

立法會
Legislative Council

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LC Paper No. CB(2)1754/08-09
(These minutes have been seen by
the Administration)

Panel on Food Safety and Environmental Hygiene

Minutes of meeting
held on Tuesday, 12 May 2009, at 2:30 pm
in Conference Room A of the Legislative Council Building

- Members present** : Hon Fred LI Wah-ming, JP (Chairman)
Hon Andrew CHENG Kar-foo
Hon TAM Yiu-chung, GBS, JP
Hon Tommy CHEUNG Yu-yan, SBS, JP
Hon Vincent FANG Kang, SBS, JP
Hon WONG Kwok-hing, MH
Hon Alan LEONG Kah-kit, SC
Hon KAM Nai-wai, MH
Dr Hon LEUNG Ka-lau
- Members absent** : Hon WONG Yung-kan, SBS, JP (Deputy Chairman)
Dr Hon Joseph LEE Kok-long, JP
Hon Cyd HO Sau-lan
Hon WONG Yuk-man
- Public Officers attending** : Items IV and V
Prof Gabriel M LEUNG, JP
Under Secretary for Food and Health

Mr Francis HO
Principal Assistant Secretary for Food and Health (Food) 2

Mr Patrick HAU Hon-fai
Chief Project Manager 301
Architectural Services Department
- Item IV

Ms Julina CHAN Woon-ye, JP
Deputy Director of Food and Environmental Hygiene (Adm &
Dev)

Ms Rhonda LO Yuet-yee, JP
Assistant Director (Operations) 2
Food and Environmental Hygiene Department

Item V

Ms CHU Lan-ying
Assistant Director (Operations) 3
Food and Environmental Hygiene Department

Clerk in attendance : Miss Mary SO
Chief Council Secretary (2) 5

Staff in attendance : Miss Joanne FONG
Senior Council Secretary (2) 6

Ms Sandy HAU
Legislative Assistant (2) 5

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I. Confirmation of minutes

(LC Paper No. CB(2)1488/08-09)

The minutes of the meeting held on 14 April 2009 were confirmed.

II. Information paper(s) issued since the last meeting

(LC Paper Nos. CB(2)1427/08-09(01), CB(2)1445/08-09(01) and CB(2)1494/08-09(01))

2. Members did not raise any queries on the following papers issued since the last meeting -

- (a) Information paper on closure of Kimberley Street Market provided by the Administration (LC Paper No. CB(2)1427/08-09(01));
- (b) Administration's reply dated 27 April 2009 to the Hong Kong Retail Management Association regarding registration of small volume exemption products (LC Paper No. CB(2)1445/08-09(01)); and
- (c) Information paper on further extension of public market rental freeze provided by the Administration (LC Paper No. CB(2)1494/08-09(01)).

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III. Items for discussion at the next meeting

(LC Paper Nos. CB(2)1489/08-09(01) and (02))

3. Members agreed to discuss the following items at the next regular meeting scheduled for 9 June 2009 and to advance the start time of the meeting from 2:30 pm to 2 pm -

- (a) Regulation of pet shops and pet breeders proposed by the Chairman;
- (b) Proposed relaxation of food room requirements for licensed restaurants and factory canteens proposed by the Administration; and
- (c) Food surveillance strategy of the Centre for Food Safety proposed by the Administration.

Members further agreed to invite deputations to give views on item (a).

4. Members noted a letter dated 11 May 2009 from the Hong Kong Suppliers Association expressing the trade's concern about the operation of the small volume exemption scheme which would come into operation on 1 July 2010. Mr Vincent FANG proposed and members agreed to hold a special meeting on 25 June 2009 at 8:30 am to discuss the matter. Members further agreed to invite the food trade and food testing laboratories to give views on the matter. In the meantime, Mr FANG undertook to arrange a meeting between the trade and the Administration to address the trade's concern about the operation of the small volume exemption scheme.

5. Mr WONG Kwok-hing proposed and members agreed to discuss the disparity of public market rentals at the regular meeting in July 2009.

IV. Provision of columbarium and garden of remembrance at Kiu Tau Road, Wo Hop Shek

(LC Paper Nos. CB(2)1489/08-09(03) and (04))

6. Under Secretary for Food and Health (USFH) and Deputy Director of Food and Environmental Hygiene (Administration and Development) (DD/FEH (Adm & Dev)) briefed Members on the proposed project to construct a new columbarium and Garden of Remembrance (GoR) at Kiu Tau Road within the Wo Hop Shek (WHS) Cemetery, details of which were set out in the Administration's paper (LC Paper No. CB(2)1489/08-09(03)).

Provision of niches

7. Mr Andrew CHENG expressed support for the proposed project to construct a new columbarium and GoR at Kiu Tau Road within the WHS

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Cemetery to provide some 37 000 niches. Mr CHENG, however, asked whether consideration could be given to constructing additional floors to the new five-storey columbarium building, say, to eight-storey, to better meet the increasing public demand for niches. Mr WONG Kwok-hing expressed a similar view.

8. USFH responded that the WHS village representatives and the North District Council only gave consent to the proposed project on the condition that the new columbarium building would be kept below the ridge line of the terrain to minimise visual and psychological impact on villagers living in the vicinity. The proposed design was the maximum height below the ridge line. USFH further said that it was questionable whether the surrounding roads could cope with the additional pedestrian and vehicular traffic caused by an additional some 10 000 niches if two more storeys were added to the new columbarium building, particularly during the Ching Ming and Chung Yeung festivals.

9. The Chairman suggested constructing a basement under the new columbarium building to provide more niches. USFH responded that it was unlikely that families of the deceased would choose to place the ashes of their loved ones in a basement.

Provision of service hall

10. Mr Andrew CHENG asked whether consideration could be given to providing a "one-stop service" for the bereaved families to pay their respect to the deceased by providing a service hall in the new columbarium.

11. DD/FEH (Adm & Dev) explained that service halls were provided in crematoria which were located within the cemetery site but not in the same building as columbaria. At present the cremated ashes were only available for collection several days after cremation, hence, service halls would not be provided in the new columbarium. DD/FEH (Adm & Dev) further said that plan was in hand to re-provision the crematorium located in the WHS cemetery by replacing the existing service hall with three new ones, amongst others, by end 2011/early 2012.

Completion date of the proposed project

12. Mr Andrew CHENG noted that the construction works of the proposed project were expected to commence in December 2009 for completion in July 2012. Mr CHENG urged the Administration to advance the completion date of the proposed project to meet the increasing public demand for niches.

13. Chief Project Manager 301, Architectural Services Department explained that some 31 months were required to complete the construction works of the proposed project, i.e. eight months to carry out site formation and piling works, 19 months to carry out the construction of the five-storey columbarium, a single-storey administration block, around 7 000 outdoor niches, GoR with

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memorial stones/pillars and other ancillary facilities, and four months to cater for unforeseen delay caused by, say, inclement weather.

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14. At the suggestion of Mr Andrew CHENG, USFH agreed to indicate in the Administration's submission to the Public Works Subcommittee (PWSC) and the Finance Committee (FC) of the Legislative Council the arrangement of the outdoor niches and that of the memorial stones/pillars in the GoR.

Traffic impact

15. In response to Mr KAM Nai-wai's enquiry about the traffic arrangements during grave sweeping festivals after commissioning the proposed project, Assistant Director of Food and Environmental Hygiene (Operations)2 (AD/FEH (Operations) 2) said that the additional pedestrian and vehicular traffic impact arising from the proposed project would not significantly affect the performance of the key junctions and walkways in the WHS Cemetery, provided that current special traffic and crowd control arrangements during peak periods would continue to apply. AD/FEH (Operations)2 further said that the walk from the public entrance at Kiu Tau Road to the columbarium block would only take about 10 minutes and the three passenger lifts to be provided inside the columbarium block would connect grave sweepers to the outdoor niches.

Environmental impact

16. The Chairman said that to mitigate environmental nuisance, incense burning should be prohibited in certain floors of the columbarium block. USFH advised that this would be banned in the first to third floors of the columbarium block.

Conclusion

17. In closing, the Chairman said that Members were supportive of the Administration's plan to make a submission to PWSC to upgrade the proposed project to Category A of the Public Works Programme in June 2009 and to seek funding approval from FC in July 2009.

V. Conversion of aqua privies into flushing toilets
(LC Paper No. CB(2)1489/08-09(05))

18. USFH and AD/FEH (Operations)3 briefed Members on the progress of the first five phases of the conversion programme for aqua privies (APs) as well as the proposal to extend the programme to cover 90 APs in Phase 6 and about 200 remaining APs in the final phase (Phase 7), details of which were set out in the Administration's paper.

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19. Mr TAM Yiu-chung welcomed the Administration's plan to re-schedule the conversion works in two phases, instead of three phases as originally planned through deployment of extra resources, and to advance the commencement of the last phase (Phase 7) by six months from end-2010 to mid-2010. The target completion date of the entire conversion programme was 2012-2013. Mr TAM then asked the following questions -

- (a) whether all the remaining APs would be converted into flushing toilets; and
- (b) what was the frequency for cleaning the converted toilets.

20. USFH responded that the converted toilets would be connected to nearby public sewers wherever possible. For those which could not be connected to public sewers (for example, because of a lack of sewerage in the vicinity), the Administration would explore other means, such as introducing bio-treatment system with toilet waste treated under a biological process or converting the existing underground septic tanks into holding tanks for temporary storage of waste supported by desludging every three months. The conversion method recommended for each AP would be reviewed and adjusted according to the ground situation. In respect of Phase 6 of the conversion programme involving 90 APs, USFH said that 11 APs could be connected to public sewers, 55 APs would be installed with bio-treatment system and 24 APs would need to have their septic tanks converted into holding tanks.

21. Regarding Mr TAM's second question, AD/FEH (Operations)3 said that how frequent cleaning would be carried out to the converted toilets would depend on their utilisation. At present, APs were cleansed once to three times a day depending on their utilisation.

22. The Chairman noted that the converted toilets would be provided with sensor activated hand-washing faucets. The Chairman asked whether consideration could be given to providing the converted toilets with one or two conventional hand-washing faucets, as some older persons did not know how to use sensor activated hand-washing faucets.

23. AD/FEH (Operations)3 responded that instruction on how to use the sensor activated hand-washing faucets would be placed nearby the faucets. Moreover, due to site constraints, the conventional hand-washing faucets would still be provided outside some APs after conversion.

24. In closing, the Chairman said that Members were supportive of the Administration's plan to seek funding approval of PWSC and FC for Phase 6 of the AP conversion programme in June 2009.

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25. There being no other business, the meeting ended at 3:35 pm.

Council Business Division 2
Legislative Council Secretariat
5 June 2009