

PILOTAGE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Ref. : HQ/COM 928/29 (19)

Minutes of the Pilotage Advisory Committee Meeting

Date : 14 December 2006 (Thursday)
Place : Conference Room A, 24/F, Harbour Building
Time : 11:30 a.m.

Present

Chairman: Mr. LEE Wai-kuen	Deputy Director of Marine
Member: Capt. LI Kwan-wood	Master Mariner
Mr. LI Pok-yan	Representing Dockyard Industry
Mr. Edward CHIU	Representing Dry Bulk Cargo Operators
Mr. Peter YIM	Representing HK Liner Shipping Association
Capt. CHEN Yu-chi	Representing HK Pilots Association
Capt. PAU Sai-hung	Representing HK Pilots Association
Mr. CHENG Siu-lun	Representing Oil Terminal Operators
Capt. WU Ka-shun	Representing Tug Operators
<i>(on behalf of Capt. Alan LOYND)</i>	
Mr. LEE Ka-mo	AD/PC, Marine Department
Mr. TONG Ho-lok	S(N)Exam, Marine Department
Secretary: Ms. Shirley HO	ADS/C&G, Marine Department

In Attendance

Mr. Terence SIT	HK General Chamber of Commerce
Capt. AU Che-hung	HK Pilots Association (HKPA)
Capt. LAW Kwun-pan	- ditto -
Mr. SHUM Yum-pui	- ditto -
Mr. Andrew NG	MO/Pilotage, Marine Department

Absent with Apologies

Capt. Joseph FONSEKA	Master Mariner
Mr. NG Jim-mi, Jimmy	Master Mariner
Mr. Gur Prasad KOHLI	Representing Break Bulk Cargo Operators
Mr. Harry LAM	Representing Containers Terminal Operators
Mr. YOUNG Yick-sing	Representing HK Shipowners Association
Mr. BUTT Lee-yuen	SMO/VTC, Marine Department

OPENING REMARKS

1. The Chairman welcomed all present. He extended particular welcome to Mr. WU Ka-shun, who was attending the meeting on behalf of Capt. Alan LOYND representing the tug operators.

2. The Chairman told the meeting that the following members were not able to attend the meeting and had sent apologies for absence –
 - (a) Capt. Joseph FONSEKA
 - (b) Mr. Gur Prasad KOHLI
 - (c) Mr. Harry LAM
 - (d) Mr. Jimmy NG
 - (e) Mr. YOUNG Yick-sing
 - (f) Mr. BUTT Lee-yuen

AGENDA ITEMS

I. Confirmation of Minutes of Last Meeting

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

Last sentence, Paragraph 20, Page 7

To delete the whole sentence, i.e. “Capt. CHEN Yu-chi confirmed Mr. Terence SIT that, so long as the draft permitted, the use of two berths together would not pose any problem for the ships berthing on the other side.”

II. Matters Arising from Previous Minutes of Meeting

Maximum Allowable LOA at Kwai Chung Container Terminal

4. In reply to Mr. Terence SIT, Capt. CHEN Yu-chi remarked that, in terms of length, the mega size container vessels could be allowed at most of the KC berths except berths no. 6 and 7, if no commercial contractual arrangements had restricted the use of two individual berths in parallel if and when required.

Apprentice Pilot – Mr. YUEN Tai-ming

5. The Chairman told members that, the apprentice pilot Mr. YUEN Tai-ming had just sat for the Class IID pilot license examination after an additional three-month apprenticeship training. After a two-hour interview, the examination board considered Mr. YUEN qualified for upgrading to a Class IID pilot and would recommend to the Pilotage Authority for granting Mr. YUEN a Class IID pilot license.

III. New Discussion Item

PAC Paper No. 5/2006 – “Compulsory Pilotage Exemption for Vessels of 1000 Gross Tonnage or over --- Proceeding to or from Container Terminals”

6. Mr. Andrew NG presented the paper briefly and said that the paper had been circulated to members for comments in October 2006. He reported to members that he had received the comments from three members and would like to respond as follows –
 - (a) Mr. Andrew NG confirmed Mr. Peter YIM that the change of name of “Sea-Land Orient Limited” listed in the Third Schedule of Cap. 295C was noted and it was not uncommon for such kind of name changes. MD would take the opportunity to update them in one go before submitting

to the Department of Justice (DoJ) for the amendment of the Ordinance;

- (b) In reply to Mr. Harry LAM, Mr. Andrew NG answered that, according to the record, the number of vessels between 2000 and 3000 GT that called at Kwai Chung Container Terminals (KCCT) in the past twelve months was only three. A big change of the situation was not anticipated. Given that the number of vessels involved was so small and all vessel movements were monitored by the Vessel Traffic Centre and the Kwai Chung Marine Traffic Control Station (KCCS), the present control on the river trade vessels (RTV) was considered satisfactory and relative tug assistance was considered not required; and
- (c) Mr. Andrew NG agreed with Capt. Alan LOYND that the traffic conditions in KCCT and RTT were different. However, the monitoring of the vessel movements and safe navigation in KCCT was considered sufficient because there was a round-the-clock control station as well as a fast patrol launch deployed in the KCCT service area for the purpose. As regards the accident rate of the RTV, Mr. Andrew NG clarified that there were a total of 163 incidents within Hong Kong waters in twelve months since October 2005. Only seven minor accidents occurred within KCCT basin and among which six were below 1000 GT. It proved that the accident rate of the RTV between 1000 and 3000 GT was not high and the situation was considered acceptable. Lastly, Mr. Andrew NG said that he had no strong view in amending the phrase “belonging to” to read “presently operated by” as stated in the Third Schedule of Cap. 295C. MD would seek the comments from the DoJ for further processing at a later stage.
7. Capt. WU Ka-shun expressed concerns over the delay of the completion of Stonecutters Bridge and its impact to the busy marine traffic in KCCT basin. Mr. LEE Ka-mo replied that to enhance the safety and efficiency of vessel operations in the KCCT Basin and its approaches it was MD’s intention that the

KCCS to play the coordinator role to monitor and regulate the traffic movements within the KCCS Service Area, and provide navigational advice to those vessels in close liaison with operators of the KCCT. MD would liaise with the relevant stakeholders and carry out appropriate consultation to ensure that different views from different parties would be well addressed and accommodated before the completion of the bridge construction.

8. In response to Capt. WU Ka-shun's worries over the pilotage exemption for those RTV between 2000 and 3000 GT proceeding to or from KCCT and its potential impacts to the navigational safety in the service area, Mr. LEE Ka-mo explained the rationale behind the proposed amendments and said that Mr. WU's concern was more a traffic control issue rather than a pilotage issue, which could be duly dealt with by the Marine Traffic Control Station. Capt. WU Ka-shun clarified that he was not objecting to the pilotage exemption proposed in the paper but was of the view that the prevailing administrative practices to exempt the pilotage for those RTV was good and sufficient to serve the purpose. Legislative amendment was considered not very suitable because it would need multiple time and effort to regulate it if and when discrepancies or disadvantages were found after the amendment. He would therefore like to maintain the established pilotage exemption system.
9. Given that all of the members except Capt. WU Ka-shun held no objections to the proposed amendment, the Chairman concluded that the paper was endorsed. Capt. WU's comments were noted and would be recorded in the meeting notes.

***PAC Paper No. 6/2006 —“Proposed Amendments to the Berthing Guidelines”
(Grading of Tugs)***

10. Mr. Andrew NG presented the paper and said that the paper was circulated and endorsed by all PAC Working Group members in September 2006 except Capt. Alan LOYND, who suggested that tugs of 3000 HP or greater should be used for all vessels of LOA below 300 metres and/or draft below 12.5 metres

because Grade I tugs of 2600 HP would be entirely phased out in the near future. Mr. Andrew NG explained that the “2600 HP” was proposed on consideration of the practical and reasonable need but not solely the market situation. The possibility that new service providers, if any, using new Grade I tugs of horsepower below 3000 to serve the market could not be eliminated. The proposed amendment to 2600 HP was therefore considered appropriate. Mr. Peter YIM supported to maintain the said “2600 HP” because from liner shipping point of view 3000 HP might be too powerful for the vessels of LOA below 300 metres.

11. Capt. WU Ka-shun provided for members’ information that the existing tugs in use were with horsepower between 3000 and 4000 and an updated list of which as from 1 January 2007 had been passed to the PAC Secretary for incorporation into the Berthing Guidelines. The Chairman thanked for the information and concluded that members had no other comments and endorsed the amendments proposed in the paper.

***PAC Paper No. 7/2006 —“Proposed Amendments to the Berthing Guidelines”
(Misc.)***

12. Mr. Andrew NG presented the paper and drew members’ attention to Items 2 and 12 of the proposed amendments particularly because the tugs list effective from 1 January 2007 in Item 2 and the new proposed amendment from “352 metres” to “353 metres” in Item 12 had not been included in the relevant PACWG paper circulated and endorsed in November 2006.
13. The Chairman noted that members raised no objections to the amendments proposed in the paper and announced that the paper was unanimously endorsed.

IV. Any Other Business

Communication in English between Duty Pilots and Tug Crew

14. According to Mr. Peter YIM, individual shipmasters were of strong view that it would enhance the communication among the three parties if the language used between the duty pilots and the tug crew could be English. They understood that the tug crew might not be proficient in English and wished that the duty pilots could play an interpreter role as far as possible. Capt. WU Ka-shun confirmed that most of the tug crew members were not conversant with English. Capt. PAU Sai-hung told the meeting that it would be difficult for the duty pilots to serve as the interpreter as well because they were always busy in handling the situation at the time of communicating with the tug crew, for sometimes, simultaneously with crew of four tugs. However, he was appreciative of the opinion given by the ship masters and willing to know more about their individual concerns. The Chairman concluded that the HKPA and the ship companies concerned should communicate direct to sort out the problem.

Use of Tugs by Ships with 1475 HP

15. Mr. Peter YIM enquired for a liner member if it was possible to use one less tug for ships with 1475 HP, which was only 25 HP differed from the standard 1500 HP. Capt. CHEN Yu-chi answered that on the contrary of the request there was at present an upward trend for the use of tugs in view of the current size of ships irrespective of their length and the HKPA was considering reviewing the need to use more tugs. Capt. WU Ka-shun shared the same view with Capt. CHEN. Capt. CHEN Yu-chi remarked that the HKPA had never officially heard of the question and for such kind of special request the ship company should approach the HKPA direct but not bring it before the PAC meeting.
16. The Chairman concluded that the number of tugs to be used by specific vessels with certain HP was recommended on the basis of reasonable operation need in practice and would not be adjusted solely because of individual request by any one company. For the special request made by that liner member, the ship

company should contact the HKPA direct for special consideration and Mr. Peter YIM was requested to pass the message to the member concerned.

Report of Board of Discipline (BOD) Cases

17. The Chairman told the meeting that a total of three BODs had been arranged in 2006. He thanked members Capt. CHEN Yu-chi, Capt. LI Kwan-wood and Capt. Joseph FONSEKA for giving their time and expertise while serving on the boards.

New Term of PAC Membership

18. The Chairman said that the present term of office of all the PAC members would be due to expire on 31.12.2006. He thanked members for their valuable contributions and donation of time to the PAC in the past two years and expressed his particular gratitude to the seven outgoing members, including Capt. LI Kwan-wood, Mr. LEE Ka-mo, Mr. YOUNG Yick-sing, Mr. Harry LAM, Mr. Jimmy NG, Mr. BUTT Lee-yuen and Mr. Gur Prasad KOHLI. He told members that they would be replaced by Mr. CHAN Lok-ching, Capt. Rado Antolovic, Mr. TO Wing-sing, Mr. CHOR Yee-on, Mr. TSANG Man-ching, Mr. SIN Tak-cheung and Mr. Andrew NG. Gazette of their appointment would be published by end of December 2006.

Operation of the Merchant Shipping (Local Vessels) Ordinance

19. The Chairman enlightened members that the Merchant Shipping (Local Vessels) Ordinance would come into operation with effect from 2 January 2007.

V. Date of Next Meeting

20. There being no other business, the meeting ended at 12:45 p.m. The date of next meeting would be announced in due course.