

西貢區議會
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SAI KUNG DISTRICT COUNCIL,
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Tseung Kwan O

Our Ref: () in HAD SK DC 13/30/6/8 Pt.1

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12 May 2016

Ms. Joanne MAK
Clerk to Panel on Home Affairs
Legislative Council Secretariat
Legislative Council Complex,
1 Legislative Council Road,
Central, Hong Kong

Dear Ms. Mak,

Panel on Home Affairs
Follow-up to Meeting on 12 April 2016

The Panel on Home Affairs discussed the Signature Project Scheme of Sai Kung District at its meeting on 12 April 2016. At the meeting, Members requested for the estimates on the revenue and expenditure of the operation of the Heritage Information Centre (HIC) and the hostel under the project of “Construction of the Tseung Kwan O Heritage Hiking Trail and the Heritage Information Centre” (the Heritage Project). The relevant information is set out below.

Haven of Hope Christian Services (HOHCS) was selected by the Sai Kung District Council (SKDC) as the partner organisation of the above project and will operate the HIC and the hostel on a non-profit making and self-financing basis. The HIC will be opened to the public for free and the hostel will be set up at the ex-staff quarters nearby to generate income along with the provision of other services, such as an outdoor café, sale of souvenirs, as well as seminars, guided tours and workshop, etc. All the income will be ploughed back for the operation and development of the HIC and the hostel.

As the project will take time to complete, HOHCS will seek advice later from experienced hostel operators on pricing, operation, marketing and promotion, and will set a suitable price having regard to the market situation then. Under the Heritage Project, the hostel will be positioned as an economical guesthouse with local character. The rough estimate of the standard room price based on the current market situation ranges from \$600 to \$700. According to the preliminary estimates based on the current situation and certain assumptions made on the operation of the HIC and hostel, the Heritage Project will have a deficit of about \$6 million in total during the five-year contract period and HOHCS has committed to absorbing the sum. As the HIC and the hostel will be used for vocational training for the disabled, bringing non-pecuniary benefits to the community, HOHCS intends to apply for financial support from charitable funds to develop this meaningful rehabilitation service.

SKDC and the Sai Kung District Office will maintain close communication with HOHCS and will closely monitor the planning and actual operation of the HIC and the hostel with a view to ensuring the project's sustainable development and beneficial returns to the public.

As well, with respect to the letter dated 12 April 2016 from the tenant of the former short-term tenancy of the ex-Tiu Keng Leng Police Station to the Panel on Home Affairs of the Legislative Council, we would like to set out our response in the attached Annex.

Yours sincerely,



Mr. Francis CHAU

Chairman

Signature Project Scheme Committee
Sai Kung District Council

cc.: Clerk to Public Works Subcommittee
[Attn.: Chief Council Secretary (1)2]

Home Affairs Department
[Attn.: Assistant Director (2)]

Response to the letter to the Panel on Home Affairs of the Legislative Council
dated 12 April 2016 from concerned individuals
relating to the former short-term tenancy of the ex-Tiu Keng Leng Police Station

- When the Government demolished the Tiu Keng Leng cottage area, Po Yin Temple (the Temple) and the individuals concerned had already received in 1997 ex-gratia allowances of over \$970,000 as compensation for giving up their structures.
- The Temple then applied for a private treaty grant for the ex-Tiu Keng Leng Police Station (ex-TKLPS) land area with a view to demolishing the ex-TKLPS for reconstructing a temple. As the area applied for by the Temple is 32 times larger than the original area of 65 m² occupied by the Temple in the Tiu Keng Leng cottage area and the Temple could not provide any proof that they had the ability and financial capability to develop and manage the proposed project, the application was not accepted by the Sai Kung District Lands Conference.
- The Sai Kung District Lands Conference granted a short-term tenancy to the Temple in 1999, renting part of the area of the ex-TKLPS for the specified purpose of holding religious activities only. It was stated in the tenancy agreement that the short-term tenancy would last for two years after which the tenancy would be renewed on a quarterly basis at an annual rent of \$1. Both sides could terminate the tenancy any time by giving three months' notice. If the Temple could provide proof that it had the ability and the financial capability in future, the Administration could consider its land grant application again. Since then, the Temple had not submitted any application for land allocation or development.
- The Temple was aware that SKDC was considering this project as early as May 2013 when the Sai Kung District Council (SKDC) conducted a site visit then to the ex-TKLPS. After the project was endorsed as the Signature Project Scheme Project of Sai Kung District in June 2014, the Temple was immediately notified that the short-term tenancy had to be terminated.
- After notifying the Temple that the short-term tenancy had to be terminated, SKDC, together with the Sai Kung District Office (SKDO) and the Sai Kung District Lands Office (DLO/SK), immediately set up a liaison group with the Temple to provide the Temple assistance in finding a site for relocation. Four meetings were held and members of the liaison group accompanied the Temple representative to inspect a piece of vacant government land in the district. The

Temple representative was also invited to the SKDC for direct discussion. The Administration had also provided the Temple information on at least 11 pieces of vacant government land for his consideration. The Administration further offered to extend the tenancy on a monthly basis to allow the Temple more time for site search for relocation. However, no response had ever been received by the Administration from the Temple.

- The Administration eventually cancelled the short-term tenancy agreement on 31 December 2014 and conducted land control action on 16 June 2015 in accordance with established procedures and the relevant legislation. After taking the land control action, the Administration has been keeping the religious items and the personal items from the Temple. Despite the fact that the Administration had contacted the Temple representative for more than ten times through telephone calls, emails, letters, etc. urging prompt collection of the items, no response was received.
- It is highly regrettable to see the continuous untrue accusations and defamation of the SKDC, departments and the partner organisation of the project on which a public statement had already been issued earlier by SKDC and uploaded on the SKDC website. Please refer to the Appendix. SKDC is willing to continue to provide assistance to the Temple in its land application if needed.
- The ex-TKLPS is the only building that remains from the Tiu Keng Leng cottage era in the 1960s. The ex-TKLPS was very much part of the daily life of the residents then and was well known among all the Tiu Keng Leng residents and was embedded in their collective memory. It is therefore most suitable for preserving as an information centre to display the development history and transformation of Tseung Kwan O. As the information centre will be open to the public for free, it will bring long-term benefit to the community.
- Many local residents, including former residents of Tiu Keng Leng, have expressed their support to this project through various channels. It is their hope that this project could be implemented as soon as possible so that the development history of Tseung Kwan O, the unique stories behind as well as the hard times of the era past can be preserved and passed on to the younger generation.

Sai Kung District Council

12 May 2016

Appendix

Statement of the Sai Kung District Council on the Construction of the Tseung Kwan O Heritage Hiking Trail and the Heritage Information Centre under the Signature Project Scheme

In view of the mendacious statements made by some individuals on the above project, the Sai Kung District Council (SKDC) would like to reiterate the following key facts to correct the misleading information and put the matter in proper perspective.

The purpose of the Tseung Kwan O History and Heritage Information Centre (HIC) is to preserve the development history of our community

The Tseung Kwan O New Town has a unique history: from just an area of obscure fishing villages at the turn of the 20th century, to becoming a squatter area in the 1950s for a group of refugees, developing into a ship breaking industry locale in the 1960s, and through extensive reclamation in the 1980s-90s, further transformed into a modern new town with a population of more than 400 000 of mainly young families. Therefore, our objective is to establish this HIC under the Signature Project Scheme to enable the public to learn about the rich history of our district while enjoying the fun of leisure walks and hiking along the adjoining hiking trail.

The Old Tiu Keng Leng Police Station is an important local landmark and is the most suitable site for the HIC

The old Tiu Keng Leng Police Station is the only remaining structure from the Tiu Keng Leng Squatter Area of the 1960s. It bears witness to the development and transformation of Tseung Kwan O in the half century past, and therefore is highly significant in terms of collective memory and heritage preservation, rendering it the most suitable site for the HIC. The HIC, which will be open to the public, will highlight the milestones and transformation in the development of Tseung Kwan O. This is a meaningful project for the benefits of the whole HK community. Recent rumours about the demolition of the former police station are totally untrue.

Po Yin Temple does not equate the history of Tiu Keng Leng

Po Yin Temple only moved into the former Tiu Keng Leng Police Station in 1999 subsequent to the demolition of the Tiu Keng Leng Squatter Area and after being offered a short-term tenancy to rent one third of the Police Station for religious purpose. Po Yin Temple therefore does not equate the history of Tiu Keng Leng.

Martyrs' Shrines as government monuments are very different from ordinary house of worship

Po Yin Temple as an ordinary house of worship claimed to have a Martyrs' Shrine (忠烈祠) therein and that it should be retained at site. However, Martyrs' Shrines are very different from ordinary house of worship. Martyrs' shrines are national monuments usually built by national governments to commemorate heroic warriors/individuals who sacrificed their lives for their countries or a national cause. Induction of individuals into a martyr shrine comprises stringent procedures, and management of such shrines as well as rites and rituals to be performed come under strict protocols. Examples of such nationally recognized martyrs' shrines include Fayuan Temple in Beijing that dates back to the Tang Dynasty, and the Huanghuagang 72 Martyrs Mausoleum & Park in Guangzhou of over 100 000 square metres that was built to commemorate the Guangzhou Uprising in 1911.

We cannot agree with the violent resistance tactic deployed by the keeper of Po Yin Temple

We have offered assistance to the Temple since deciding on the site of the HIC. Together with the representatives of the concerned government departments, we have set up a liaison group with the Temple keepers to try to render them assistance. We invited the Temple keepers to inspect a piece of vacant government land in the district, provided them with information on at least 11 other vacant government sites in the neighborhood, and invited them to our Committee for direct dialogue.

The eventual land control action was carried out by departments in accordance with established procedures. In addition to the issuance of a Notice of Termination of Tenancy to the Temple as per the terms of the tenancy, the Sai

Kung District Lands Office had also offered the Temple other options of tenancy renewal and then notified the Temple keepers a few times of the expiry of the tenancy prior to taking action. All were in vain as the Temple did not respond at all.

The SKDC cannot agree with the self-injury, injury to others, harassment and other radical actions deployed by the Temple keepers as a means of resistance which do not help in resolving the matter.

We regret to see the intentional distortion of facts

As Members of the SKDC, we fully support the implementation of this SPS project. It is highly regrettable to see the intentional dissemination of untrue information and repeat distortion of facts by some individuals about this project.

We are thankful for the support of and the information provided by many former Tiu Keng Leng residents

Since the commencement of the project, we have received many letters from the public through different channels. It is encouraging to receive letters from former residents of Tiu Keng Leng expressing their support and providing relevant information for the project.

The meeting documents and the related information of the Signature Project Scheme projects have been uploaded to the website of the Sai Kung District Council for public's reference.

Sai Kung District Council
17 July 2015