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Title	Minutes of the Open Meeting of the HONG KONG HOUSING AUTHORITY held on Thursday, 30 March 1995.
CONTENTS	<p>File Ref.: HA/COM12/2 Paper No. HA 24/95</p> <p>Minutes of the Open Meeting of the HONG KONG HOUSING AUTHORITY held on Thursday, 30 March 1995.</p> <p>---O---O---O---</p> <p>PRESENT:</p> <p>Hon Rosanna WONG Yick-ming, CBE, JP (Chairman) Mr FUNG Tung, OBE, JP (Director of Housing) (Vice-Chairman) Mr PAO Ping-wing, JP Ms LEUNG Wai-tung, MBE, JP Hon HUI Yin-fat, OBE, JP Hon Edward S T HO, OBE, JP Rev Sean Patrick BURKE, JP Mr HAU Si-lui-pui Hon FUNG Kin-kee Prof YEUNG Yue-man Mr Stanford MILLER, JP Mr LEUNG Chull-ying Ms HO On-nei Mr CHAN Kam-man, JP Mr Nicholas BROOKE Hon LEE Wing-tat Mr Daniel LAM Chun Mr YEUNG Ka-sing Mr Anthony WONG Luen-kin Mr Joseph CHOW Ming-kuen, JP Mr Dominic WONG Shing-wah, OBE, JP (Secretary for Housing) Mr M J T ROWSE (Deputy Secretary for the Treasury)</p> <p>ABSENT WITH APOLOGIES:</p> <p>Mr Victor SO Hing-woh, JP Ms Audrey EU Yuet-mee, QC, JP Mr A G EASON, CBE, JP (Secretary for Planning, Environment & Lands)</p> <p>IN ATTENDANCE:</p> <p>Mr LEE Kai-fat (Deputy Director/Administration & Policy)</p>

(Secretary of the Authority)
Mrs Fanny LAW, JP (Deputy Director/Housing Management & Works)
Mr R A BATES, JP (Senior Assistant Director/Maintenance & Construction Services)
Mr Simon P H LI, JP (Senior Assistant Director/Estate Management)
Mr Stephen S C POON, JP (Senior Assistant Director/New Development)
Mr Marco M H WU, JP (Senior Assistant Director/Housing Administration)
Mr HO Wing-him (Assistant Director/Policy)
Mr R J AVON (Assistant Director/Finance)
Mr M L YUEN (Assistant Director/Housing Architect)
Mr R N CARPENTER (Assistant Director/Construction Services)
Mr T C YUEN (Assistant Director/Development)
Mrs Joy AU (Assistant Director/Regional Management (1))
Mr Peter K W YIP (Assistant Director/Operations & Redevelopment)
Mr C M KWONG (Assistant Director/Central Services & Management Policy)
Mr C C HUI (Assistant Director/Applications & Home Ownership)
Mr Vincent TONG (Assistant Director/Maintenance)
Mr J J NG (Assistant Director/Regional Management (2)) (Acting)
Mr Edward LAW (Assistant Director/Administration)
Mr Simon P S LEE (Legal Adviser)
Mr Safat HOOSAIN (Public Relations Officer)
Mr W H CHEUNG (Chief System Manager)
Miss Fiona LAM (Senior Assistant Committees' Secretary)
Miss Sabrina LEE (Assistant Committees' Secretary/3)
Mr Raymond KO (Committees' Secretary) (Meeting Secretary)

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Action

The Chairman opened the meeting at 8:45 am. Apologies for absence were recorded from Mr Victor H W SO, JP, Ms Audrey EU, QC, JP and Mr A G EASON, CBE, JP (Secretary for Planning, Environment & Lands).

BROADCAST OF PROCEEDINGS

2. The Chairman informed Members that the proceedings of the meeting would be broadcast to the Lecture Hall for the benefit of departmental officers.

VALEDICTION

3. The Chairman recorded a vote of thanks to two retiring Members, Mr PAO Ping-wing and Rev S P BURKE, for their contributions to the work of the Authority over their past ten and eight years' service respectively.

CONFIRMATION OF THE MINUTES OF THE OPEN MEETING HELD ON 5 JANUARY 1995

4. The Minutes were confirmed and signed.

MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

5. Members noted the information paper No. HA 15/95.

Rehousing of Displaced Tenants of Bedspace Apartments (Paragraph 46 of the Minutes)

6. Mr FUNG Kin-kee was concerned that the inter-departmental Task Force on

bedspace apartment matters with representatives from the Housing Authority had been dormant for a long time. On the other hand, a similar working group without Housing Authority AD/AHO representatives had been set up. The Department would clarify the position with the Home Affairs Branch and report back to the Authority.

Action

ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION

(AGENDA Proposals to Improve the Complaints Monitoring System and Item 3)
Public Enquiry Service (Paper No. HA 19/95)

7. Mr LEE Kai-fat introduced the paper and said that the present proposals were in line with the Authority's policy to be more accessible to the public and to provide a more customer-oriented service. These were the first of a series of proposals from the new Information and Community Relations Division. He informed the meeting that the next step was to present a new community relations strategy for Members' consideration. Mrs Tammy CHAN and Mr Safat HOOSAIN they jointly presented the new system and hotline service with visual aids. A Waiting List applicant was invited to demonstrate the use of the new Housing Department Hotline number "2712 2712". A short video to be shown on television for publicizing the Hotline was also shown to Members.

(Prof YEUNG Yue-man joined the meeting at this juncture.)

8. In response to Mr HUI Yin-fat's question, Mr W H CHEUNG replied that the cost of the computer projects was about \$2 million.

9. In response to the enquiries of Messrs YEUNG Ka-sing, PAO Ping-wing, LEE Wing-tat and LEUNG Chun-ying regarding the information that could be obtained from the Computerised Complaints/Requests Register, Mrs Tammy CHAN, Mr V H CHEUNG and Mrs Fanny LAW advised Members that -

(a) the system could produce reports under different categories such as processing time, nature of complaints etc. in finer details. It could report the number of complaint cases which had been outstanding for one to six months. It could also define the subject and nature of the complaint cases more specifically and in greater details etc.;

(b) the current system could provide complaint statistics but not details of individual cases. However, the system was being enhanced to provide imaging of the original complaint letter or message in about six months' time; and

(c) the system could indicate at which housing block did each complaint occur. The subject officer could thus be identified indirectly.

Action

10. Mr Joseph CHOW commented that the Department should not be tempted to include too much details in the system. A complicated system might discourage users from using it and defeat the original purpose of improving efficiency. Mr FUNG Kin-

kee said that operational details should be left for the Department to work out.

11. On the Housing Department Hotline, Mr Joseph CHOW asked whether the messages were in Cantonese only; and whether the number and nature of enquiries made would be recorded. Mrs Tammy CHAN replied in the affirmative. The Chairman supplemented that callers could also record their views and suggestions through the Hotline

12. Mr Edward HO opined that more specific information should be provided by the Hotline. For example, a Waiting List applicant should be informed of the approximate waiting time before an eligibility investigation or a flat allocation was carried out; rather than just being told to wait. Mr FUNG Kin-kee and Ms HO On-nei shared his view. Ms Ho added that the applicants should at least be advised of whether their applications had been accepted or not. Mr YEUNG Ka-sing however pointed out that such electronic information system should provide answers to the most commonly asked questions rather than case details. The public could contact the designated officer through the system if they wanted to obtain information on individual cases.

13. Mr YEUNG Ka-sing envisaged that the public would need time to get accustomed to the new system but believed that they would eventually accept it. The Hotline was already an improvement over the existing enquiry system. Ms LEUNG Wai-tung echoed his view. She said that distribution of the publicity leaflets on the Hotline should be made as widely as possible so that the public could familiarize themselves with the operation of the Hotline more readily.

14. Ms LEUNG Wai-tung suggested that, to further enhance the enquiry system, the Department should consider installing computer terminals for the public to check public housing information including case details. Mr Marco WU responded that information kiosks were already being planned in the Home Ownership Centre and our commercial centres which would be introduced later this year.

CEO/C&E 15. Mr HAU Shui-pui requested the Department to cater for the needs of the dumb and the blind in developing future enquiry systems.

Action

16. With the above comments, Members noted and supported the computerization proposals detailed in paper No. HA 19/95.

(Mr M ROWSE left the meeting at this juncture.)

(AGENDA Proposed Revision to the Terms of Reference of the Ad Hoc Item 6) Committee on Private Domestic Property Ownership by Public Rental Housing Tenants (Paper No. HA 16/95)

17. As Prof YEUNG Yue-man, the Chairman of the Ad Hoc Committee on Private Domestic Property Ownership by Public Rental Housing Tenants (CPPO), had to leave the meeting earlier, Members agreed to advance the discussion on this item.

18. Mrs Fanny LAW presented the paper. Prof YEUNG Yue-man emphasized that the

Terms of Reference of the CPPO had to be expanded to cover other forms of assets in addition to private domestic property. This was to enable the CPPO to formulate more comprehensive proposals to tackle the wider issue of well-off public rental housing (PRH) tenants who were no longer in need of subsidized housing.

19. Mr FUNG Kin-kee objected to the proposal. He pointed out that tenants affected by past clearance or land resumption exercises had been rehoused to PRH without the need to undergo any means test. Any policy which would result in eviction of such tenants on grounds that they owned certain assets would be unfair to them. Mr Anthony WONG Luen-kin remarked that such tenants had already received other forms of compensation. Mr LEUNG Chun-ying reminded Members that the proposal was to expand the ambit of the CPPO so as to enable it to widen its scope of study. The CPPO would recommend to the Authority whether certain policies should be introduced and if so, whether they should also take into account other forms of asset. The CPPO was not authorized to decide on any policy. Mr Joseph CHOW expressed similar views.

20. Members generally supported the proposal to expand the ambit of CPPO to cover other forms of asset. Mr YEUNG Ka-sing and Ms LEUNG Wai-tung held the principle that tenants who could afford to meet their housing needs should no longer receive subsidized housing. Such affordability should be related to ownership of all forms of asset. Ms HO Onnei said that, other forms of asset could worth more than private domestic property. Mr Daniel LAM remarked that the CPPO should have been asked to consider other forms of asset also at the very beginning. Messrs LEUNG Chun-ying, CHAN Kam-man and Joseph CHOW considered that the Authority should formulate comprehensive and consistent policies to tackle the problem rather than piecemeal ones. Mr Leung added that the reaction of the tenants to be affected should be thoroughly considered before any new policy was introduced. Messrs Edward HO and Anthony WONG Luen-kin opined that the current proposal was in fact a positive step in response to the public's concerns raised on this subject. Mr Nicholas BROOKE said that the expansion of the ambit of study to cover other forms of asset could also serve as an indication to the public of a philosophical change that eligibility for PRH would take into account all assets owned by a person.

21. Mr FUNG Kin-kee was of the view that if a committee had problems in achieving its objectives, the Authority should consider dissolving the committee and then review whether there was a need to set up a new one rather than to expand its ambit. Mr Stanford MILLER said that if the CPPO simply recommended that a new committee was required, the work done by the CPPO in the past months would be wasted. Mr HUI Yin-fat felt that once the Authority had set up a committee, it should give the committee the necessary authority and support to complete its task instead of dissolving it when problems arose. Mr Anthony WONG Luen-kin also found the revision of ambit acceptable as long as the final decision on any new policy was rested with the Authority.

22. Mr LEUNG Chun-ying considered that the CPPO should ascertain the extent of property ownership instead of just private domestic property ownership among public rental housing tenants. As regards the forms of asset to be taken into account under any proposed policies, these should include properties outside Hong Kong territories as there was a tendency for Hong Kong people to purchase flats in Macau and China and

actually lived there. Mrs Fanny LAW responded that while these proposals would be considered, there was a need to strike a balance between the types of asset that should be looked into and the difficulties in investigation.

23. Mr CHAN Kam-man suggested that former Members of the Ad Hoc Committee to Review the Housing Subsidy Policy be invited to share their experience with the CPPO. This would enhance co-ordination between the proposals of the CPPO and the Housing Subsidy Policy (HSP). Mr LEE Wing-tat considered the proposal acceptable. Mr FUNG Kin-kee was concerned that to touch on the HSP might deviate from the earlier decision that the HSP would not be reviewed in five years. Ms LEUNG Wai-tung reminded Members that when the Committee on Housing Subsidy to Tenants of Public Housing submitted its report in 1986, the Committee did recommend reviewing the policy in two years and tackling the private property ownership problem. It was regretted that the latter issue had not been covered when the Ad Hoc Committee to Review the Housing Subsidy Policy was set up in 1991.

Action

24. Messrs HUI Yin-fat, LEE Wing-tat and Ms LEUNG Wai-tung were concerned about the time required by the CPPO to complete its study. Prof YEUNG Yue-man estimated that the first report could be completed in around September 1995. Mrs Fanny LAW however felt that the CPPO should be allowed sufficient time to study the subject thoroughly. It was undesirable to set any time limit.

(Prof YEUNG Yue-man left the meeting at this juncture.)

25. Ms LEUNG Wai-tung requested that if any proposal of the CPPO was related to the work of another committee, the respective committee should be given the opportunity to comment on the proposal before it was submitted to the Authority for approval. Mrs Fanny LAW informed Members that public consultation would be conducted on the recommendations of the CPPO. All the views collected, including those of other committees, would be incorporated into the report of the CPPO before submission to the Authority for decision.

26. Mr LEE Wing-tat said that the proposal to expand the ambit of a committee was an important issue. He asked why the proposal was first submitted to Members in the form of a presumption paper. The Chairman explained that the original aim was to speed up the approval process in view of the tight working schedule of the CPPO. However, if any Member requested for discussion of a presumption paper at a meeting, it would be so arranged.

27. After the above deliberations and with the exception of Mr FUNG Kin-kee, Members endorsed the proposal set out in paragraphs 6 and 7 of paper No. HA 16/95.

(AGENDA Progress on Implementation of Housing Production Item 4) Targets and Housing Undertakings in the Governor's Policy Addresses (Paper No. HA 20/95)

28. Mr HO Wing-him took Members through the paper with visual aids

29. Members expressed grave concern about the shortage of some 38 ha of land for meeting the housing production target of the Long Term Housing Strategy (LTHS). Mr HUI Yin-fat opined that the Governor should provide sufficient land to the Authority to enable it to achieve the target which the Governor had pledged. Messrs FUNG Kin-kee and LEE Wing-tat asked for firm commitment from the Government on sufficient land supply to the Authority. Messrs LEE Wing-tat and Stanford MILLER added that Government should maintain an even supply of land to facilitate better planning and steady housing production.

30. Mr LEUNG Chun-ying remarked that with only 5% deviation from the housing production target, the Authority's performance was already very satisfactory. Theoretically, demand could rise or fall. If for unforeseen reasons, demand fell significantly below the estimated level, the resultant overproduction would represent a waste of public resources. The problem of land shortage could be tackled by slowing down the redevelopment programme, building higher blocks, adopting a less relaxed building density standard and shortening the production cycle, etc. Mr Edward HO however pointed out that as the public housing production agent, the Authority had the responsibility to alert the government as soon as production problems were anticipated.

31. Mr Dominic WONG Shing-wah responded that prior to mid- 1994, there was an agreement between the Housing Authority and the Government on the housing demand assessment. Sufficient land had also been provided to or earmarked for the Authority to meet the agreed housing production targets announced by the Government. However, there seemed to be a difference in opinion between the Government and the HA on housing demand since the mid- 1994 assessment. Before the Working Group on Housing Demand (WGHD) had completed its assessment of housing demand in mid- S for H 1995, the Administration could not confirm whether the HA's request for more land could be acceded to. The Housing Branch would liaise with the Housing Department as soon as the assessment of housing demand was completed and considered by the Government.

32. The Chairman clarified that the Authority had never agreed that sufficient land had been allocated to the Authority in that there had been a persistent shortfall as a result of annual reviews of housing demand and production targets. She reiterated the need for more land identified well in advance so that it could be allocated to HA for meeting the LTHS production targets before 2001.

S for H 33. At the request of Mr LEE Wing-tat, Mr Dominic WONG Shing-wah undertook to provide information on the allocation or earmarking of land by the Administration to meet the housing production targets announced by the Government. Mr HAU Shui-pui said that the difference in assessment must be sorted out quickly. The production trough in the next few years was a result of insufficient land allocation in past years. He hoped that this would not recur.

Action

34. Based on the information of the Development Committee, Mr FUNG Kin-kee and Ms LEUNG Wai-tung were of the view that the housing demand assessment made by the Housing Department was already very conservative. Mr Fung asked who would make the final decision if the Authority and the Housing Branch could not agree on the

housing demand assessment and land requirement. The Chairman and Mr Dominic WONG Shing-wah clarified that the Administration had not rejected the Authority's request for more land. The Administration was just waiting for the result of housing demand assessment of the WGHD before it could respond to the Authority's request.

(Mr HUI Yin-fat left the meeting at this juncture.)

35. Mr PAO Ping-wing noted that additional land was required by the Authority before end of 1995 in order to catch up with the production targets while the housing demand assessment of the WGHD would not be available until mid 1995. Mr Pao requested that, in future, the housing demand assessment should be conducted earlier to allow more time for discussion and processing.

36. Regarding the additional 38 ha of land required by the Authority, Mr Edward HO asked whether the sites had already been identified. Mr Stephen POON replied that the Department was already discussing with the Administration on various possible sites. Actual allocation would depend on the progress of such discussions.

37. To cater for unforeseen constraints of sites allocated by the government, Mr LEE Wing-tat proposed that a higher safety margin should be included in assessing land requirement. Mr Stephen POON responded that a safety margin had already been included in the Department's assessment. However, whether the LTHS production target could be achieved would depend on whether additional sites could be included in the Public Housing Development Programme before end 1995 and be made available for construction works to commence in early 1998.

38. Messrs LEE Wing-tat, Edward HO and Stanford MILLER were concerned about the "bunching effect" by the end of the LTHS period. They wondered whether the Department would have the SAD/ND capacity to meet the high production level. Mr Stanford MILLER considered that there was a need for a realistic look at the housing production targets.

Action

39. To facilitate long term planning, Mr Stanford MILLER said SAD/ND that the LTHS should be rolled forward beyond 2001. Mr LEE Wing-tat added that, being the public housing production agent, the Authority should be consulted in such planning.

(Mr Stanford MILLER left the meeting at this juncture.)

40. Turning to how the clearance and rehousing programmes of Temporary Housing Areas (THAs) could be implemented swiftly and smoothly, Mr YEUNG Ka-sing hoped that concerned tenants would co-operate by being less selective in the choice of flats allocated to them. While tenants could state their preferences, it was not always possible to satisfy their request entirely owing to practical constraints. This would be the case even if one was to rent or purchase private properties. Mr FUNG Kin-kee requested that tenants should be offered flats of similar standard irrespective of whether the THAs were scheduled for demolition.

41. Mr PAO Ping-wing noted that the Authority was introducing a number of measures

to improve public housing management. He considered that manpower should be increased correspondingly to cope with the increase in workload. Otherwise, staff morale would be adversely affected.

SAD/ND 42. Mr LEE Wing-tat said that a briefing session for the Department to clarify Members' other queries regarding the paper would be useful.

43. With the above comments, Members noted information paper No. HA 20/95.

(Messrs FUNG Kin-kee and Anthony WONG Luen-kin left the meeting at this juncture.)

(AGENDA An Update of Computer Projects under Development Item 5) (Paper No. HA 18/95)

44. Mr Edward HO commended the Department for its computerization strategy which was far more advanced than other government departments. Referring to paragraph 22 of the paper, Mr Ho suggested that in addition to using magnetic/optical disks as means of storage for the Document Processing System, the CSM Department might also consider using CD-ROM. Mr W H CHEUNG replied that the feasibility of using various forms of electronic storage, including CD-ROM, would be explored.

45. Members noted paper No. HA 18/95.

Action (AGENDA Secretary's Report- Committee Work Item 7) (November - December 1994) (Paper No. HA 8/95) (January- February 1995) (Paper No. HA 17/95)

46. Referring to the rehousing arrangements for rooftop occupants as reported in paragraph 13 of Paper No. HA 17/95, Rev S P BURKE expressed concern about the press reports on the rooftop squatter clearances of Cheuk Ming and Tak Yan Buildings claiming success in their fights for local rehousing and encouraging/supporting their counterparts of Kingland Building in Mongkok to do the same. Rev Burke questioned why the Department had not made any clarification or response in this regard. Mr Simon LI explained that the former clearances had been rehoused according to the prevailing policy as usual and many of them had in fact been rehoused to temporary housing areas in the New Territories. As to the response to the press reports, the Department had clarified the situation by issuing a press statement but to no avail because the press had not reported the Department's clarification.

47. Members noted the papers Nos. HA 8/95 and HA 17/95.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Release of Members' Attendance Record

48. A note at the Annex was passed to Members at the meeting. The Chairman sought Members' advice and comments on the compilation of individual Authority/Committee Members' attendance records on a yearly basis and the release of such records upon request.

49. Mr Edward HO said that compiling and releasing individual attendance records were in line with the practice of the Legislative Council and he had no objection to it. Mr Ho however pointed out that attendance records might not necessarily be a reliable indicator to reflect the work done for and effort devoted to the Authority by HA/Committee Members.

50. Members agreed to the proposal of compiling a register on Com Secy individual Members' attendance records annually and releasing such information on request.

Action

Estate Management Advisory Committees (EMAC)

51. Mr LEUNG Chun-ying referred to a letter of 17 March 1995 from the Housing Managers Association which reflected the Association's concern on the political and human resource implications of the EMAC scheme. Mr Leung said that estate housing staff were subject to huge pressure emanated from this scheme and the Department should provide them with as much resources and administrative support as possible so as to facilitate the implementation of the scheme. Ms HO On-nei, citing the EMAC of Lai King Estate as an example, echoed Mr Leung's view. Mr K S YEUNG remarked that the Department should collect more information in this respect for the future review of the pilot scheme.

52. In response, the Director of Housing informed the meeting that he and Mrs Fanny LAW had met the representatives of the Association. The Director of Housing said that the Association's concerns were noted and understood. Regarding manpower, three additional staff would be assigned to each of the eight estates in the pilot scheme to cater for the increased workload. The actual growth of workload would be thoroughly assessed during the trial period. A Senior Housing Manager stationed in the Headquarters would oversee the scheme and necessary adjustments would be made to deal with any contingencies. Mrs Fanny LAW said that the Department would accord priority to new projects and initiatives in future budgets with a view to providing the resources required for their implementations.

(Mr Nicholas BROOKE left the meeting at this juncture.)

Squatter Control

53. Rev S P BURKE said that there were reports on vacated squatter huts being sold to new immigrants who were not familiar with rehousing policies. Mr LEE Wing-tat said that he had also received complaints on new squatter huts being built in Tsuen Wan and Kwai Tsing and sold to new immigrants. Mr Lee said that though these immigrants were not eligible for direct rehousing to PRH, this would still burden the Authority's over-all rehousing commitment. He requested the Department to tighten up the control on these activities. Mr Simon LI assured Members that the Department would tackle the squatter problem effectively.

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Action

54. There being no other business, the meeting closed at 11:50 am.

CONFIRMED on

Hon Rosanna WONG Yick-ming, CBD,JP
(Chairman)

Raymond KO
(Secretary)

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