

LOCAL VESSELS ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Minutes of the 2nd Meeting

Date : 24 September 2007 (Monday)
Time : 11:00 a.m.
Place : Conference Room A, 24/F, Harbour Building

Present

Chairman: Mr. H P LIU	Deputy Director (Acting), Marine Department (MD)
Member: Mr. TAM Mo-pun	Representing Naval Architects
Mr. LAI Hoi-ping	Representing Seafarer's Associations
Mr. WONG Miu-sang	Representing Cargo Vessels' Operations
Mr. KWOK Tak-kee	Representing Launch & Excursion Vessels' Operations
Mr. John HUI	Representing Ferry Vessels' Operations
Mr. Danny WU	Representing River Trade Cargo Operations
Dr. Alan LAU	Representing Pleasure Boating Operations
Hon. WONG Yung-kan, JP	Representing Fishing Industry
Mr. FUNG Wai-kin	Hong Kong Police Force
Mr. SO Ping-chi	GM/LVS, MD
Mr. BUTT Lee-yuen	GM/Ops, MD
Secretary: Mr. John LEUNG	ADS/C&G, MD

In Attendance

Mr. KEUNG Siu-fai	Hong Kong & Kowloon Floating Fisherman Welfare Promotion Association
Mr. WONG Yiu-kan	Hong Kong Cargo Vessel Traders' Association
Dr. HO Chi-shing, David	Hong Kong Ferry (Holdings) Co. Ltd.
Mr. PANG Wah-kan	Hong Kong Fishermen's Association
Mr. WU Ka-shun	Hong Kong Shipping Staff Association
Mr. WONG Yiu-wah	Marine Excursion Association
Mr. LEE Shing-hing	Sai Kung Ferry Traders Association
Ms. CHING Ngon-lai	Small Craft Workers Union
Mr. CHAU Chun-ming	SMO/ITMS, MD

Absent with apologies

Mr. Ken LO	Representing Ship Building & Repairing Industry
Mr. Martin CHU	Representing Ship Survey Work
Mr. Elden YAU	Representing Marine Insurance Industry
Mr. Tony YEUNG	Representing Seafarers' Training

I. Opening Remarks

1. The Chairman welcomed all to the meeting. He extended particular welcome to Mr. SO Ping-chi and Mr. BUTT Lee-yuen who were attending the meeting for the first time.

II. Confirmation of Minutes of Last Meeting

2. The minutes of last meeting were confirmed subject to the following amendment –

Last sentence of para. 23, Page 6

To revise the sentence to “they would be gazetted for implementation by early February.”

III. Matters Arising from Previous Minutes

Establishment of Sub-Committees

3. The Chairman informed members that the six Sub-committees had been formally set up in July 2007 after members had endorsed the memberships. Sub-committees on Class I, II, and IV Vessels were chaired by Mr. BUTT Lee-yuen, GM/OPS, while Sub-committees on Class III Vessels, Survey Work of Local Vessels, and Safety for Works on Vessels were chaired by Mr. SO Ping-chi, GM/LVS. The first meeting of Sub-committee on Class III Vessels had been held on 17.9.2007.

Survey on Language and Medium of Correspondences

4. The Chairman informed members that a survey had been carried out early this year to collect members' preference on the language (Chinese or English) and the medium (paper copy, CD, or web-link) of the papers and correspondence to be adopted. Based on the result of the survey, it had been decided that when the quantity of documents was small, paper copies would be sent out; and when the quantity was large, CD and paper copies would be sent out according to members' preference.

Electronic Copy of Public Forms on Marine Department (MD)'s website

5. Mr. CHAU Chun-ming reported that most of MD's public forms had been uploaded to the Department's website. Users might download, complete and return these forms to MD by fax or by post. In addition to submitting hard copies, under MD's Electronic Business System (eBS), some of MD's public forms might be completed and submitted on-line.

IV. New Discussion Item

Marine Department's Electronic Business System (eBS)

6. Mr. CHAU Chun-ming provided a PowerPoint presentation to members on MD's Electronic Business System (eBS). MD's eBS provided a channel for submitting and handling port formalities documents electronically. The eBS would not only save the shipping community resources and operating costs involved in preparing paper applications and making the submission in person, but also contribute to paper saving and therefore a greener environment. Mr. CHAU described the features of the eBS and explained its benefits in detail. It was expected trial run of the eBS might be carried out in the second quarter of 2008. Promotional activities, such as briefing sessions, issuing of leaflets, etc., would be arranged before launching of eBS to the public.
7. Mr. WONG Miu-sang asked if the eBS would be connected to the Customs & Excise Department (C&ED)'s systems. Mr. CHAU replied to the negative explaining that the reason being C&ED's business nature was quite different from that of MD's and hence the two departments' information requirements were not the same. Mr. Danny WU asked if there would be any interfaces

that users might use to connect to the eBS. Mr. CHAU replied that in view of cost implications, whether such interfaces needed to be developed would have to be justified by demand. Dr. HO Chi-shing David asked if there would be any restrictions on the users' bank account for the e-Payment option and how the authenticity of certificates could be ensured if a signature on the certificate was not required. Mr. CHAU replied that at this stage the system allowed e-Payment through the Hongkong and Shanghai Bank only and the authenticity of certificates could be carried out via MD's website. Mr. LAI Hoi-ping asked if application for certificate of ownership could be made under eBS. Mr. CHAU replied that eBS was developed mainly for handling vessels' port formalities documents.

V. Any Other Business

Declaration of Interest

8. The Chairman reminded members that at present members were required to register their interest by completing a declaration form first on appointment and annually thereafter. Members were also required to disclose their interest if they perceived a potential conflict of interest in a matter placed before the committee.
9. The Chairman informed members that the government had recently updated the guidelines on declaration of interest by advisory boards and committees. The guidelines provided clearer explanations and illustrations on the declaration system and the situations where disclosures were required. The guidelines for LVAC members would be updated accordingly and these would be circulated to members when available.

Charges for Using Typhoon Shelters

10. Mr. P C SO reported that at the last meeting of the Sub-committee on Class III Vessels, members had asked whether MD might waive the charges for issuing permits for vessels of 100 feet and above to use typhoon shelters. At the same meeting, Mr. SO had explained to the fishermen's representatives that the charges were for recovering the administrative costs of issuing the permits.

Replacement of Environmentally-friendly Engines

11. Mr. P C SO reported that the replacement of environmentally friendly engines was also discussed at the last meeting of the Sub-committee on Class III Vessels. He pointed out that use of non-environmentally friendly engines might continue until they were due for replacement. Sub-committee members had suggested that financial incentive be granted to encourage users to replace the engines before they were due for replacement. MD would forward the proposal to the policy bureau for consideration. Mr. WONG Miu-sang asked and Mr. SO confirmed that the legislation to be enacted would cover local vessels as well. Mr. KWOK Tak-kee asked and Mr. SO clarified that all existing engines would have to be registered, and the vessels might swap their engines as long as the engines had been registered. The old engines would eventually be phased out. Mr. TAM Mo-pun said that if the registration was limited to engines on board vessels, once these engines were broken down, an old engine not already on board a vessel as spare engine could not be used as replacement. Mr. SO said that detailed procedures would be discussed by the relevant sub-committees.

12. Mr. John HUI asked if MD had tightened its monitoring of black smoke emission before the implementation of replacement of environmentally-friendly engines. Mr. P C SO replied that air pollution was not necessarily caused by black smoke but by the emission of sulphur and nitrogen oxides in the air instead. Black smoke might mean poor condition of engine. The public were quite concerned about black smoke emission by vessels. MD had received some complaints of black smoke, and therefore had to follow up on the complaints.

Large-scale Infrastructure Development Projects

13. Mr. Danny WU asked if MD might provide relevant and timely information on large-scale infrastructure development projects, e.g. West Kowloon Cultural District, to members. The Chairman replied that as in the past, for developments relevant to members, the responsible parties would be invited to give briefings for members. Mr. KWOK Tak-kee and Mr. WONG Yiu-kan raised that for major issues, e.g. the expiry of the Berth Licence Agreements for the Public Cargo Working Areas, concerning members, MD should liaise with the policy bureau and ensure that members were consulted before implementation.

Meeting of Sub-committee on Class IV Vessels

14. Mr. WONG Yiu-wah asked if the meeting for Sub-committee on Class IV Vessels could be arranged as soon as possible, as survey of pleasure vessels on charter would become compulsory next year. The Chairman replied that concerned sub-committees would hold their meetings as soon as necessary.

Progress on conversion of P4 to Fishing Sampan

15. Ms. CHING Ngon-lai asked about the progress on conversion of P4 to fishing sampans. Mr. PC SO replied the scheme had already been underway for some time, and the response was quite encouraging.

Supply of Tax-free Petrol

16. Mr. KEUNG Siu-fai asked if there would be any supplier of tax-free petrol in Hong Kong for the fishing sampans. Dr. Alan LAU said that there would also be fire safety issue to be considered for sampans to carry large amount of petrol. Mr. P C SO replied that the matter could be discussed by the relevant sub-committees and referred to the C&ED as necessary.

Fendering Systems of New Piers

17. Mr. TAM Mo-pun pointed out that the design of new piers very often accorded little attention to the design of the fendering systems to suit different types of vessels. The Chairman replied that the Civil Engineering and Development Department (CEDD) was responsible for the design of new piers. Mr. BUTT Lee-yuen explained that in general the fendering systems were built based on local vessels of about 35 metres long. This issue might be discussed by the sub-committees and any suggestions might be referred to CEDD for their reference.

VI. Date of Next Meeting

18. There being no other business, the meeting ended at 12:30 p.m. The date of next meeting would be announced in due course.