

**Confirmed Minutes of the 36th Meeting of
the Waste Management Subcommittee
held on 19 July 2016 at 11:00 am**

Present

Prof Jonathan WONG, MH, JP (Chairman)
Prof FUNG Tung
Ir Prof Irene LO
Mr Anthony LOCK
Ir MA Lee-tak, SBS
Mr Luther WONG, JP
Ir Conrad WONG, BBS, JP
Mr Stanley WONG, SBS, JP
Ms Pansy YAU
Ms Becky LAM (Secretary)

Absent with Apologies

Dr HUNG Wing-tat, MH
Miss Yolanda NG
Dr Carrie WILLIS, SBS, JP

In Attendance

Environmental Protection Department (EPD)

Mr WONG Hon-meng	Assistant Director of Environmental Protection (Waste Reduction and Recycling)
Mr Samson LAI	Assistant Director of Environmental Protection (Waste Management Policy)
Mr WONG Wai-yuen	Senior Environmental Protection Officer (Waste Reduction and Recycling) 3
Mr Niki KWOK	Senior Administrative Officer (Waste Management Policy Division)
Mr SIN Wai-kuen	Environmental Protection Officer (Waste Management Policy Division) 2
Miss Dora CHU	Executive Officer (CBD)
Mr Alan CHUNG	Executive Manager (CBD)

Action

The Chairman informed Members that apologies of absence had been received from Dr Hung Wing-tat, Miss Yolanda Ng and Dr Carrie Willis.

Item 1: Confirmation of the draft minutes of the 35th meeting on 29 January 2016

2. The minutes were confirmed without amendment.

Item 2: Matters Arising

3. There was no matter arising from the minutes of the last meeting.

Item 3: Update on the EcoPark Development
(Paper WMSC 03/2016)

4. The Chairman said that the paper updated Members on the latest development of the EcoPark. He informed Members that he was a former non-executive director of one of the tenants of EcoPark. Members agreed that the Chairman could stay on to chair and participate in the discussion.

5. At the invitation of the Chairman, Mr H M Wong briefed members on the background and the latest progress of the EcoPark with the aid of a powerpoint presentation.

6. In response to the written comments/questions submitted by a Member, Mr H M Wong provided the following information :

- (i) The Environmental Protection Department (EPD) reviewed the operation of the EcoPark after the implementation of Phase 1 and improvements were made for Phase 2, such as extending the tenancy period from 10 to 20 years;
- (ii) The EcoPark had made good progress in achieving its objectives, including -
 - (a) facilitating the development of a high value-added local recycling industry;
 - (b) supporting the recycling industry which handled materials under the producer responsibility schemes; and
 - (c) providing support to tenants with respect to conducting market research, performing business and job matching and assisting in waste sourcing.
- (iii) As regards the benefits to the community, apart from the capital investments by government and various tenants, which amount to almost HK\$1 billion, the EcoPark had created over 330 job opportunities. In 2015, the EcoPark had an annual throughput of 160,000 tonnes of recyclable, and the figure was expected to rise as more tenants would commence their operation in the months to come;
- (iv) EPD had been maintaining close contact with the EcoPark tenants to collect feedbacks including the difficulties encountered.

7. In response to a Member's enquiry, Mr H M Wong confirmed that the tenancies for the non-government organizations (NGOs) operating in EcoPark, i.e. Yan Oi Tong and St. James' Settlement, would be terminated as these projects had already achieved their original objectives. The sites would be put back to the market for bidding by interested recyclers. Mr Wong further advised that a 10-month winding down project had been offered to Yan Oi Tong, with the aim to enhance smooth transition including link up with private recyclers. As for the Member's concern on the sorting and cleansing equipment of Yan Oi Tong, Mr Wong informed that an audit would be conducted to evaluate the condition of the equipment. Equipment in good condition would be sold according to established government procedures.

8. Regarding a Member's concern on the public education on recycling, Mr H M Wong advised that on top of the Yan Oi Tong EcoPark Plastic Resources Recycling Centre (PRRC), there were 18 community recycling centres supported by the Environment Conservation Fund (ECF) which would strengthen their community promotion and education works on waste reduction and recycling. Moreover, the Community Green Stations (CGSs) in different districts were being implemented which would also add more efforts to promote waste reduction and recycling.

9. A Member supported the proposal of extending the tenancy period as a long lead time was required for setting up a high value-added recycling operation. He asked whether the approach of designating specific waste type for the tenants in Phase 1 would continue when the lots were re-tendered. Mr H M Wong explained that proposals involving a waste type that required more support, such as plastic and waste cooking oil would be given a higher technical score during the tender evaluation process. This would allow market flexibility while encouraging certain types of recycling business to be developed in the EcoPark.

10. A Member asked whether or how the two private recyclers would compete with the government-funded Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment Treatment and Recycling Facility (WEEETRF). Mr Samson Lai said that there was no policy for the WEEETRF to monopolize the market. In practice, building on the experience from St. James' Settlement's project, the WEEETRF operator would serve the entire community but private recyclers would likely focus at the more profitable market segments, e.g. bulk collection from commercial organizations.

11. A Member pointed out that the price of recycled products were usually higher than the price of products made from raw materials. He considered that such a price difference was attributable to the public knowledge that using recycled projects could reduce carbon footprints and negative impacts on the environment. Given that the EcoPark recovered 160,000 tonnes of recyclables

annually, he suggested quantifying the benefits of the EcoPark in terms of the annual costs that would be incurred for treating/disposing of the same amount recyclables in the absence of the EcoPark so as to facilitate the public to better understand the purposes of waste reduction and recycling in the EcoPark. Mr H M Wong explained that the benefits brought by the EcoPark could not be easily quantified in dollar terms as it not only increased the amount of recyclables that could be recovered, but also helped develop a high value-added local recycling industry in Hong Kong and raise public awareness and knowledge on waste reduction and recycling.

12. A Member suggested including public education as one of the future leasing conditions. In this way, the public could have the opportunity to gain on-site experience and learn more about the industry. Another Member followed that the general public's recycling knowledge should be enhanced. Mr H M Wong informed that the EcoPark Visitor's Centre, which had already received 120,000 visitors, had set up a gallery to display the products of the EcoPark tenants. Separately, educational efforts outside the EcoPark would also be stepped up by engaging NGOs to promote recycling at housing estates.

13. A Member suggested EPD to liaise with the Green Building Council and/or the BEAM Society to consider including recycling as one of the building assessment criteria.

14. A Member opined that the positive image of Tuen Mun being a hub for various waste reduction and recycling facilities that were important for the development of Hong Kong could be further strengthened.

15. The Chairman concluded that the EcoPark played an important role to create a high value-added local recycling industry. He expressed appreciation towards the efforts of EPD in the development of the EcoPark, and invited EPD to consider further strengthening the recovery of recyclables in EcoPark which could in turn reduce carbon emissions.

Item 4: Plastic Shopping Bag Charging: Evaluation of Effectiveness *(Paper WMSC 02/2016)*

16. By way of a powerpoint presentation, Mr Samson Lai briefed Members on the background and the survey findings in relation to the impacts of plastic shopping bag (PSB) charging.

17. Considering a potential switching effect, a Member asked if future surveys could cover the counting of paper bags. Mr Samson Lai explained that there could be practical difficulty at the field as many paper bags, after being mixed with trash and soil, could be worn out and counting might not be feasible. However, apart from the landfill disposal survey, it could be observed that some

apparel retailers while providing paper bags took initiatives to promote “Bring your own bag” (BYOB) by voluntarily imposing a charge for the paper bags provided.

18. In response to the written comments submitted by a Member, Mr Samson Lai explained that a “retention” approach was adopted for the second phase of the producer responsibility scheme mainly to ensure that the compliance cost would not be prohibitive to small and medium-sized enterprises. The Chairman remarked that it could be difficult to switch back to the “remittance” approach and it would be more practicable to further improve the scheme incrementally along the current direction.

19. As for the other comment from the Member regarding donation of the PSB charges collected, he Mr Samson Lai clarified that information contained in the paper was deduced from a snapshot survey of limited scale and was not meant to portray the overall situation in the retail industry. In reality, many companies donated money in support of green and other charitable causes under their own corporate social responsibility policies, and some would choose not to publicize their charitable work. EPD would continue to appeal to the trade for the support of green policies and initiatives of the Government.

20. The Chairman concluded that the Subcommittee was pleased to note that PSB charging achieved waste reduction as intended. He looked forward to early introduction of the other waste management policy tools including municipal solid waste charging.

Item 5: Any Other Business

21. There was no other business for discussion at the meeting.

**Waste Management Subcommittee Secretariat
July 2016**