

立法會
Legislative Council

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LC Paper No. CB(1)1096/99-00
(These minutes have been
seen by the Administration)

LegCo Panel on Planning, Lands and Works

Minutes of meeting
held on Thursday, 13 January 2000, at 10:45 am
in Conference Room A of the Legislative Council Building

- Members present** : Hon Edward HO Sing-tin, SBS, JP (Chairman)
Dr Hon TANG Siu-tong, JP (Deputy Chairman)
Hon HO Sai-chu, SBS, JP
Ir Dr Hon Raymond HO Chung-tai, JP
Hon LEE Wing-tat
Hon James TO Kun-sun
Hon WONG Yung-kan
Hon LAU Wong-fat, GBS, JP
Hon Timothy FOK Tsun-ting, SBS, JP
Hon TAM Yiu-chung, GBS, JP
- Members absent** : Hon Ronald ARCULLI, JP
- Public officers attending** : **For item IV**
- Mr M J BYRNE
Principal Assistant Secretary for Works
- Mr Gary YEUNG
Principal Assistant Secretary for Planning and Lands
- Mr Gilbert KO
Assistant Secretary for Planning and Lands
- Mr I J MacNaughton
Assistant Director of Lands (Estate Management)
- Mr C K WONG
Assistant Director of Highways
- Item V**

Mr Steve BARCLAY
Principal Assistant Secretary for Environment and
Food

Mr W H KO
Assistant Director (Civil)/Port

Mr C Y CHAN
Chief Engineer/Port Works,
Civil Engineering Department

Mr Raymond WONG
District Planning Officer
(Tuen Mun and Yuen Long), Planning Department

Item VI

Mr Gary YEUNG
Principal Assistant Secretary for Planning and Lands

Mr Gilbert KO
Assistant Secretary for Planning and Lands

Mr CHEUNG Koon-nam
Assistant Director of Housing/
Operations & Redevelopment (Atg)

Mr T K TSAO
Project Manager/NT North,
Territory Development Department

Mr T C CHAN
District Land Officer/North,
Lands Department

Mr LUI Hau-tuen
Deputy Director of Home Affairs(1)

Mr WONG Hon-ho
District Officer (North)

Clerk in attendance : Miss Odelia LEUNG, Chief Assistant Secretary (1)1

Staff in attendance : Miss Irene MAN, Senior Assistant Secretary (1)9

I Confirmation of minutes of meeting
(LC Paper No. CB(1)666/99-00)

The minutes of the joint meeting with Transport Panel held on 12 November 1999 were confirmed.

II Date of next meeting and items for discussion
(LC Paper Nos. CB(1)749/99-00(01) and (02))

2. Members agreed to discuss the following items at the next regular meeting of the Panel to be held on 10 February 2000 at 10:45 am -

- (a) Slope safety; and
- (b) Cleaning up of environmental black spots in the New Territories

(Post-meeting note: On the advice of the Chairman, the next regular meeting was rescheduled for 24 February 2000 at 4:30p.m.)

3. The Chairman reported that the Legislative Council Commission (LegCo Commission) had reserved funds for Panel to conduct overseas visits before the end of the LegCo session. All bids for funds for overseas visits by Panels would be considered by the House Committee. He invited suggestions from members and said that any member who had proposals should forward them to the Panel Clerk.

4. Members noted the list of follow-up actions arising from discussions at Panel meetings.

III Information papers issued since last meeting
(LC Paper No. CB(1)733/99-00)

5. Members noted the Administration's information paper on "slope safety".

IV Proposed charging and penalty system for road opening works
(LC Paper No. CB(1)749/99-00(03))

6. The Chairman drew members' attention to the submissions tabled at the meeting from New T&T Hong Kong Ltd., Hutchison Communications Ltd.

and the Hong Kong and China Gas Co. Ltd. raising objection to the proposed charging and penalty system for road opening works.

(*Post-meeting note* : The submission from New T&T Hong Kong Ltd. was circulated to members vide LC Paper No. CB(1)775/99-00, submissions from Hutchison Commissions Ltd., the Hong Kong and China Gas Co. Ltd. and the Hongkong Electric Co. Ltd. vide LC Paper No. CB(1)791/99-00 and submission from New World Telephone Ltd. vide LC Paper No. CB(1) 827/99-00.)

7. At the invitation of the Chairman, the Principal Assistant Secretary for Works (PAS/W) briefed members on the salient points of the Administration's information paper which set out the legislative proposal to control promoters and contractors in connection with road excavation works and the fee structure for recovery of the costs incurred by Government for administering the Excavation Permit (EP) system. Members noted that the Administration intended to introduce a bill to amend the Land (Miscellaneous Provisions) Ordinance (LMPO), Cap. 28 into the Legislative Council on 23 February 2000.

Justifications for the charging and penalty system

8. Ir Dr Raymond HO questioned about the rationale for introducing a charging system and whether the sole aim of which was to recover the cost for administering that very system. The Assistant Director of Highways (AD of Hy) explained that at present, the Administration incurred costs for processing EPs and for carrying out the related inspections but no fees were charged on the utility companies undertaking the excavation works. The purpose of the proposed charging system was to recover the costs incurred by Government for administering the EP system based on the "user-pays principle". PAS/W added that Government contractors would not be required to pay the related EP fees for Government excavation works since the cost would ultimately be borne by the Administration. However, the Government portion of the cost had been deducted in deriving the proposed EP fees so that it would not be shouldered by other EP applicants.

9. On the proportion of EPs issued to Government contractors and private promoters, AD of Hy advised that among the total 68,805 EPs issued in 1998, 22,418 and 46,387 were issued to private promoters and Highways contractors respectively. The EPs issued to Highways contractors were in the form of Works Orders which were deemed to be EPs under the Land (Miscellaneous Provisions) Ordinance. Water Supplies Department (WSD) and Drainage Services Department (DSD) were regarded as private promoters because the services they provided were similar to those of a public utility company. However, for the purpose of calculating the EP fees, their share of the cost had been taken out. Members considered such categorization of statistics confusing and requested the Administration to provide clearer information on the respective numbers of EP permits issued to Government

contractors and private promoters. Ir Dr Raymond HO also requested information on the respective prosecution figures in respect of the two parties for contravening EP conditions. AD of Hy undertook to provide the information.

10. Ir Dr Raymond HO enquired about the reasons for introducing the proposed penalty system. AD of Hy advised that although the existing monitoring system for excavation works operated relatively well, the current provisions of LMPO had an inherent constraint in that only the promoter could be prosecuted for breach of EP conditions. However, normally it was the contractor who took full control of the site and violated the EP conditions. Under the proposed penalty system, contractors would be deemed to be a permittee and could be held legally responsible for breach of the EP conditions. Upon the Chairman' enquiry about the actions to be taken if Government contractors, not having to pay EP fees, were not compliant with the EP conditions, AD of Hy assured members that both Government and non-Government excavation works were monitored in the same manner and contractors, regardless of whether they worked for Government or utility companies, would be treated the same for breach of EP conditions.

Proposed fee structure

11. Referring to the proposed fee structure in paragraph 10 of the information paper, Dr TANG Siu-tong and Mr LAU Wong-fat expressed serious doubt about the effectiveness of the proposed fees in expediting road works since only a daily charge of HK\$67 would be imposed for the duration of an EP including any extension. AD of Hy explained that the proposed fee structure aimed to recover the full cost incurred for administering the EP system. Meanwhile, the Administration had been endeavouring to minimize the nuisance caused to the public by issuing guidelines to promoters and by co-ordinating road works through the Road Opening Coordinating Committee (ROCC). Inspections to monitor the excavation progress on a weekly basis would continue. Principal Assistant Secretary for Planning and Lands (PAS/PL) supplemented that the proposed fees contained no element of penalty but the proposed amendment to LMPO would enhance compliance with EP conditions.

12. Mr LEE Wing-tat opined that the proposed fee structure could hardly serve as sufficient incentives to induce promoters to speed up their excavation works. Apart from the financial costs incurred by Government in administering the EP system, there were social costs in road works. The Administration should not just recover the full cost incurred but should levy a higher charge to enhance the efficiency of excavation works. PAS/PL reiterated the purpose of the charging proposal was to recover the full cost incurred for administering the EP systems. He said that since excavation works were carried out for public interest, the Administration needed to balance different considerations in fixing the levels of fees. Moreover, the

proposed scheme would facilitate effective inspections and enforcement actions against non-compliance with EP conditions. The Administration would be empowered to prosecute contractors for breach of EP conditions. The proposed maximum fine for breach of EP conditions would be raised from HK\$5,000 to 50,000. Mr LEE acknowledged that excavation works were beneficial to the society as a whole. Nevertheless, utility companies were profit-making companies and would consider the cost implications in undertaking any project. A sufficiently high charge could motivate them to improve efficiency of road works. In response, PAS/W said that the contractors' incentive to comply with EP conditions would come from the proposed penalty. He believed that compliance with EP conditions would ensure completion of excavation works in the shortest possible time, causing the least nuisance to the public.

13. Ir Dr Raymond HO enquired about the additional cost incurred for introducing the new charging system which, he believed, would be borne by promoters ultimately. AD of Hy replied that administering the proposed charging system would require three clerical staff, the cost of which would be about HK\$300,000 a year. PAS/PL and PAS/W stressed that at present, the Administration already incurred costs for issuing EPs and inspecting the excavation sites. The proposed charging was based solely on the "user-pays principle". The additional staff cost for administering the charging system would be minimal.

14. Noting that the annual expenditure for issuing EPs was over \$100 million as shown in the cost computation annexed to the information paper, the Chairman doubted if it was worthwhile to implement the charging system which imposed low fees on EP applicants. He requested the Administration to provide information on the number and rank of staff and other related costs involved in issuing EPs.

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Duration of works

15. Dr TANG Siu-tong enquired about the basis for assessing the duration of an EP. AD of Hy explained that based on past experience, the Administration took into account factors such as the nature of the works, the location, and the traffic conditions in the vicinity of the excavation site in arriving at the time required for an excavation project and hence the duration of an EP. The assessment would be made on a case by case basis. PAS/PL advised that with inputs by different departments, ROCC would consider the suggested duration and the impact of each and every EP application carefully.

16. Mr LEE Wing-tat did not agree that the Administration should rely on past experience in assessing the required duration of excavation works. He pointed out that utility undertakers adopted a relaxed attitude in completing excavation works in the past because there was no penalty for delay. Given the traffic congestion and environmental nuisance so caused during the course

of the works, he called on the Administration to adopt a more stringent standard in assessing duration of works. As the charging system would not apply to Government excavation works, Mr LEE also queried the way to ensure completion of Government works without delay. In reply, AD of Hy said that Government works had been monitored closely and a client department could deduct liquidated damages for delay in completing the works. Since last year, whenever works were suspended and the sites were left unattended for a period of time, a notice board had to be erected at the sites to explain the reasons for the suspension.

17. Mr LEE Wing-tat considered the erection of notice boards not an effective measure to expedite excavation works and reiterated that imposing a higher charge could achieve the purpose much better. He urged the Administration to improve the coordination with utility undertakers to minimize the nuisance caused to the public. AD of Hy said that suspension of excavation works was sometimes necessary for technical reasons. The requirement to erect notice boards would enable the Administration to assess whether the suspension was justified. As regards coordination of works, there were currently three channels dedicated to this purpose, namely the Joint Utilities Policy Group which met once every three months, the Utilities Technical Liaison Committee and the ROCC through which the excavation schedules were co-ordinated to reduce road openings. This coordination system functioned well so far.

Assessment of improvement

18. Mr LEE Wing-tat was dissatisfied with the absence of an objective yardstick to measure the improvements made as a result of implementation of the proposed system. He objected to the proposed charging and penalty system in the present form. The Chairman opined that the proposed penalty system would improve enforcement but the proposed charging system might not help expediting excavation works. PAS/PL said that the proposed legislative amendments would enable the Administration to prosecute contractors for breach of EP conditions and this could improve excavation works. PAS/W said that the number of prosecutions would be a good indicator of any improvements made after the implementation of the proposed charging and penalty system. Should the number of prosecutions decrease, the system would be proved effective.

19. Ir Dr Raymond HO asked whether utility undertakers had been consulted on the proposal. AD of Hy said that utility undertakers had been consulted on the proposed system but raised objection to it. This could be expected as they would be required to pay EP related fees.

20. Concluding the discussion, the Chairman said that as the implementation of the proposal would require amendments to LMPO, a Bills Committee would likely be set up to examine the legislative proposal and

interested parties might give view in that context.

(Post-meeting note: The Administration decided to defer introduction of the legislative proposal to amend the LMPO pending further discussion with utility undertakers. The Administration's letter was issued to members vide LC Paper No.CB(1)805/99-00.)

V Advancing the Tuen Mun Area 38 Stage 2 Reclamation
(LC Paper No. CB(1)749/99-00(04))

21. The Principal Assistant Secretary for Environment and Food (PAS/EF), at the invitation of the Chairman, briefed members on the information paper which outlined the proposal to advance reclamation at Tuen Mun Area 38. He said that the principal justification for advancing the reclamation was to provide sufficient outlets for public fill since there would be an acute shortfall of public filling capacity by mid-2001.

Impact on traffic and environment

22. Mr LAU Wong-fat expressed concern about the traffic impact of the reclamation project. The Assistant Director (Civil)/Port (AD(C)/P) said that there had been 300 truckloads per day arising from the Tuen Mun Area 38 Stage 1 reclamation project from 1995 to May 1999 but this had not caused traffic congestion to Lung Mun Road. Moreover, after consulting the Tuen Mun Provisional District Board on 7 September 1999, the Administration had proceeded to build a temporary public filling barging point in Tuen Mun Area 38 to reduce reliance on the road network. Tenders for the works were invited in December 1999 and the construction works would commence shortly. Furthermore, the improvement works for Tuen Mun Road were completed last year while those for the Tuen Mun Foothill Bypass and Wong Chu Road would be completed in mid-2001. Since the forecast traffic for the Stage 2 reclamation was expected to remain at the present level of 300 truckloads per day, the proposed reclamation works should not have a significant impact on traffic in the vicinity.

23. Addressing the concerns of Mr WONG Yung-kan and Mr LAU Wong-fat about the environmental impact of the project, the Chief Engineer/Port Works (CE/PW) said that before the commencement of the Stage 1 reclamation at Tuen Mun Area 38, the Territory Development Department (TDD) had done an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) in 1994 and the study concluded that the proposed reclamation works would have no adverse long-term impact on the environment. The Stage 2 reclamation would be carried out with reference to the EIA and relevant pollution control measures would be stipulated in the works contracts.

24. Mr WONG Yung-kan pointed out that when Stage 1 reclamation at

Tuen Mun Area 38 was in progress, many reclamation projects in the vicinity had yet to be confirmed. However, as the reclamation projects at Penny's Bay and in Tsuen Wan would proceed, he doubted if there would be cumulative adverse environmental impact when these projects took place at the same time. He also enquired about the availability of measures to prevent deterioration of the water quality during the course of works. In reply, CE/PW advised that there was a contaminated mud disposal pit in Sha Chau opposite Tuen Mun. The water quality of the area concerned had been closely monitored by CED under the supervision of an environmental consultancy firm and no significant environmental impact had been detected during the past years. Meanwhile, a seawall would be built before commencement of works to prevent water pollution. A desilting curtain might also be used if necessary to prevent any public fill from polluting the waters in the vicinity.

Development of the SIA

25. Ir Dr Raymond HO expressed support for the proposal and enquired about the type of industries to be developed in the Special Industries Area (SIA) at Tuen Mun Area 38. PAS/EF advised that the SIA had been earmarked for the development of the fourth industrial estate in Hong Kong. A review was being conducted by the Administration and the Hong Kong Industrial Estates Corporation (HKIEC) on the future use of the SIA. Pending conclusion of the review, the site would remain an SIA. He expected that the site would be zoned for industrial related purpose as it was surrounded by a cement plant, a steel mill, a power station, a river trade terminal, a landfill and a cemetery as shown in Enclosure C of the information paper. Nevertheless, the exact nature and type of industries had yet to be determined. Ir Dr Raymond HO requested the Administration to consider developing the industry of prefabricated building components in this SIA. PAS/EF undertook to reflect the member's concern to the appropriate Government departments.

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Reclamation in Penny's Bay

26. Dr TANG Siu-tong enquired about the feasibility of using public fill instead of expensive marine sand for the reclamation works in Penny's Bay. AD(C)/P explained that since the first stage of reclamation in Penny's Bay was planned for completion within two years, there would not be sufficient time to collect public fill after the construction of seawalls and other related works. Moreover, owing to the considerable amount of fill required in the reclamation works in Penny's Bay, only marine sand could accommodate the demand in a short time.

VI Land resumption policy and related matters

(LC Paper No.CB(1)749/99-00(05))

27. At the invitation of the Chairman, PAS/PL highlighted the salient points of the information paper regarding the land resumption policy. He said that at the request of a client department, the Lands Department would examine the resumption requirements of a public works project carefully and ensure that only the minimum amount of private land would be resumed for the purpose. Affected landowners would be offered compensation for the land resumed and/or rehousing should they meet certain criteria.

Assessment of the extent of land for resumption

28. Members sought information on the process in determining the extent of private land to be resumed for a public works project. They were concerned whether resuming the minimal land required was appropriate in each and every situation. PAS/PL said that the amount of land to be resumed would depend on the actual requirements of the project concerned. Since resumption of private land would cost public money, the policy had been to resume the amount of land which was strictly necessary. The Project Manager/NT North of the Territory Development Department (PM/TDD) explained that engineering reasons would be one of the considerations in deciding on the extent of land to be resumed. For example, the amount of land to be resumed for a road project would include both the road and the working space required for its construction. A proposal for public road project which necessitated land resumption would be gazetted. Should there be objections to the proposal, the Administration would meet the parties concerned, explain to them the reasons for resuming a particular portion of land and explore the viability of making amendments to the plan to meet the objections. Individual circumstances would be considered to ensure that the land resumed was strictly necessary.

29. Dr TANG Siu-tong and Mr LAU Wong-fat said that there were many occasions on which a small part of a piece of land was left unresumed. This would make it difficult for the owner to use the remaining part of land. There were also occasions on which a piece of land was resumed portion by portion in several resumption exercises. The interest of the landowners concerned was jeopardized in these situations. Mr TAM Yiu-chung said that the Administration should consider broad issues such as aesthetics and design and should not just follow the principle of resuming the minimal land required. To enhance public understanding of the reasons for resuming a particular piece of land, Mr James TO was of the view that the Administration should make available to the public the information relevant to the making of the decision on the land to be resumed and suggested that a formal mechanism be established for the purpose, such as by placing the information concerned at district offices for public inspection.

30. PM/TDD said that the information was often technical in nature and could not be understood easily. PAS/PL added that District Councils (DC) would normally be consulted on the implementation of public works projects

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and relevant information including the amount of land to be resumed would be provided for DC members' consideration. Nevertheless, the Administration undertook to consider the member's suggestions.

Ex-gratia zonal compensation system

31. Dr TANG Siu-tong noted with concern that Government resumed private land at a low price but sold it at a high price after changing the land use. PAS/PL emphasized that the purpose of land resumption was for implementing public works projects; for instance, the land in Shek Wu San Tsuen was resumed to facilitate a river training project in the North District. He also advised that the ex-gratia zonal compensation system had been adopted since 1985 and a detailed review on the system was conducted in 1996. If an affected landowner refused to accept the compensation offered, he could submit a claim to the Administration within a specified period and state his requested compensation amount. At the end of the day, the landowner concerned could lodge an appeal to the Lands Tribunal if a mutual agreement could not be reached. The decision of the Tribunal on the compensation amount would be final. The compensation system, therefore, was fair and transparent.

32. Dr TANG Siu-tong asked if the Administration would consider increasing the compensation amount already paid to the owner if the resumed land was sold by Government after changing the land use. PAS/PL said that full compensation in accordance with the prevailing policy would have been given to the owner when private land was resumed.

Rehousing

33. Mr TAM Yiu-chung said that many squatter residents did not understand or fulfill the five eligibility criteria for public housing as listed in Annex B to the information paper. On many occasions, these residents did not wish to change their familiar living environment for many reasons, for example, they wished to maintain a relatively low cost of living. Conflicts would likely arise when their squatters had to be cleared. However, he acknowledged that rehousing was a difficult issue to handle but any changes at the policy level would have serious implications.

34. The Assistant Director of Housing/Operations & Redevelopment (Atg) (AD of H) explained the existing rehousing eligibility criteria for squatter clearances and provided the following information:

- (1) The clearances should be genuine residents of domestic structures covered by the 1982 Squatter Structure Survey at time of announcement of clearance;
- (2) Past statistics showed that over 60% of squatter clearances were

covered by the 1984/85 Squatter Occupancy Survey (SOS) and another 11% were eligible new additions due to natural growth and marriage. Some 38% of squatters covered by SOS moved out before announcement of clearance, and about one-quarter were new comers not covered by SOS;

- (3) For those families who satisfied all other eligibility criteria except the seven-year residence rule, they would be rehoused to refurbished flats in older rental estates;
- (4) To ensure rational allocation of rehousing resources, all squatter clearers affected by clearance operations announced after 11 September 1998 had to undergo a comprehensive means test and should not own domestic property; and
- (5) So far about 17% of squatter clearers failed the comprehensive means test.

35. Mr TAM Yiu-chung appreciated the above explanations but acknowledged the difficulties of squatter residents in meeting all the criteria for rehousing. He also expressed concern about the new immigrants who would unlikely be covered by the 1984-85 Squatter Occupancy Survey and would not be eligible for rehousing. AD of H clarified that the Administration would arrange interim housing for squatter clearers who were covered by the 1982 squatter structure survey but had not been registered in the 1984-85 Squatter Occupancy Survey provided that they met other eligibility criteria.

Clearance of Shek Wu San Tsuen

36. Referring to the confrontation in the Shek Wu San Tsuen clearance operation, Dr TANG Siu-tong considered that maintaining close contacts with Rural Committees (RCs) and Heung Yee Kuk (HYK) was important to enhance residents' understanding of clearance matters. The District Officer (North)(DO/N) explained that the North Provisional District Board and the RCs were consulted in 1997 regarding the clearance of Shek Wu San Tsuen. As a matter of fact, the Administration had been maintaining frequent liaisons with Sheung Shui RC regarding the River Indus training project and had contacted the affected residents and business operators direct on compensation matters. He assured members that the Administration had been and would continue to liaise with the relevant RCs regarding clearance matters.

Review of the land resumption policy

37. Having solid experience in land resumption matters in the New Territories for 30 years, Mr LAU Wong-fat pointed out that the change in land resumption policy in recent years had brought about frequent conflicts in relation to the resumption of farmland, fish ponds, orchards, etc. On some

occasions, resuming the minimum amount of land could cause tremendous inconvenience to the landowners concerned; landowners would also be upset by resumption of a piece of land in several phases. Moreover, the assessed values of the same piece of land might vary when different ordinances were applied. Besides, the four compensation zones under the current ex-gratia zonal compensation system were considered not clear enough by landowners.

38. Mr LAU Wong-fat then pointed out a number of differences between the past and the present administrative procedures on land resumption. In the past, the Administration would negotiate with the affected landowner on the amount of land to be resumed and issue a letter of notification with the landowner explaining the reasons for resumption three months before gazetting the resumption proposal. However, under the current policy, the Administration would not have any contact with the landowner concerned but gazetted a resumption proposal right away. Since many landowners knew little about the gazetting procedures, they often missed the deadline for lodging appeals about compensation in accordance with the relevant provision of the Lands Resumption Ordinance (Cap.124). Moreover, in the past, if over 70% of the major source of income of the affected person came from farming, the Administration would make arrangements to facilitate him to continue his farming activities after resuming the land. Public housing estates would be given to those who did not earn a living by farming upon clearing their houses. Under the current policy, if the value of the premises to be cleared exceeded HK\$600,000, rehousing of the landowner concerned would not be arranged. Some village residents who had spent their lifelong savings in building their own houses could become homeless after resumption of the land by Government. In Mr LAU Wong-fat's view, the incident of Shek Wu San Tsuen illustrated that many residents did not accept the present clearance and compensation arrangements. He urged the Administration to review the present land resumption policy and suggested that a special meeting be held to further discuss the subject matter in detail.

39. The District Lands Officer/North (DLO/N) advised that the resumption procedures were conducted in accordance with the relevant resumption ordinances. PAS/PL said that the Administration always discussed land resumption issues with HYK and he was prepared to examine the subject in detail should HYK so wish. In view of the complexity of the subject matter, the Chairman suggested that the Administration should provide a further information paper and Mr LAU liaise with HYK and set out in writing the current problems and suggested improvements. Upon receiving the relevant information, the Panel could then decide on the need to hold a further meeting. The Deputy Director of Home Affairs (DD of HA) undertook to coordinate with the Government departments concerned on the preparation of a paper to explain the past and present mechanisms for land resumption for members' reference. Mr LAU also agreed to provide the relevant information to facilitate the Panel's consideration for arranging a special meeting.

40. There being no other business, the meeting ended at 12:55 p.m.

Legislative Council Secretariat

1 March 2000