

立法會
Legislative Council

LC Paper No. CB(2)145/15-16
(These minutes have been
cleared with the Chairman)

Ref : CB2/PL/FE

Panel on Food Safety and Environmental Hygiene

Minutes of meeting
held on Thursday, 15 October 2015, at 10:30 am
in Conference Room 1 of the Legislative Council Complex

Members present : Hon Tommy CHEUNG Yu-yan, GBS, JP (Chairman)
Hon Steven HO Chun-yin, BBS (Deputy Chairman)
Hon Vincent FANG Kang, SBS, JP
Hon WONG Kwok-hing, BBS, MH
Prof Hon Joseph LEE Kok-long, SBS, JP, PhD, RN
Hon Cyd HO Sau-lan, JP
Hon Starry LEE Wai-king, JP
Hon CHAN Hak-kan, JP
Hon Alan LEONG Kah-kit, SC
Hon Claudia MO
Hon Michael TIEN Puk-sun, BBS, JP
Hon CHAN Chi-chuen
Hon CHAN Han-pan, JP
Dr Hon Kenneth CHAN Ka-lok
Hon Alice MAK Mei-kuen, BBS, JP
Dr Hon KWOK Ka-ki
Hon KWOK Wai-keung
Hon SIN Chung-kai, SBS, JP
Dr Hon Helena WONG Pik-wan
Dr Hon CHIANG Lai-wan, JP
Hon Christopher CHUNG Shu-kun, BBS, MH, JP

Members absent : Dr Hon LEUNG Ka-lau
Hon WONG Yuk-man

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

Staff in attendance : Miss Flora TAI
Assistant Secretary General 2

Ms Wendy LO
Senior Council Secretary (2) 2

Mr Richard WONG
Council Secretary (2) 6

Miss Emma CHEUNG
Legislative Assistant (2) 2

Ms Camy YOONG
Clerical Assistant (2) 2

Action

I. Election of the Chairman and Deputy Chairman
(Appendices III and IV to LC Paper No. CB(2)7/15-16)

Election of Chairman

Mr Tommy CHEUNG, Chairman of the Panel for the 2014-2015 session, called for nominations for the chairmanship of the Panel for the 2015-2016 session. Mr Tommy CHEUNG was nominated by Mr Vincent FANG and the nomination was seconded by Mr WONG Kwok-hing. Mr Tommy CHEUNG accepted the nomination.

2. As the incumbent Chairman was nominated for the office, Mr Steven HO, the incumbent Deputy Chairman, took over from Mr Tommy CHEUNG to preside over the election. Mr Steven HO called for other nominations.

3. Dr Helena WONG was nominated by Ms Cyd HO and the nomination was seconded by Ms Claudia MO. Dr Helena WONG accepted the nomination.

4. As there was no other nomination, Mr Steven HO announced that voting be conducted by secret ballot. After all the members present had cast their votes, Mr HO invited Mr Vincent FANG and Ms Cyd HO, who had nominated the two candidates, to monitor the counting of votes.

5. Mr Steven HO announced that 12 and nine members voted for Mr Tommy CHEUNG and Dr Helena WONG respectively. Mr HO declared Mr Tommy CHEUNG elected as the Chairman of the Panel for the 2015-2016 session. Mr Tommy CHEUNG then took the chair.

Election of Deputy Chairman

6. The Chairman called for nominations for the deputy chairmanship of the Panel. Mr Steven HO was nominated by Ms Starry LEE and the nomination was seconded by Mr KWOK Wai-keung. Mr Steven HO accepted the nomination. The Chairman called for other nominations.

7. Dr Helena WONG was nominated by Ms Claudia MO and the nomination was seconded by Ms Cyd HO. Dr Helena WONG accepted the nomination.

8. As there was no other nomination, the Chairman announced that voting be conducted by secret ballot. After all the members present had cast their votes, the Chairman invited Ms Starry LEE and Ms Claudia MO, who had nominated the two candidates, to monitor the counting of votes.

9. The Chairman announced that 12 and nine members voted for Mr Steven HO and Dr Helena WONG respectively. The Chairman declared Mr Steven HO elected as the Deputy Chairman of the Panel for the 2015-2016 session.

II. Schedule of meetings for the 2015-2016 session

10. Members agreed that the Panel would continue to hold its regular meetings on the second Tuesday of each month at 2:30 pm. As the second Tuesday of February 2016 was a public holiday (the second day of Lunar New Year), members agreed to re-schedule the regular meeting for that month to Tuesday, 2 February 2016 at 4:30 pm.

11. Mr Michael TIEN expressed a wish that the regular meeting on 8 March 2016 be re-scheduled to another date to avoid clashing with the plenary sessions of the National People's Congress ("NPC") and the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference ("CPPCC") held in the first two weeks of March every year. The Chairman said that there appeared to be no precedent cases where regular meetings of Panels were re-scheduled to avoid clashes with the meetings of NPC and CPPCC. He, however, asked the Clerk to note the request of Mr TIEN and to explore the feasibility of re-scheduling the March meeting.

(Post-meeting note: The schedule of the regular meetings of the Panel for the 2015-2016 session was issued to members vide LC Paper No. CB(2)50/15-16 on 16 October 2015.)

III. Items for discussion at the next meeting

(Appendices V and VI to LC Paper No. CB(2)7/15-16)

Regular meeting in November 2015

12. Members noted that the Administration proposed to discuss the following three items at the next regular meeting scheduled for 10 November 2015 -

- (a) Enhancing the monitoring and surveillance of food trading and imports;
- (b) Promotion of green burial; and
- (c) Updated proposal on the election of members from the veterinary profession to the Veterinary Surgeons Board of Hong Kong.

13. The Chairman referred members to Ms Claudia MO's letter dated 8 October 2015 proposing the appointment of a subcommittee under the Panel to study issues relating to animal welfare and cruelty to animals (LC Paper No. CB(2)11/15-16(01)). The Chairman suggested and members agreed that Ms MO's proposal be included into the agenda of the November meeting for discussion.

14. The Chairman asked the Clerk to liaise with the Administration after the meeting on the number of Administration's proposed items to be discussed at the next meeting. In the event that all the three items under paragraph 12 above were to be discussed, the meeting time would need to be extended for half an hour.

(Post-meeting note: The Administration subsequently confirmed to discuss at the November meeting items (a) and (c) in paragraph 12 above. The notice of meeting was issued to members on 19 October 2015 vide LC Paper No. CB(2)64/15-16.)

Items proposed for discussion at future meetings

15. Dr Helena WONG pointed out that wall-mounted electric water kettles/tea urns were commonly used in food premises and restaurants. She expressed concern about the presence of heavy metal contaminants, including lead, in food if cooking and kitchen utensils used by food premises and restaurants contained lead. She considered that in the wake of recent incidents of excess lead found in drinking water, the Administration should conduct water sampling tests on water samples taken from food premises and restaurants across the territory in order to safeguard public health.

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Dr WONG further pointed out that food might be rendered unfit for human consumption due to problematic food contact materials (including tableware and food containers). She expressed concern about the regulatory control of food contact materials and suggested that the matter be discussed by the Panel.

16. Dr Helena WONG was also concerned about the regulation of animal feed for livestock and cultured fish and the presence of veterinary drug residues, including antibiotics, in meat and aquatic products for human consumption. She considered that the Panel should discuss these issues at a Panel meeting. Dr WONG further said that the Panel had previously requested the Administration to make arrangements for members to visit registered farms in the Guangdong Province to better understand the regulation and operation of those registered farms which supplied food to Hong Kong. She hoped that Administration could revert to the Panel on the progress of its discussion with the relevant Mainland authorities regarding the proposed visit.

17. Referring to item 17 in the Panel's list of outstanding items for discussion on "Safety of food for pet animals", Dr CHIANG Lai-wan hoped that when the Panel discussed the safety of food for pet animals, arrangements be made for discussion of the safety of medicine for pet animals as well.

18. Mr Michael TIEN said that as there was a lack of ancillary facilities for wholesaling of chilled meat and poultry, wholesalers could only make use of temporary storage, e.g. vehicles equipped with refrigeration facilities and freezers, to perform the processes of dividing and distributing chilled meat and poultry. He expressed worries about the risk posed to public health if the existing way of handling chilled meat and poultry continued to prevail. Mr TIEN further said that it was his understanding that the Food and Health Bureau had agreed in principle to set up an approved distribution and storage centre for chilled meat and poultry but suitable government land for this purpose had yet been identified. He and the Deputy Chairman both expressed concern about the slow progress of the Administration in taking forward the initiative. They requested for early discussion of the subject matter by the Panel.

19. The Deputy Chairman also hoped that arrangements could be made for early discussion of the item "Wholesale market consultancy study" which was already in the Panel's list of outstanding items for discussion.

IV. Any other business

Subcommittee on Hawker Policy (LC Paper No. CB(4)1498/14-15)

20. The Chairman said that the Subcommittee on Hawker Policy ("the Subcommittee") formed under the Panel had completed its work. The Secretariat had earlier on consulted members by circulation of paper (LC Paper No. CB(2)2178/14-15) on the following two proposals of the Subcommittee -

- (a) to seek the House Committee's agreement for priority allocation of a slot to Mr Steven HO, the Subcommittee Chairman, for holding a motion debate on the Subcommittee's Report at the Council meeting of 11 November 2015 ("first proposal"); and
- (b) in addition to the aforesaid debate, only one other debate on a Member's motion not intended to have legislative effect should be held at that Council meeting ("second proposal").

21. The Chairman informed members that all the 14 members who had responded before the deadline were supportive of the first proposal but one member had indicated disapproval of the second proposal. Taking into account that the majority of members were in favour of the second proposal, which indeed was in line with previous practice, the Chairman suggested and members agreed that the above two proposals of the Subcommittee should be supported and put forward to the House Committee for its consideration.

22. There being no other business, the meeting ended at 10:56 am.