

LOCAL VESSELS ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Minutes of the 15th Meeting

Date : 25 April 2014 (Friday)
Time : 2:30 p.m.
Place : Conference Room A, 24/F, Harbour Building

Present

Chairman:	Mr. H. M. TUNG	Deputy Director, Marine Department (MD)
Members:	Mr. NG Kwok-wing, Eric	Representing Naval Architecture
	Mr. XIE Da-ming	Representing Ship Survey Work
	(On behalf of Mr. HUANG Li-fan)	
	Mr. Anthony YEUNG	Representing Seafarer's Training
	(On behalf of Mr. LUK Pak-hung)	
	Mr. SIU Ping-wing	Representing Seafarer's Associations
	Mr. WAN Guo-qing	Representing Cargo Vessels' Operations
	Mr. WEN Tsz-kit, Bondy	Representing Launch & Excursion Vessels' Operations
	Mr. CHEUNG Kwok-wai	Representing Ferry Vessels' Operations
	Mr. Ambrose LO	Representing Pleasure Boating Operations
	Mr. CHEUNG Mei-hon	Representing Hong Kong Police Force (HKPF)
	Mr. Jimmy LEUNG	GM/LVS, MD
	Mr. H. B. CHAN	GM/Ops, MD
Secretary:	Ms. Alison WONG	EO(C&G), MD

In Attendance

Mr. KEUNG Siu-fai	Hong Kong & Kowloon Floating Fisherman Welfare Promotion Association
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Ms. LAW Wing-suet	Hong Kong Cargo-Vessel Traders' Association Ltd.
Mr. CHOR Yee-on	The Hong Kong & Yaumati Ferry Co Ltd.
Mr. PANG Wah-kan	Hong Kong Fishermen's Association
Mr. LI Chi-keung	Marine Excursion Association Ltd.
Mr. LEE Shing-hing	Sai Kung Ferry Traders Association
Mr. FAN Keung	Small Craft Workers Union
Mr. WU Ka-shun	Hong Kong Shipping Staff Association
Mr. PUI Chi-keung	Hong Kong & Kowloon Motor Boats & Tug Boats Association Limited
Ms. Yvette CHAN	Hong Kong Pilots Association
Mr. Cyrus WONG	Senior Engineer/SCL(4), HyD
Mr. Dennis CHIU	Senior Design Management Engineer – Civil, MTRC Ltd.
Ms. Helen LEUNG	Executive Director, AECOM Asia Co. Ltd.
Mr. Wilson KWAN	Principal Marine Engineer, BMT Asia Pacific Ltd.
Mr. S. F. WONG	AD/SD(Ag), MD
Mr. W. H. WONG	GM/VTs(Ag), MD
Mr. Y. K. LI	GM/SRSB(Ag), MD
Mr. F. C. CHAN	SMO/P&D(1), MD

Absent with Apologies

Mr. SZETO Feut	Representing Ship Building and Repairing Industry
Ms. Vivian HO	Representing Marine Insurance Industry
Mr. Kevin FAN	Representing River Trade Cargo Operations
Hon. Steven HO Chun-yin	Representing Fishing Industry

I. Opening Remarks

1. The Chairman welcomed all to the meeting, and extended welcome particularly to the following attendees:

New members

- Mr. Jimmy LEUNG, GM/LVS of MD
- Mr. H. B. CHAN, GM/Ops of MD
- Mr. CHEUNG Mei-hon of HKPF

Attending on behalf of other members

- Mr. XIE Da-ming (on behalf of Mr. HUANG Li-fan representing the ship survey work)
- Mr. Anthony YEUNG (on behalf of Mr. LUK Pak-hung representing seafarers' training)

II. Confirmation of Minutes of Previous Meeting

2. The minutes of the 14th meeting held on 23.10.2013 had been circulated to members for endorsement in December 2013 and January 2014 respectively. The minutes were confirmed without amendment.

III. Matters Arising from Previous Minutes

LVAC Paper No. 3/2014 – Installation of Automatic Identification System (AIS), Radar and Very High Frequency (VHF) Radiotelephone on Local Vessels

3. Mr. Jimmy LEUNG presented the paper to members, which set out the proposed implementation details on the installation of AIS, radar and VHF radiotelephone on local vessels, including the scope and subsidy of the proposed installation and the training matters.
4. Mr. WEN Tsz-kit, Bondy urged the government to ensure that the required installation should come into effect only after the training of crew was ready. He also remarked that sufficient crew members should be trained up before the commencement of the legislation. The number of crew members involved should be calculated on a more realistic basis and the actual operation of the trade should be taken into account.
5. Mr. CHEUNG Kwok-wai also agreed that a more scientific approach should be adopted to calculate the number of crew required to attend the training courses.

He commented that the estimated number of crew expected to receive relevant training on the use of navigational equipment as presented in the paper was much smaller than the actual figure. However, the radar training courses were only planned to be run once a month with a class size of about 12 persons, which were far from adequate to accommodate the genuine need. Mr. CHEUNG opined that measures to enhance the safety of local vessels and navigation should be regarded as a long term policy to change the culture and practice of the industry as a whole. Sufficient resources should be solicited and provided to equip crew staff with the required knowledge and techniques to upgrade their services standard.

6. Mr. S. F. WONG responded that the concerns of the trade were well noted. He explained that the figures presented in the paper were calculated based on the estimation that 2 crew to operate radar and VHF radiotelephone for each vessel affected taking into account the number of shifts as well. He pointed out that although MD planned to submit the legislative amendments to the Legislative Council (LegCO) in 2015, it still had to wait for the announcement from the Secretary for Transport and Housing for the commencement of the new legislation after its passage by the LegCO. Apart from the legislative work, MD would proactively liaise with different training institutions, including the Maritime Services Training Institute (MSTI), on the provision of related courses and classes for the industry. He called upon the industry's support to arrange for their crew members to participate in the courses once available so that they could be well-equipped with necessary knowledge and qualifications before the enactment of the new legislation.
7. Mr. S. F. WONG remarked that the industry was encouraged to install the navigational equipment as soon as possible before the enforcement of the legislation. As for the subsidy for the installation, he responded that the detail arrangements were still under study and would be announced once ready.
8. Members raised no further comments and the paper was endorsed.

LVAC Paper No. 4/2014 – Enhancement Measures for Examination

9. Mr. Y. K. LI presented the paper in detail, which covered the proposed change in measures for examination with a view to reducing the time required for local crew to attain relevant qualifications.

10. Mr. KEUNG Siu-fai expressed grave concern on the low passing rate of the fishermen. He opined that the purpose of the certification examinations should be identifying and confirming the ship handling skill and ability of the applicants, but they turned out to be a hurdle for those who wanted to join the industry. He further highlighted that the fishing community could actually apply for funding from the Sustainable Fisheries Development Fund to design for their own training programmes and engage qualified trainers to conduct the courses. He urged the government to consider validating their internal examinations or arranging officers to carry out on-site examinations or practical assessments for the fishermen.
11. Mr. CHEUNG Kwok-wai echoed Mr. KEUNG Siu-fai's opinion on the low passing rate and suggested a review on whether the course content could genuinely match up with the examination syllabus. Mr. Anthony YEUNG pointed out that apart from written examinations, MD could liaise with the training institutions to consider the feasibility of drawing into a continuous assessment scheme on part of the subjects, which would be beneficial to the seamen with lower academic level.
12. The Chairman responded that the content of the newly introduced maritime preparatory training course for the examination should be able to match up with the examination syllabus. He also agreed that the examination paper should be reviewed in order to screen out those outdated and inappropriate questions. Mr. Y. K. LI also emphasized that the examiners of MD would continue to monitor the passing rate of the examinations and take follow up actions should they notice any irregularities.
13. In respond to Mr. PUI Chi-keung's enquiry, Mr. S. F. WONG confirmed that the examination duration for Coxswain Grade 2 and Grade 3 Certificate would remain as 40 and 50 minutes respectively for the time being. The examination rules could be further revised subject to the result of the proposed amendments as stated in the paper.
14. Mr. S. F. WONG informed members that the MSTI would consider to introduce a 10-day course on a comprehensive basic training and general knowledge for local seamen. Mr. Anthony YEUNG supplemented that as a measure to attract new blood to join the industry and to train up new talents, the MSTI was

commissioned by the Transport and Housing Bureau to design a training course covering all basic aspects for crew staff, including navigational safety and crisis management, etc. MSTI had already come up with a framework of the training course and would introduce the details to the industry with a view to further refine the content of the course.

15. Members raised no further comments and the paper was endorsed. The Chairman further appealed to members' support in arranging their crew staff to attend the training courses once available.

IV. New Discussion Item

LVAC Paper No. 5/2014 – Marine Traffic Impact of the Shatin to Central Link (SCL) Construction

16. Mr. Cyrus WONG and Mr. Dennis CHIU briefly introduced the purpose and background of the paper as well as the cross harbour tunnels section of the SCL. Mr. Wilson KWAN then briefed members on the finding of the Marine Traffic Impact Assessment (MTIA) study, stressing on the anticipated marine traffic impacts and navigation impacts during the SCL construction works and operation phases and the proposed mitigation measures during the construction phases. Mr. Dennis CHIU supplemented that the Cross Harbour Tunnel works was currently undergoing tendering procedures. After taking over the site, the contractor was expected to refer to the proposed mitigation options as the blueprints and further develop and design the details of the construction works. Stakeholders would be further consulted at the construction stage.
17. In response to the Chairman and Mr. Ambrose LO's enquiry on the detailed timetable of the construction project and the duration of the fairway diversion, Mr. Dennis CHIU replied that the successful bidder would take over the site by end of this year. The contractor would then conduct site inspections and plan for the details of the construction works, which should be ready in 2015. The actual construction works was expected to commence in 2016. Ms. Helen LEUNG stressed that fairway diversion was not proposed for the first year of the dredging operations. It would be implemented in the immersed tunnel installation and backfilling works stage, which would last for approximately 2 years.

18. Mr. W. H. WONG voiced out that the proposed fairway diversion would result in a rather narrow and meandering waterway for large ships at certain construction phases. He opined that, as far as possible, this arrangement should be avoided from the safety point of view as it would increase the difficulties for the ships to swing at the sharp turn, not to mention that two-way traffic was adopted in the fairway. He counter-proposed that the fairway could be split into two (i.e. north and south waterway) during the construction phases concerned to maintain navigation safety. He also noticed that the diversion was proposed to be implemented at the early stage of the works, which was considered unnecessary as the original fairway was not yet affected. His opinions were supported by Mr. Eric NG and Mr. CHEUNG Kwok-wai who also queried that the proposal would invite accidents and create potential danger to the vessels using the fairway.
19. Mr. Wilson KWAN responded that the purpose of implementing the proposal at an early stage was to allow more time for the fairway users to adapt to the change. It was also their intention to minimize the frequency of the diversion within a very short period. Mr. W. H. WONG expressed that if sufficient buoys could be laid to clearly indicate the diverted fairway, together with the Marine Department Notices and relevant safety announcements, there should be no major difficulties for mariners to get use to the changes.
20. Mr. WU Ka-shun highlighted that the anchors or sinkers of the construction pontoons should not be dropped within the fairway to avoid accident. Mr. Anthony YEUNG also expressed concern on the visibility of the buoys indicating the anchors or sinkers of the construction pontoons and suggested radar reflectors be installed on these buoys so that other vessels could be alerted. Mr. W. H. WONG pointed out that if the construction works was near to the principal fairways the buoys used should be more prominent. He also enquired whether the government mooring buoy A35 with its sinker could be reinstated over the tunnel after the construction of SCL.
21. The Chairman suggested MTRC should take onboard members' concerns and suggestions in designing the mitigation measures with the contractor in due course.

V. Any other Business

22. In response to Mr. KEUNG Siu-fai enquiry on whether there was any change in policy to discourage owners from using stationary vessels in typhoon shelters for any non-fishing related activities that could be conducted onshore, the Chairman replied that the policy remained unchanged.

VI. Date of Next Meeting

23. There being no other business, the meeting ended at 4:00 p.m. The date of next meeting would be announced in due course.