



panel_ea/LEGCO
26/03/2012 12:43

To
cc
bcc

Subject Fw: URGENT - information pertaining to the discussion on waste

1 attachment



LLWasteLegco.mov

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To: panel_ea@legco.gov.hk

From: Living Lamma <livinglamma@yahoo.com>

Date: 03/26/2012 10:53AM

Cc: Daniel Clarke < >, Laura R < >, Damon Wong < >

Subject: URGENT - information pertaining to the discussion on waste
(See attached file: LLWasteLegco.mov)

> Dear Chairman and members of the Legco Panel on Environmental Affairs,
>
> I write to you as Chairperson of Living Lamma, a local NGO committed
> to cleaning up the environment of Lamma Island and improving the
> design of public facilities. Though we are unable to share our
> experience at today's meeting, we hope that you will consider our
> comments and not allow EPD to push forward with its plan to build a
> super-incinerator off Shek Kwu Chau.
>
> This plan will be disastrous for our efforts to reduce waste,
> recycle and clean up our community. We have raised our concerns with
> EPD several times, yet have little commitment from government to
> resolving problems of waste management.
>
> Living Lamma was formed in May 2009 in response to a case of dumping
> on agricultural land, which destroyed a lily pond and Romer's tree
> frog habitat and created a landfill site in the middle of a
> residential area. At the time we presented this case to the Panel on
> Environmental Affairs and submitted papers on the problem of fly-
> tipping (which has noticeably worsened since the introduction of
> charging for the disposal of construction waste) and on the
> government's proposals for WEEE.
>
> In February 2010, we produced a report containing more than 250
> pictures of eyesores in our community, the majority of which are
> caused by rubbish and dumping. It became apparent that many of the
> problems occur because of the way waste is viewed, collected and
> disposed of. The incinerator will not change this.
>
> For the majority of people, anything that is no longer needed is
> discarded and becomes the responsibility of someone else to remove
> and dispose of. Because our bin areas are dirty, many people do not
> attempt to place their rubbish in the bin, but simply toss rubbish
> nearby. Recyclable items are often placed in general waste bins and
> non-recyclable items are put into the recycle bins.
>

> There has been no attempt by EPD to address these problems, or to
> take measures to change people's perceptions. We often have
> enquiries from people who want to know where the recycling goes. The
> perception is that it all goes into landfill because it is collected
> in the same black bags by the same contractors. As a result, even
> environmentally educated expats who would normally recycle waste in
> their own communities do not bother to do so in Hong Kong.

>
> We have recently managed to get recycling bins placed by the
> kindergarten in Yung Shue Wan. The children learn about recycling in
> the school, yet there was no where for them to do it and as a
> result, all the recyclable waste from the school was placed on or
> near the general bin. There was some resistance from some parents
> about putting recycling bins near the school. Their perception is
> that bins are dirty and will attract rats and mosquitos. This
> viewpoint is common - particularly as the bin areas on Lamma are
> dirty, poorly organised and ugly. We believe this is a massive
> barrier to changing behaviour that would bring cause people to be
> more responsible where waste is concerned.

>
> The attitudes towards waste that we see in the community and the
> facilities that are available are very similar to how things used to
> be in the UK. Thirty years ago, the local refuse collection point,
> or tip as it was known, was dirty and smelly. If people had
> something to drop off at the tip, they would do so as quickly as
> possible and leave.

>
> Today's tips are clean and well-organised, with drop off areas for
> different items. People go to the tip not only to take unwanted
> items, but to find things that might be of use. The outlook of these
> recycling centres is often improved with landscaping and planting so
> they look attractive. In areas where it is difficult for people to
> take unwanted items to a central point, this is often resolved with
> collection days for different items.

>
> Please take a look at the presentation attached, which Living Lamma
> circulated to its members in December last year. We also gave a copy
> to Elvis Au. The presentation shows what happens to waste in our
> community. The photographs are all taken on Lamma.

>
> We have, during the course of our research, uncovered a 1995 paper
> by a town planner, who was living on Lamma at the time and involved
> with a group that lobbied for sensitive development and better waste
> management. The paper lays out a blueprint for community recycling,
> yet the suggestions made were not taken up. We are in the process of
> retyping this report from its rather tatty original so that it can
> be shared.

>
> We have also discovered from LCSD that there used to be composting
> of green waste on Lamma more than 20 years ago. Today the green
> waste created whenever the Land's Department fells a tree is either
> piled at the side of the path, causing a fire risk and yet another
> pile of waste as people tend to toss deposit other rubbish there, or
> it is wrapped in black plastic and sent to landfill.

>
> EPD may tell you that they are now conducting a pilot programme to
> recycle food waste, glass, plastic and small electrical items on
> Lamma. They are. They operate a booth on Friday and Saturday
> afternoon from 1-4pm. The programme has been running for 3 weeks,
> yet there was no notice in the community about it prior to its
> launch and still only one poster, in Chinese only, outside the Rural
> Committee building. Living Lamma will be supporting this programme,
> but we would hope that government would be much more proactive in
> ensuring that this programme is a success but communicating its
> benefits and promoting it in the community. We have suggested that
> EPD make a presentation to the schools and community groups, and

> place a notice on each of the bin areas telling people about the
> programme. We would also expect each bar, restaurant and shop to
> receive leaflets and encouragement to participate. It is also
> important that people are allowed to give their feedback on this
> initiative (already restaurant owners who would like to recycle food
> waste have expressed concern about the size of the bin used, others
> say the distance that they have to bring heavy items like glass and
> the recycling times prohibit participation. They want to know why
> they cannot leave their glass at their local bin for collection. EPD
> cites safety concerns, but this is ridiculous when glass has to now
> been thrown into the general waste bins).

>
> It appears that EPD is paying lip service to recycling, while
> pushing ahead with a massive concrete pouring exercise that simply
> switches from burial to burn as a waste management strategy. The EPD
> has failed to provide adequate policy and education initiatives to
> reduce and recycle waste and now presents Shek Kwu Chau as the only
> option. As a measure of EPD's failure to engage the public, at last
> week's meeting of District Councillors, not one DC members supported
> Amy Yung's motion to discuss the issue of the incinerator. Surely
> every effort should be made to engage the districts to be
> responsible for the waste they produce before billions of public
> funds is given to a project that will ensure that, aside for the
> relatively small population who will be affected by the building and
> operating of the incinerator, no-one else will have to see it or
> think about it.

>
> We hope that the idea of building an incinerator off Shek Kwu Chau
> will be rejected and thank you for considering our views. Should you
> have any questions, we would be happy to talk to you.

>
> Yours sincerely

>
> Jo Wilson
> Chairperson
> Living Lamma
> Tel:

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