Planning Board and URA handle the matter because residents were not informed of the traffic diversions that would arise from the redevelopment project concerned. A park on Amoy Street would be lost and residents were deprived of their rights. He hoped that members would pay close attention to the matter. Mr SIN Yau-kan, Member, Amoy Street Concern Group, said that URA changed the layout of the streets in order to maximize the gross floor area of the project. The construction of a roundabout, carpark entrance and exit, and taxi pick-up and drop-off points at Amoy Street would lead to air pollution, traffic congestion and conflicts between pedestrians and vehicles. He queried whether this was in line with the principles of adopting a people-oriented approach, maintaining social networks and enhancing the living conditions of the residents in urban renewal projects. He strongly urged that a subcommittee be formed to study the URS Review, receive complaints from the public, monitor URA's operation, raise the transparency of planning and redevelopment, and consult affected residents living in the redeveloped and surrounding districts. District Councils should collect views from affected parties and discuss related issues. Redevelopment projects should only proceed after a consensus had been reached.

*Mr LAI Kin-kwok, Programme Leader, Department of Social Sciences, Caritas Francis Hsu College
(LC Paper No. CB(1)1289/08-09(01))*

46. Mr LAI Kin-kwok, Programme Leader, Department of Social Sciences, Caritas Francis Hsu College, delivered his presentation, the details of which were given in the relevant submission.

Community Development Alliance

47. Miss WONG Wing-chi, Member, Community Development Alliance said that they were concerned whether social work teams could assist residents during urban renewal and knew what residents needed. Apart from handling residents' emotions and assisting them to adapt to their new living environment after moving out, which were no easy tasks, she hoped that social work teams could also facilitate residents' participation in urban renewal. Residents in old districts had close social ties, but urban renewal would inevitably destroy their social networks and memories of the old districts. Some residents would even visit their old neighbours everyday after they had moved out just to chat with them. There was no channel for the social work teams to provide assistance if residents wanted to return to live in their old districts. She considered that social work teams should start their work at the early stage of a redevelopment project to organize the residents and enhance communication among parties concerned so that urban renewal could be better carried out.

*The Hong Kong Institute of Landscape Architects
(LC Paper No. CB(1)1311/08-09(08), tabled and soft copy issued on 16 April 2009 by email)*

48. Mr Evans IU, Vice President, The Hong Kong Institute of Landscape Architects, delivered his presentation, the details of which were given in the relevant submission. He added that there should be statutory requirements and long-term targets in greening. The public open space provided under urban renewal projects should be integrated with the original public open space or green areas in the district.

The Hong Kong Institute of Surveyors

49. Mr Lawrence POON, Chairman of General Practice Division, The Hong Kong Institute of Surveyors, said that The Hong Kong Institute of Surveyors had established a working group to explore various aspects of and provide constructive advice on the URS Review. At present, it considered that the scope of the URS Review should remain open and not be too limited. It considered that several aspects deserved in-depth study and exploration. URA should consider reviewing its strategy and focus to respond to calls for conservation and revitalization. Whether URA should continue to be solely responsible for all aspects of urban renewal and whether other bodies could share some of those aspects should be explored. Although society in general accepted that URA should be self-sufficient

financially, URA might have difficulty in balancing its books in face of the escalating calls for lower development density. Densely populated old districts requiring a substantial amount of funds for making acquisition offers might then be accorded a lower priority in redevelopment because of the financial pressure involved. Although the Administration considered the current resumption mechanism effective and fair, the valuation method and the basis and process of making acquisition offers could be reviewed.

*The Hong Kong Council of Social Service
(LC Paper No. CB(1)1240/08-09(04))*

50. Mr Laurence LAM, Convener of Focus Group on URS Review, The Hong Kong Council of Social Service, delivered his presentation, the details of which were given in the relevant submission. He added that he supported the suggestion of forming a subcommittee to follow up the URS Review.

Central and Western Concern Group

51. Mr John BATTEN, Co-convenor, Central and Western Concern Group, said that Hong Kong people lived in a crowded environment. The planning for Tseung Kwan O demonstrated a total failure in the town planning policy. The massive roads and buildings were incompatible with the living environment. The URS Review involved a wider issue. It was about the way in which the public lived in Hong Kong. Town planning in Hong Kong was unsustainable. There was a lot of dissatisfaction with town planning, which could be encapsulated as an outmoded mindset. Unless that mindset could be changed, there was no hope and conducting the URS Review was just a waste of time. If URA projects could create a better place for living, there would not be any complaints.

*Mr NG Kam-kiu
(LC Paper No. CB(1)1311/08-09(09), soft copy of powerpoint presentation materials issued on 16 April 2009 by email)*

52. Mr NG Kam-kiu delivered his presentation, the details of which were given in the relevant powerpoint presentation materials. He added that URA had failed to adhere to the guidelines in the URS and destroyed local characteristics and social networks. He queried why the Town Planning Board had approved URA's high-rise redevelopment projects. He considered that a subcommittee should be formed to monitor the URS Review.

v-artist

53. Miss FAN Shum-yue, Executive Manager, v-artist played a video to reflect the voices of the residents affected by urban renewal, the close social ties of the residents and the effects on affected business operators. She said that urban renewal had a huge impact on society and hoped that a subcommittee could be formed to follow up the URS Review.

*Wan Chai Street Market Concern Group
(LC Paper No. CB(1)1311/08-09(10), tabled and soft copy issued on 16 April 2009 by email)*

54. Mr CHAN Hok-fung, Member, Wan Chai Street Market Concern Group, delivered his presentation, the details of which were given in the relevant submission.

*活在觀塘
(LC Paper No. CB(1)1289/08-09(02); and LC Paper No. CB(1)1311/08-09(11), soft copy of powerpoint presentation materials issued on 16 April 2009 by email)*

55. Mr YUEN Chi-yan, Member, 活在觀塘, delivered his presentation, the details of which were given in the relevant submission and powerpoint presentation materials. He said that based on the information he collected from the Internet, URA's claim that the compensation for residents affected by the Kwun Tong Town Centre project was sufficient for them to purchase a seven-year flat in the same district was not substantiated. The majority of the residents moved to Tseung Kwan O, which was more remote. He queried why buildings in good or fair condition were included in the redevelopment boundary of the Kwun Tong Town Centre project, and why the sites for existing public facilities and public open space were included in the boundary but URA did not have to pay any premium. He also queried why some facilities for connecting the redeveloped site with the surrounding areas were to be constructed by other parties rather than URA. He expressed support for forming a subcommittee.

Mr TSE Tak-man

56. Mr TSE Tak-man said that URA was an "independent kingdom" which lacked accountability. It lacked financial transparency and competed with the public for benefits through offering bonuses to its staff. He was unconvinced of URA's claim that many of its projects would record deficits. The Government had injected funds into and offered premium-free redevelopment sites to URA. If URA still could not balance its books under the circumstances, it should discontinue with its work. URA could change its role. Instead of acting like a developer, it could provide consultancy to owners for them to redevelop their properties by adopting an approach similar to that in Taiwan. There were media reports that URA resumed owners' properties using disgraceful tactics. URA and the Hong Kong Housing Society sent undercover agents to attend residents' meetings to collect intelligence, but there were no guidelines on how they would use the information collected. Redevelopment was not required to solve dilapidation. The Government could carry out maintenance works. If owners refused to comply, the Government could register a charge against the titles of their properties. The Government could recoup the maintenance costs when the properties concerned were sold after the owners had passed away. The URS Review was problematic because instead of reviewing urban renewal work in the past, it sought overseas experience in urban renewal. He queried whether this complied with the relevant legislation. He also queried whether there was any

conflict of interest for the Administrations to engage Dr C K LAW in conducting the URS Review because he had served as URA's contractor in undertaking other work in the past. He expressed support for forming a subcommittee to follow up the URS Review.

深水埗重建關注組

57. Miss CHAU Yee-mei, Member, 深水埗重建關注組, said that URA staff used disgraceful tactics in their work. She had sought assistance from Members, the Complaints Division of the Legislative Council Secretariat and the relevant committee of the District Council concerned but her effort was to no avail because of their limited power. Without a good method to communicate with citizens, URA's public consultation would not achieve its purposes. She urged Members to support forming a subcommittee to monitor urban renewal work. She considered URA's urban renewal work not people-oriented. By way of illustration, an 85 years' old rooftop structure resident who did not want to move out was informed by frontline staff that she would be put into jail and a daily fine of \$100 would be imposed if she refused to move out. In another case, URA staff recorded the telephone numbers of the contacts of a crippled resident without giving explanation. An affected business operator refusing to move out lost the lawsuit and queried why URA's urban renewal work robbed one's livelihood if it was people-oriented.

*The Lion Rock Institute
(LC Paper No. CB(1)1240/08-09(05))*

58. Miss Nicole ALPERT, Research Associate, The Lion Rock Institute, delivered her presentation, the details of which were given in the relevant submission.

Discussion

59. Ms Emily LAU said that the Administration should settle disputes on urban renewal in order to gain the support of the Legislative Council. If society was satisfied with URA's projects, there would not be so many deputations requesting LegCo to look into the problems. She asked whether SDEV supported the suggestion of forming a subcommittee to study urban renewal matters. She also sought clarification on whether Dr C K LAW of The Hong Kong University Research Team had any conflict of interest in serving as the Administration's consultant.

60. SDEV responded that the Administration considered that the Panel could also study and discuss urban renewal matters in a focused manner and special meetings could be held if necessary. At present, the Subcommittee on Harbourfront Planning, Joint Subcommittee on Amendments to Land Titles Ordinance and Joint Subcommittee to Monitor the Implementation of the West Kowloon Cultural District Project had been formed under the Panel or jointly with another Panel. The Administration planned to have regular discussions with the

Panel on the URS Review and the present meeting was already the third meeting for discussing the subject in the current legislative session. Whether forming a subcommittee or not was not a major issue. Besides, forming a subcommittee could not solve all the problems and reconcile all the views relating to urban renewal. If the objective of the subcommittee was to conduct surveys or overseas studies, there might be overlap with the work of the Administration because the information collected by the Administration in these areas would be provided to the Legislative Council. If the objective of the subcommittee was to monitor the work of URA, it was unrelated to the URS Review. URA would continue with its work during the URS Review, but there would be fewer redevelopment projects in the coming year because it would be a period of consolidation for URA. It would be for members to decide whether to form a subcommittee taking into account their own workload, and the Administration would co-operate. Attendance by deputations would complement the discussions at meetings because they wished that Members could listen to their views. The Administration had introduced new methods of engaging the public in the URS Review through conducting activities such as public forums and focus groups, engaging partnering organizations and setting up an Idea Shop in Wan Chai. Dr C K LAW of The Hong Kong University Research Team did not have any conflict of interest because the team was responsible for fact-finding on urban renewal work in selected Asian cities. The team would not take the lead in the URS Review.

61. Mr Alan LEONG said that Members did not wish to duplicate the Administration's work, but were worried whether the URS Review was conducted in a fair manner and in the right direction. It would be a waste of time and resources if it was discovered in the end that Members and the Administration were going on separate ways. By way of illustration, he did not know whether the Administration would review and draw a conclusion for each clause of the URS. He also did not have information on the details and focus of the tracking study for the Hai Tan Street/Kweilin Street and Pei Ho Street project because the Administration did not provide such information. No Legislative Council Member was sitting on the Steering Committee. He asked how the Administration would allay Members' worries. He also asked whether the Administration would provide timely information on the URS Review so that Members could propose adjustments promptly if they considered that the direction of the URS Review had deviated from their expectation. If a subcommittee was formed, the Administration could provide progress reports on a regular basis. It would be undesirable if Members' input was sought not timely during the URS Review. In this regard, he enquired about the appropriate timing for Members to give their inputs.

62. SDEV responded that the Administration would solicit Members' views during the URS Review in an interactive way. Changes to the URS would need the support of the Legislative Council, and if legislative amendments or new financial arrangements were needed, approval by the Legislative Council would be required. The Envisioning Stage of the URS Review, which was aimed at soliciting input from the public to set the agenda for the review and was hence comparatively abstract, had just been completed, and neither the Administration

nor the Steering Committee had any preconceived views on the outcome of the review. She urged Members to give their views on whether the nine topics identified during the Envisioning Stage as set out in the Administration's paper for this meeting were sufficient and whether additional topics should be included for discussion during the Public Engagement Stage. The tracking study for the Hai Tan Street/Kweilin Street and Pei Ho Street project was one of the measures to enhance the implementation of urban renewal projects, and URA had some flexibility to adopt improved practices without waiting for conclusion of the entire review. Resources for the social service teams had been increased to address concerns about insufficient resources. The appropriate timing for Members to give their inputs would mainly depend on the initiatives of Members and whether a subcommittee was formed was not a major factor. By way of illustration, an item could be placed on the agenda of the Panel if Members wished to discuss a subject, and the Administration would prepare the discussion papers accordingly. For the Administration, proceeding with the work of the Steering Committee and reporting to the Panel on the progress of the URS Review could be done in parallel. Discussions by the Steering Committee had been reported to the Panel. The latest development was that the Steering Committee requested that more in-depth study should be conducted on a district-based urban renewal approach.

63. Mrs Regina IP said that she would offer some contrary views on social networks to facilitate a more comprehensive discussion. Although she agreed that support from social networks was very important for the elderly because they had restricted mobility and difficulty in adapting to a new environment, over-protection for the citizens, especially the younger generations, would reduce their adaptability to new environments. Hong Kong people's ability to cope with adverse circumstances and adaptability to different circumstances were important factors for Hong Kong's success. She queried whether it was desirable if citizens were protected to the point that they were unwilling to move to another district and establish new social networks. Sometimes, society needed creative destruction so as to release new creativity.

64. Miss CHAU Yee-mei, Member, 深水埗重建關注組, said that residents had sentiments towards the districts in which they lived and they had mutual ties. Natural regeneration within a district is also a kind of change. Constant relocation to another district was not the only way to create new developments. Likewise, destruction was not the only source of creativity. Nonetheless, she admitted that in a way, the destruction in human relationships and local economic activities brought about by URA had aroused creativity in the affected residents. For example, Sham Shui Po residents had created a website to voice their views on town planning and bottom-up public consultation.

65. Mrs Regina IP said that what she referred to was not constant changes without cause, but natural changes that occurred in the course of time. She was doubtful whether citizens really did not have the ability to move to another district and establish new social networks.

66. Miss CHAU Yee-mei, Member, 深水埗重建關注組 said that residents were not unwilling to change. In fact, social networks and human relationships were constantly changing. Yet, it was not a matter of whether citizens had the ability to establish new social networks, but whether it was necessary to wipe out the old social networks that the residents had built up over time.

67. Mr NG Kam-kiu said that the living environment and neighbourhood relationships in overseas places and Hong Kong were different. Overseas experience in urban renewal might not be applicable to Hong Kong. The current approach to redevelopment often separated residents and destroyed the family-like ties among them. Old districts also had services such as Internet access to cater for the needs of the younger generations.

68. Mr Albert HO expressed support for forming a subcommittee. As regards Mrs Regina IP's views on citizens' adaptability to new living environments, he said that he would not object to changes, but how the changes took place was an issue. More public engagement was required in this regard.

69. Prof Patrick LAU was concerned about the effect of urban renewal on the environment of the community. For the Sai Yee Street project, he was concerned that its outcome would not be in line with the principles of the URS. He queried why URA did not adopt the quintuple-win option that he and Mr Albert CHAN proposed so that the community concerned could evolve naturally. There was no need to adopt a demolition approach. He urged that there should be more communication with the Administration and suggested that the Steering Committee could meet with the Panel to exchange views.

70. Mr TSE Tak-man said that he shared Prof Patrick LAU's views. The Administration controlled all information on urban renewal and more information would be made available to the public if a subcommittee was formed. As such, he expressed support for forming a subcommittee.

71. Ms Cyd HO said that the meeting provided an opportunity for the public to learn about the unscrupulous acts of URA. She expressed support for forming a subcommittee to follow up with the URS Review, steer the way in which the Steering Committee carried out its work and monitor URA's work. The URS Review should have been conducted two to three years after 2001. Due to the lack of a mechanism on the side of the Legislative Council to follow up the matter, the URS Review only commenced recently. The Legislative Council had a role to monitor the work of the Administration. By way of illustration, why URA's acquisition offers should be treated as confidential agreements needed discussion and URS should provide an explanation and the legal basis for such an arrangement. Social workers concerned were afraid to voice their views openly. A lot of interests were involved in urban renewal work. She requested members to vote to express their attitude on whether a subcommittee should be formed. She considered that members who were not interested in following up urban renewal matters should not obstruct interested members to do so.

72. Mr Albert CHAN said that some residents whose properties were not included in URA's redevelopment projects longed for redevelopment of their properties. On the other hand, some residents whose properties were included in URA's redevelopment projects resisted redevelopment of their properties. Whether to redevelop an area was at present decided administratively and lacked transparency and participation by the residents and the public. He solicited deputations' views on whether it was a feasible option to allow residents concerned to decide whether they accepted URA's redevelopment projects through a voting mechanism based on detailed proposals provided by URA. He said that the principle of allowing residents to decide for themselves was important and asked whether the Administration would consider the issue in the URS Review. A number of deputations expressed support for such a principle with a show of hands.

73. SDEV responded that the issue was important and would be included in the URS Review. Mr Quinn LAW, Managing Director, URA, said that specific information on complaint cases against the acts of URA staff should be provided to URA to follow up.

74. At the direction of the Chairman, the Clerk explained that according to the House Rules, a proposal for forming a subcommittee under a Panel had to be prepared for the Panel's consideration. An item on a proposal of forming a subcommittee under the Panel to follow up matters related to urban renewal had been put on the agenda of the meeting on 24 February 2009. Members decided at that meeting to hold a Panel meeting to receive public views in the first instance. Members might consider following the previous practice and the relevant item could be included on the agenda of the ensuing meeting.

75. Ms Cyd HO requested members to formally vote on whether a subcommittee should be formed.

76. The Chairman said that the established procedures should be followed and the decision on whether to form a subcommittee should be made at the ensuing meeting.

77. Mr Alan LEONG said that although the procedures required the preparation of a proposal for discussion at a meeting, members present could indicate their stance at the current meeting.

78. Ms Emily LAU said that the relevant item should be included on the agenda of the ensuing meeting scheduled for 28 April 2009 and the decision of forming a subcommittee should be made at that meeting. She concurred with Mr Alan LEONG that members present could indicate their stance at this meeting, and she asked the Secretariat to prepare the necessary paper.

79. Mr Alan LEONG said that the paper should include the Administration's timetable for and workflow of the URS Review.

80. A number of members present then indicated their support for forming a subcommittee with a show of hands. Mrs Regina IP said that she did not object to forming a subcommittee.

81. The Chairman said that members had indicated their stance and no member had raised objection.

II Any other business

82. There being no other business, the meeting ended at 12:55 pm.

Council Business Division 1
Legislative Council Secretariat
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