

立法會 CB(2)1025/17-18(04)號文件
LC Paper No. CB(2)1025/17-18(04)

Greetings of Peace.

As we have stated in the previous deputation the United Muslim Association of Hong Kong is currently in the process of constructing the Sheung Shui masjid (Islamic centre) & elderly home project.

The plot of land (2,046 Sq. meters) was acquired in Sheng Shui in 2006 with a lease premium of HK\$9.35 Million to construct an Islamic Centre and a 200-bed elderly care home through the generous grant of the Qatar endowment fund, the land premium was paid. The Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) that was signed with the Ministry of Finance of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia on 30 September 2009 after the late King Abdullah pledged to finance the construction project is on hold since July 2016 when the Saudi Consulate in Hong Kong sent a letter to the government of HKSAR that they want to postpone the project for some time. We are awaiting their final decision at the end of February whether they will continue with the project.

We have continually approached various institutions, one of which is the Jockey Club Trust which maybe interested to fund the elderly home pending our funding for the masjid part. This has been a continuing struggle for our community to realize this project and despite all the difficulties, external and internal, we remain steadfast.

I would like to raise the following points:

As per the minutes of the previous meeting we have requested that a new mosque should be built in the New Territories ("NT") with government assistance, and that it should not be tied up with a social service facility as our community is unable to finance such a large scale project and in reality the HKSAR government is well equipped to construct such facilities. Nearby other religious groups in the North District with monasteries and churches were granted land without such a requirement, and we only request for a similar condition considering the increase in worshippers living in the New Territories. (1)

Furthermore, why are we not allowed to establish a secondary school when other religious and non-religious groups have been granted and assisted by the government throughout the years.

At present there are more than 30 International Schools for the Secondary level, of which some around 4 are faith based, with 2 about 100 students or less, HK Adventist Academy and Carmel School.

Some years after refusing UMAH's application for an international Secondary School, the HKSAR government proceeded to grant other schools, space and funding in 2009. (2)

In particular our organization is well placed to assist the HKSAR gov't in its policy for our community youth. We operate an international primary school at present and applied for a secondary school previously but was rejected. In this case we would like to request for assistance to set up a youth training centre that would provide training in the health sector as well as language learning.

"Review comprehensively the entry requirement on Chinese proficiency for all grades of the civil service to increase government job opportunities for ethnic minorities (EM). Further support and assist EM to integrate into society and cultivate positive values through a regular cross-disciplined forces training programme targeting EM youth."(3)

Our land grant is subject to a high premium and granting of land and still facing penalty and we would like to request that this penalty and premium be waived. Our late Chairman had pointed out previously that the "regrant premium" (a specific type of land lease for charitable and non-profit making organizations) for the headquarters of Heung Yee Kuk (Rural Council) was only HK\$1,000 (Legislative Council, 6 December 2001, 1776– 1777), even though some of its facilities such as the theatre, exhibition hall, and conference room can be hired by the public and Heung Yee Kuk makes a profit from such activities. Legislative Council minutes also show that in 2006 the government required an elderly home in nearby Sai Kung Lung Ha Wan to pay a premium of only HKD\$1,000 (Legislative Council, 6 December 2001, 1776 –1777). (4)

The varying prices across similar applications is evidence of government prejudice and evidence of discrimination.

We respectfully request this subcommittee to review our project, allow us to change the nature of social service to be provided in using this land to include a training centre for our ethnic minority youth and convey our urgent plea to the HKSAR

government to provide assistance for us to realize our decades long dream of providing not only a place of worship but also a range of community services for our youth as well as the elderly.

We reiterate that Hong Kong is our home, and request the Hong Kong government to help us to make it a viable home for our community.

References

1. https://commons.m.wikimedia.org/wiki/Category:Religious_buildings_in_North_District,_Hong_Kong
 2. LC Paper No. CB(2)2409/08-09(01) Provision on International school places.
 3. <https://www.policyaddress.gov.hk/2017/eng/highlights.html>
 4. Lok-yin Law (2015) Hong Kong citizens' understanding of Islam: the case of the Sheung Shui Mosque development project, *Asian Anthropology*, 14:1, 57-66, DOI: 10.1080/1683478X.2015.1025597 <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/1683478X.2015.1025597>
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