

**Advisory Council on the Environment  
Waste Management Subcommittee**

**Notes of the 23<sup>rd</sup> Meeting Held on 3 September 2009**

**Present**

Prof. Wong Ming-hung           (Chairman)  
Prof. Lam Kin-che  
Mr. Edwin Lau  
Dr. Man Chi-sum  
Mr. Tsang Kam-lam  
Dr. Yau Wing-kwong  
Mr. Samson Lai                 (Secretary)

**Absent with Apologies**

Mr. Simon Wong

**In Attendance**

Mr. Albert Lam	Deputy Director of Environmental Protection (2)
Ms. Margaret Hsia	Assistant Director of Environmental Protection (Waste Management Policy)
Dr. Alain Lam	Principal Environmental Protection Officer (Waste Management) [Agenda Item 3 only]
Mr. C.K. Chen	Officer in Charge (Refuse Transfer Station Development) [Agenda Item 4 only]
Dr. Derek Wong	Environmental Protection Officer (Waste Management Policy Division)1

**Action**

**Welcome**

1. The Chairman welcomed Ms. Margaret Hsia, who recently assumed office as Assistant Director of Environmental Protection (Waste Management Policy). The Chairman also informed members that Mr. Samson Lai replaced Mr. Te Chi-wang as secretary to the Subcommittee.

### **Agenda Item 1: Confirmation of Minutes of the Last Meeting**

2. The draft minutes of the 22<sup>nd</sup> meeting held on 5 June 2009 were confirmed without amendment.

### **Agenda Item 2: Matters Arising**

3. There were no matters arising from the last meeting.

### **Agenda Item 3: Progress of Key Initiatives in the “Policy Framework for the Management of Municipal Solid Waste (2005-2014)” (Paper WMSC 06/09)**

4. Upon invitation by the Chairman, Ms. Margaret Hsia took members through the progress of key initiatives in the “Policy Framework”. There were brief discussions on individual items –

#### Producer Responsibility Schemes

5. A Member enquired about the mechanism to monitor the effectiveness of the environmental levy scheme in reducing the usage of plastic shopping bags, including flat-top bags. Ms. Margaret Hsia advised that retailers should submit quarterly returns on the collection of levy. The first round would fall due in end September. Pending that the Administration has been maintaining close liaison with the retail trade to monitor the situation. There would also be periodic landfill surveys to measure the number of plastic shopping bags disposed of at the landfills. From our preliminary observations, the overall response of the community to the levy scheme was positive. It was not apparent that alleged malpractices such as the abuse of flat-top bags would proliferate.
6. A Member noted the progress in taking forward the various producer responsibility schemes for different products. He said that the Legislative Council should have the resources to scrutinize the proposals in parallel in case the Administration aimed to introduce multiple schemes in one go.

## Municipal Solid Waste (MSW) Charging

7. In response to the Member, Ms. Margaret Hsia said that a baseline study to collect key information on waste generation and waste management practices of different commercial and industrial establishments were expected to be completed in late 2009. The information collected would provide useful reference for the development of possible charging options for MSW. A Member requested that findings and recommendation of the baseline study be reported to the Subcommittee. Mr. Albert Lam said that the study was still underway. EPD would be happy to brief the Subcommittee of the findings when available.

## EcoPark Phase II

8. A Member asked about the tendering timetable for EcoPark Phase II. Mr. Albert Lam advised that there were active discussions with relevant Bureaux and Departments on how the tendering should be done. A key consideration was how we could allow more flexibility as would be required by the operators given the specific context of the trade under the established tendering mechanism applicable generally to government contracts.
9. A Member suggested that the Administration arrange suitable publicity to promote the EcoPark in case any plants could commence operation in the near future. Mr. Albert Lam appreciated the suggestion and shared that the Administration would carry out publicity in line with the completion of visitor centre inside the EcoPark at the turn of the year. So far, the cooking oil recycling plant was to some extent operative and started collecting used cooking oil.
10. A Member expressed interest in the planned wood recycling plant, in particular the source of waste wood for the plant. The Secretary undertook to provide supplementary information after the meeting.

*[Post-meeting Notes: In response to the Member's enquiry, Environmental Protection Department (EPD) advised that the department had been assisting the operator in identifying waste food source. Among others, the Airport Authority had agreed to deliver wood waste collected in the airport area to the EcoPark for production of wood chips. Processed wood chips would be sent to Mainland China for further production of flakewood. At present, all the building plans of the recycling plant had been approved by the Buildings Department. EPD is liaising closely with the recycler on the commissioning of the plant construction works.]*

### Public Education

11. A Member opined that public support was important and should be carefully cultivated through publicity and public education before key policy initiatives were taken forward. Another Member concurred and pointed out that many approved projects funded under the Public Education Programme (PEP) were campaign-based and could not serve the purpose as effectively as other programmes adopting a public engagement approach. Considerations could be given to allow more flexibility under the PEP to facilitate funding support for public engagement projects as well as a wider scope of activities (e.g. more policy study or analysis work in support of the publicity and public education programmes).

### Green Procurement

12. In response to the enquiry from a Member, Dr. Alain Lam said that about 300 tonnes of glass containers had been collected since the launch of the voluntary glass container recycling programme in November 2008. The used containers thus collected were sent to a local recycler for paving block production. A Member supported the initiative and opined that that the Administration should take the lead in using more paving blocks containing recycled glass. Mr. Albert Lam advised that that Administration shared the same view and several departments had indeed been using such paving blocks. In addition, an inter-departmental working group on green

government procurement was set up and one of its tasks was to consider how to promote the use of green materials for public works.

### Others

13. The Chairman enquired how the Administration could control the pollutants generated from the local e-waste recycling plants. In response, Dr. Alain Lam said that two contractors were operating in the Kowloon Bay workshop for the processing of waste electrical and electronic equipment (WEEE). They would carry out deep level dismantling. Hazardous materials generated from the process would be detoxified locally before further processing by authorised operators. He said that the experience from such operation would provide guidance on how to properly handle locally generated WEEE after the implementation of the mandatory producer responsibility scheme.

### **Agenda Item 4: A Review on Increase in Commercial & Industrial Waste Disposal in Recent Years (Paper WMSC 07/09)**

14. Mr. C.K. Chen briefed Members on the latest review on increase in commercial and industrial (C&I) waste disposal in recent years. In light of the findings, he invited Members' comments on the suggested approach to differentiate waste concrete/plaster/mortar from other industrial waste in future statistical analysis and reporting.

### General

15. A Member held no strong view against the suggested approach. He opined that a proper incentive structure under the charging schemes was important to ensure that construction waste would not end up in our landfills.

### Food Waste

16. A Member further expressed concerns that a significant portion of C&I waste came from food waste. Two other

Members concurred. They also noted that there was increase in various types of waste in term of absolute terms.

17. In response, Mr. Albert Lam said that economic factors might be relevant in explaining the trend. Among other waste reduction initiatives, the Administration had been promoting green lunch in schools which could help reduce food waste and the use of disposable utensils. Funding was available under the Environmental and Conservation Fund (ECF) for participating schools to purchase relevant equipment such as dish washing machines. Other relevant Bureaux and Departments were supportive. For example, the Education Bureau was exploring the feasibility of providing financial support for the necessary alteration works. The Electrical and Mechanical Services Department would also provide one-stop service for installation of the relevant equipment.
18. A Member enquired whether the green lunch scheme would cover tertiary institutions. Mr. Albert Lam confirmed that the scheme was applicable to all but the ECF funding scheme was for relevant primary and secondary schools only.
19. The Chairman enquired about the use of food waste composting technology. Mr. C.K. Chen advised that there was a pilot composting plant set up in the decommissioned Kowloon Bay Transfer Station which accepted food waste from various sources such as restaurants, wet markets and food manufacturers. With adjustments after a series of testing, the technology now adopted was found generally effective. A Member was aware that there were also composting machines on the market and suggested that schools participating in the green lunch scheme could acquire one with possibly funding support from the ECF.

*[Post-meeting Notes: The ECF funding scheme for implementing on-site meal portioning at schools will cover essential items, including facilities for re-heating cooked food and washing food containers, while food composter is currently excluded. As the cost-effectiveness of food waste*

*composters is yet to be demonstrated, ECF would normally only support small-scale food waste composters with handling capacity smaller than 10kg/day for education and demonstration purpose under the minor works projects funding scheme.]*

#### Other Wastes

20. A Member observed that over one fifth of the C&I waste was paper. Another Member opined that it should be comparatively easy to arrange recycling of paper in the commercial sector. Mr C.K. Chen agreed. He however pointed out that a large portion of the paper waste did not come from printing paper but rather packaging materials. The volume of such waste might also be related to economic activities.
21. A Member enquired about how the Administration would manage the construction waste (primarily public fill) to be generated from the major infrastructure projects in the pipeline. Mr. Albert Lam said that public fill should as far as possible be reused before other alternative disposal arrangements were considered. In general, where relevant, waste management was an aspect to be examined in environmental impact assessments. Furthermore, an inter-departmental committee namely the Public Fill Committee, was maintaining an overview on public fill management in major public works projects.
22. The Chairman concluded that the recommendations detailed in the paper were endorsed.

#### **Agenda Item 5: Public Education Programme of the “Policy Framework for the Management of Municipal Solid Waste (2005-2014) (Paper WMSC 08/09)**

23. The meeting received a five-minute presentation from representatives of the applicant.
24. A Member supported the application subject to the suggestion that the applicant re-consider the plan to collect used newspaper bags for reuse by the newspaper

vendors. He opined that promoting reuse of newspaper bags might confuse the message as the project aimed to discourage the use of such bags in the first place. Another Member suggested that the applicant re-consider the timing for the discussion forum so as to maximize the publicity effect. After some deliberations, it was agreed that subject to the minor changes as suggested by Members, endorsement was given for the application to be further considered by the ECF Committee after revision of the proposal by the applicant in accordance with the Members' comments.

**Agenda Item 6: Any Other Business**

25. No other business was raised.

**Agenda Item 6: Date of Next Meeting**

26. The next meeting had been scheduled for 10 December 2009.

*[Post-meeting Notes: The next meeting was subsequently re-scheduled to 27 November 2009.]*

**ACE Waste Management Subcommittee  
Secretariat  
November 2009**