

**Confirmed Minutes of the 82nd Meeting of the
Environmental Impact Assessment Subcommittee of
the Advisory Council on the Environment
held on 23 December 2003 at 4:00pm**

Present:

Mr. Otto POON, BBS (Chairman)
Mr. Peter Y C LEE
Mr. LIN Chaaan-ming
Dr. NG Cho-nam
Prof. POON Chi-sun
Miss Petula POON (Secretary)

Absent with Apology:

Prof. HO Kin-chung (Deputy Chairman)
Mrs. Mei NG, BBS
Prof. WONG Tze-wai

In Attendance:

Mr. Elvis AU	Assistant Director (Environmental Assessment & Noise), Environmental Protection Department (EPD)
Mr. C C LAY	Assistant Director (Conservation), Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department
Mr. Eddie CHENG	Executive Officer (E), Environment, Transport and Works Bureau (ETWB)

In Attendance for Agenda Item 3:

Dr. Ellen CHAN	Assistant Director (Waste Facilities), EPD
Mr. Lawrence LAU	Principal Environmental Protection Officer (Waste Facilities), EPD
Mr. C K CHEN	Senior Environmental Protection Officer, EPD
Mr. Harold INSLEY	Study Project Manager, Scott Wilson
Mr. Ben RIDLEY	Ecologist, BMT Asia Pacific
Ms. Connie CHAN	Assistant Environmental Engineer, Scott Wilson

Action

The Chairman welcomed Prof. Poon Chi-sun who had newly joined the Environmental Impact Assessment Subcommittee.

Agenda Item 1: Confirmation of Minutes of the 81st Meeting held on

19 November 2003

2. Members confirmed the draft minutes without amendments.

Agenda Item 2: Matters Arising

Para. 21: Selection of the EIA Report on the Re-provisioning of Diamond Hill Crematorium

3. A Member declared interest, as the EIA report of the project was prepared by the Hong Kong Productivity Council. The Secretary informed Members that three Members had selected the project for submission of the EIA report and three Members had not. Reply from one Member was still outstanding. She would inform Members once the result was available.

(Post-meeting note: Four Members selected the project for submission of the EIA report. In accordance with the established practice, the Secretariat had informed EPD that the Subcommittee had selected the EIA report for presentation.)

Agenda Item 3 : Extension of existing landfills and identification of new waste disposal sites - Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) (ACE-EIA Paper 9/2003)

4. The Chairman welcomed the project proponent team to the meeting. Dr. Ellen Chan presented the background of the SEA, including the need for extending the existing landfills/identification of new sites. Mr. Harold Insley briefed Members on the findings of the SEA.

The need for the landfills and the projection of the total amount of waste

5. Noting that the consultant had presented a projection at 560 Mcum of waste for the year 2050, a Member said that it was a substantial figure and asked whether it had taken into account the large-scale waste treatment facilities being planned and the development of new technologies that could result in a substantial reduction in the total volume of waste. He did not consider landfill a sustainable option and that the Government should try its best to reduce waste. In response, Dr. Ellen Chan said that the waste projection scenarios in the report had already taken into account the large-scale integrated waste management facilities to be introduced in around 2010 and had assumed that the target of recovering 40% municipal solid waste could be reached in 2007. However, even with waste reduction and waste recycling, residual waste from waste treatment facilities had to be disposed of in landfills and

wastes that could not be treated required disposal. The projections would be reviewed regularly to take into account factors such as technological advancement. Nonetheless, it was certain that the existing landfills had to be extended, as they would be filled up very soon.

6. A Member pointed out that each year about 6 million tonnes of waste was disposed of in landfills. If waste reduction could catch up with the growth rate, the total amount of waste would be about 300 Mcum instead of 560 Mcum. Mr. Harold Insley said that the figure of 560 Mcum was calculated from the existing amount of waste and taking into account an annual growth rate of 2-4% and factors such as waste recovery target to be achieved in 2007 and the landfill-charging scheme to be introduced in 2004. Upon the Chairman's request, Dr. Ellen Chan agreed to provide the assumptions and the summary figures of the projections for Members' information after the meeting.

EPD

Construction and demolition waste

7. In response to the Chairman's question on construction and demolition (C&D) waste, Dr. Ellen Chan said the volume of C&D waste fluctuated a lot in the past and it was difficult to predict the growth rate. They had assumed a volume of C&D waste that was in line with the present trend with some reduction after the introduction of the landfill-charging scheme in 2004. It should be noted that the majority of construction waste arising would be inert and would be disposed of separately in other public fill outlets.

8. A Member pointed out that buildings constructed in the 60's and 70's would eventually be redeveloped in the next two decades and a large amount of C&D waste would be generated. A separate strategic plan might be required. Another Member suggested that the artificial island base(s) of the Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge might make use of the C&D waste generated in Hong Kong.

9. In reply to a Member's enquiry on C&D waste, Dr. Ellen Chan said that the Civil Engineering Department was undertaking a study on the long-term disposal of non-contaminated mud and inert C&D materials. It was suggested that artificial island could handle a large quantity of C&D materials. If the proposal was feasible, EPD might be able to use the top of the artificial island as a landfill. However, artificial island was a very complex issue. EPD would concentrate on the extension of existing landfills and identification of other new sites for the time being.

Time required for planning a new landfill

10. In reply to the Chairman's enquiry, Mr. Harold Insley said that it would take around 16-18 years to set up a marine based landfill and around 10 years for a land based landfill.

Joint effort with the Mainland and Macao

11. Two Members pointed out that the development of a marine based landfill was very expensive and suggested the Administration consider joining hands with the Mainland and Macao to deal with the waste issue. In response, Dr. Ellen Chan said waste issues involving the Mainland and Macao would be dealt with by the Policy Bureau. She would reflect Members' suggestions to the Bureau for consideration. She pointed out that the waste problem in the coastal cities of the Mainland was quite severe and the waste figures were growing rapidly. For instance, while Hong Kong's waste growth rate was 2-4% per year, the rates for Guangzhou and Shanghai amounted to 8% and 6% respectively.

Consultation with the Country and Marine Parks Board

12. Noting that the proposed extension of the Southeast New Territories (SENT) Landfill would encroach the Clear Water Bay Country Park and the Northeast New Territories (NENT) Landfill would abut the potential Robin's Nest Country Park respectively, a Member asked whether the Country and Marine Parks Board (CMPB) had been consulted. In response, Dr. Ellen Chan said that they would consult the MPB on the two proposals at an appropriate time as early as practicable. Furthermore, in the feasibility and EIA studies to be conducted for the two sites, the design of the projects would avoid ecological important areas identified as far as practicable and mitigation measures would be devised to minimize any potential environmental impacts. Mr. C C Lay said that though there was no plan to set up the Robin's Nest Country Park at the moment, it would be advisable to consult the CMPB as early as possible as the proposed extension of the SENT Landfill would encroach upon the Clear Water Bay Country Park.

The proposed Lamma breakwater island

13. Referring to item M.6 of the table in page 21-21 of the Final SEA Report Volume I, a Member asked whether both the artificial islands for the Lamma Breakwater Landfill and South Cheung Chau Landfill would be developed. In response, Mr. Harold Insley said that it was not possible to develop the artificial islands at both SCC and Lamma Breakwater together as the two would interfere with each other. The breakwater was proposed many years ago and its status was uncertain at

the moment. The landfill site in question was limited and there were concerns about the impact on the feeding ground of green turtles. That site was held in “reserve” if further consideration identified that the SCC Landfill could not proceed.

14. In response to a Member’s enquiry, Dr. Ellen Chan said that the feasibility of the three proposed extensions would be studied and they would be implemented if feasible. A separate EIA would be conducted for each of the proposed extensions.

15. A Member reiterated that the Government should try its best to reduce and recycle waste, and landfills should only be the last resort. The Chairman thanked the presentation team and said that with the understanding that rigorous actions would be taken by the Administration to reduce and recycle waste, the Subcommittee supported the feasibility studies and the EIAs recommended in paragraph 33 of ACE-EIA Paper 9/2003.

Agenda Item 4 : Monthly Updates of Applications under Environmental Impact Assessment Ordinance

16. Members noted the updates.

Agenda Item 5 : Any Other Business

Schedule of Subcommittee Meetings in 2004

17. As some Members would not be available on Tuesdays, it was agreed that the meetings of the EIA Subcommittee should be rescheduled to Mondays.

Secretariat

(Post-meeting note: The revised meeting schedule of the Subcommittee was circulated to Members on 30 December 2003.)

Tentative items for discussion at the 83rd meeting

18. The Chairman informed Members that the works summary of the EIAO Support Section since June 2002 would be scheduled for discussion at the next meeting. In response to the Chairman’s enquiry, the Secretary said that the EIA report of the Reprovisioning of the Diamond Hill Crematorium would be discussed if Members selected it for consideration. However, the EIA report was being studied by EPD and might not be ready for discussion at the next meeting.

19. The Chairman informed the meeting that at the suggestion of

Action

the Council Chairman, the Subcommittee would continue to discuss the Stage III Public Consultation Booklet of the Hong Kong 2030 Planning Study at the next meeting, particularly the decentralization/consolidation planning options, etc. Members were encouraged to make reference to the relevant technical papers in the web site at <http://www.info.gov.hk/hk2030>.

Long Valley Tunneling Site

20. A Member suggested arranging a visit to the Long Valley tunneling site. The Secretary informed the meeting that a visit to the Lok Ma Chau Enhanced Compensation Area was being arranged with KCRC. Members agreed that the Long Valley tunneling site should be included in the visit as well.

Secretariat

Election of Chairman and Deputy Chairman of the EIA Subcommittee

21. The Secretary informed Members that the office of the Chairman and Deputy Chairman of the EIA Subcommittee would expire on 31 December 2003. It was necessary to elect the Chairman and Deputy Chairman for year 2004. She then explained the election procedure.

22. The EIA Subcommittee elected Mr. Otto Poon and Prof. Ho Kin-chung as the Chairman and Deputy Chairman of the Subcommittee.

Agenda Item 7: Date of Next Meeting

23 The next meeting was scheduled for 19 January 2004.

**EIA Subcommittee Secretariat
December 2003**