

Country and Marine Parks Board (CMPB)
Confirmed Minutes of the 52nd Meeting

Date : 23 May 2013 (Thursday) File Ref.: AF CPA 01/1/0
Time : 2:30 p.m.
Venue : Room 701, Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department (AFCD)
Headquarters

ATTENDANCE

Chairman

Prof Nora TAM Fung-ye, JP

Members

Dr Gary ADES

Professor Rebecca CHIU Lai-har, JP

Mr CHOW Kwok-keung

Dr Billy HAU Chi-hang

Ms Tennessy HUI Mei-sheung, JP

Mr LEUNG Wing-hang

Dr Eric LI Shing-foon

Ms LO Po-man

Dr Young NG Chun-yeong, MH

Mr TANG King-shing, GBS, PDSM

Dr TIK Chi-yuen, BBS, JP

Dr LEUNG Siu-fai, JP

Director of Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation
(Acting)

Mr Elvis AU, JP

Assistant Director (Nature Conservation & Infrastructure
Planning), EPD

Mr Wilson SO	Assistant Director of Planning (New Territories)
Mr C S CHIN	Assistant Director of Water Supplies/Development
Mr S M CHUNG	Assistant Director of Marine (Port Control)

Secretary

Mr Patrick TSANG	Assistant Secretary (Boards)1, AFCD
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IN ATTENDANCE

Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department (AFCD)

Mr Joseph SHAM	Assistant Director (Country and Marine Parks)
Mr Edmond LAM	Senior Country Parks Officer/Ranger Services
Mr Franco NG	Senior Country Parks Officer/South-east
Dr K M YEUNG (For agenda item IV only)	Senior Geopark Officer
Mr Alan CHAN	Senior Marine Parks Officer
Mr K S CHEUNG	Senior Country Parks Officer/North-west (Acting)
Mr Boris KWAN (for Agenda Item IV only)	Geopark Officer/Education

Home Affairs Department (HAD)

Mrs Ann HO	Chief Executive Officer (2)1
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ABSENT WITH APOLOGIES

Ms Jasminia Kristine CHEUNG

Prof CHU Lee-man

Ms KWAN Sau-wan

Dr NG Cho-nam, BBS, JP

Mr WONG Yung-kan, SBS, JP

Ms Olga LAM, JP

Assistant Director of Lands (Estate Management)

Mr Donald CHOY

Assistant Director of Leisure and Cultural Services
(Leisure Services)³

Mr HUI, Eric Kwok Sun, JP

Assistant Director of Home Affairs (2)

(The meeting would be proceeded to the closed-door session in which public attendance was not allowed.)

OPENING REMARKS BY THE CHAIRMAN

269/13 The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting. She also informed members that Dr LEUNG Siu-fai, JP, Deputy Director of Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation, was doubling up as Director of Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation while Mr Alan WONG Chi-kong, JP was on duty visit.

270/13 The Chairman informed members that, as an established practice, to facilitate the taking of meeting minutes, sound recording would be made during the meeting. The audio records would be destroyed after the meeting minutes were confirmed.

AGENDA ITEMS

I. Closed-door Session

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(End of the discussion under the closed-door session. The meeting was opened for public attendance.)

II. Confirmation of Minutes of the Meeting held on 17 October 2012

280/13 The minutes of the 51st Meeting held on 17 October 2012 were confirmed without amendments

III. Matters Arising

(a) Proposed Eco-adventure Zipline Tour at Ngong Ping, Lantau North Country Park (Para. 196/12 to 242/12)

281/13 Mr K S CHEUNG reported that the Secretariat had informed Flying Fox in writing on 14 November 2012 that the Board did not support their proposal and stated the objection reasons. Flying Fox had not contacted the Secretariat in respect of its reply.

(b) Draft Replacement Maps of Sai Kung East Country Park, Kam Shan Country Park and Tai Lam Country Park (Para. 243/12 to 244/12)

282/13 Mr K S CHEUNG reported that the Authority published in the Gazette a notice regarding the draft maps of the Sai Kung East Country Park (SKECP), the Kam Shan Country Park (KSCP) and the Tai Lam Country Park (TLCP) and the respective explanatory statements on 26 October 2012. Copies of the draft maps and explanatory statements were made available for inspection by the public for a period of 60 days from the date of the Gazettal (i.e., 26 October 2012) to 24 December 2012. During the inspection period, the Authority and the Secretary of the Country and Marine Parks Board (the Board) received nine objections against the draft map of the SKECP and one objection against the draft map of the TLCP while there was no objection against the draft map of KSCP.

283/13 Mr CHEUNG continued to say that the Board conducted a special meeting on 7 and 8 February 2013 to hear the objections to the draft maps of the SKECP and the TLCP. After careful deliberation of all the written objections, the opinions of those attending the hearing, the

respective representations of the Authority and his comments at the hearing, the Board unanimously rejected all objections to the two draft maps. The Secretary of the Board notified in writing the objectors of the Board's decision on 12 April 2013 and posted the decision at various locations in the concerned country parks and on AFCD's website. The draft maps of the SKECP, the KSCP and the TLCP were approved by Chief Executive in Council (CE in C) on 7 May 2013. The Authority signed the three approved maps and deposited them in the Land Registry. The Authority would publish a notice of the deposit of the three approved maps in the Gazette next week.

(c) Annual Field Visit (Para. 248/12 to 249/12)

284/13 Mr Joseph SHAM briefed members of the details of the Visit.

285/13 The Chairman commended the Visit and pointed out that the Visit enhanced members' understanding of AFCD's work in country parks, geoparks and the marine reserve.

(d) Proposal for a Site of Special Scientific Interest and Support for Country Park Designation on the Po Toi Islands by The Hong Kong Bird Watching Society (Para. 257/12 to 258/12)

286/13 Mr K S CHEUNG reported that in 1993 Planning Department had pointed out that the Po Toi Islands had the potential to be designated as a country park in accordance with Territorial Development Strategy Review (TDSR)(全港發展策略檢討). The Authority commissioned the Chinese University of Hong Kong (CUHK) to conduct a study on the assessment of suitability of the Po Toi Islands for country park designation in 1999. A study report was submitted to the Board in 2000, which suggested that country park designation was suitable for the Po Toi Islands. He then recapitulated the highlights of the proposal by The Hong Kong Bird Watching Society (HKBWS). He advised that the Authority would use the updated principles and criteria for designating new country parks or extending existing country park to assess the suitability of the Po Toi Islands for designation as a country park, and consult the Board, relevant parties and the public in due course.

(Mr CHOW Kwok-keung attended the meeting at this juncture.)

287/13 In response to a member's enquiry about the reasons why the suggestions of the

study report of CUHK had not been implemented, Mr Joseph SHAM replied that apart from the Po Toi Islands, the TDSR's recommendations also covered other areas in Hong Kong such as Robin's Nest (紅花嶺) and Lantau North (Extension) (北大嶼(擴建部分)). The Authority had successively designated other recommended areas as country parks according to the TDSR's report, for instance, the Lantau North (Extension) Country Park and planned designation of Robin' Nest as a country park.

288/13 A member supported the proposal of HKBWS.

289/13 Dr LEUNG Siu-fai, JP was of the view that the Board would be heavily engaged in the proposed designation of country park enclaves as part of country parks, which should be the priority work of the Board, in the next few years. The designation of the Po Toi Islands as a country park would be proceeded as appropriate. The Chairman echoed Dr LEUNG's views that the designation of the Po Toi Islands as a country park was a matter of order of priority subject to resources and time.

290/12 In response to a member's enquiry about preventive measures to combat unauthorized activities in Po Toi Island prior to country park designation of Po Toi Island, Mr Wilson SO replied that with the approval from the Town Planning Board (TPB), the draft Po Toi Islands Development Permission Area Plan (DPA Plan) was gazetted in March 2012 to put Po Toi and its adjoining islands under statutory planning control. Apart from uses or development permitted under the DPA plan, other uses or development would require planning permission from the TPB. Any unauthorized development would be subject to enforcement under the Town Planning Ordinance (TPO).

(e) Convention on Biological Diversity (Para. 259/12)

291/13 Mr Joseph SHAM reported that the Convention on Biological Diversity (the Convention) had been extended to Hong Kong as China was a signatory of the Convention. In light of this, AFCDD was required to formulate its Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (BSAP). The Environment Bureau and the AFCDD had embarked on an exercise to develop the BSAP. A BASP website was established in AFCDD's homepage. The Administration would prepare the BSAP through an open and participatory process in the form of a series of public engagement events in 2013 and 2014. The Administration also set up the BASP Steering Committee and Working Groups to collect views from the public, green groups and other

stakeholders for the preparation of strategies and practicable action plans. It was expected that the Steering Committee would conduct its first meeting in June 2013.

[Post-meeting note: The first meeting of the BSAP Steering Committee was held on 18 June 2013.]

(A group photo was taken for CMPB members at this juncture)

**IV. Preparation work for the revalidation of Hong Kong Global Geopark
(Working Paper: WP/CMPB/6/2013)**

292/13 The Chairman welcomed the following persons to attend the meeting:

Dr K M YEUNG Senior Geopark Officer

Mr Boris KWAN Geopark Officer/Education

293/13 Dr K M YEUNG and Mr Boris KWAN briefed members on Working Paper WP/CMPB/6/2013.

(Dr TIK Chi-yuen, BBS, JP left the meeting at this juncture.)

294/13 Dr K M YEUNG answered to a member's enquiry that assessors from Global Geoparks Network (GGN) would meet users in connection with the areas of the revalidation, such as participation in the local engagement and science popularisation programmes, and exchange views with visitors of Hong Kong Global Geopark during the revalidation exercise.

295/13 In response to a member's enquiries about the progress of the facilities conceived in early stages of the geopark project, the five-level interpretation system of geoscientific knowledge popularization, as well as relevant research projects, Dr K M YEUNG said that apart from planned Volcano Discovery Centre and enhancement plans of the Lions Nature Education Centre (LNEC), the planning of an Earth Science Centre was also underway. From the experience learnt in the first two years of the geopark project, he explained that the idea of

five-level interpretation system was neither requisite nor practical. It was because geologists deemed it unnecessary to read the interpretation materials while most people required a level lower than that assumed by the five-level interpretation system. The education strategy had therefore been changed to two to three levels to meet the needs of the majority, with a clear direction that all interpretation materials must be easily understandable. He also remarked that two important research projects, namely, a study on hexagonal columns in Hong Kong and a study on sedimentary rock region in Bluff Head (黃竹角咀), as well as projects related to paleontology were being undertaken. The findings of these research projects would be disseminated to the public by easy-to-understand means.

296/13 In response to a member's enquiries about the qualities of geopark guides and the initiatives to sustain the interests of the public to make repeat visits to the geopark, Dr K M YEUNG said that the public were free to choose geopark guides of different service qualities for geopark tours. The Recommended Geopark Guide / Accredited Geopark Guide (R2G/A2G) scheme was set up to provide a benchmark of the quality of geopark tours and geopark guides. To ensure the standards of R2G, he highlighted that there was no target number of R2G and the standards would not be compromised.

297/13 As regards the initiatives to sustain the interests of the public to visit the geopark, Dr YEUNG pointed out that the market potential of geopark tours was very large since many Hong Kong people had not yet visited the geopark. Hence, the principal task was to promote geopark branding by good management and conservation work and innovative initiatives such as new geotour routes and visitor centres. He said that the planned Volcano Discovery Centre would facilitate geopark tours by serving as a one-stop centre for visitor services.

298/13 In response to the member's follow-up enquiry about measures to ensure the quality of geopark tours, Dr K M YEUNG answered that nearly 1,000 local tour guides had attained the qualification of Basic Geopark Guide (B2G) through training. He advised that the Authority had been monitoring guided geopark tours and detected few cases of poor quality tours. Dr LEUNG Siu-fai, JP supplemented that the Authority would consider allocation of resources for on-going refresher courses for geopark guides with a view to upgrading their quality. Besides, interested organizations, companies or individual groups could hire R2G or A2G to lead quality geopark tours. This might stimulate market demand for R2G and A2G and so encourage more people to become R2G and A2G.

299/13 As regards a member's enquiry about the consequences of failure in the revalidation, Dr K M YEUNG explained that the GGN would visit a geopark in another two years after it failed in the initial revalidation. If the geopark failed again, its eligibility as a member of the GGN would be discontinued. With regard to the member's enquiry about the possibility of developing science popularization projects in the tree fossil garden of a hotel in Tsuen Wan, he said that the Hong Kong Geopark only provided some initial suggestions but that was not a project of AFCD.

300/13 In replying to the Chairman's enquiry about any concerns or shortcomings to be overcome in the preparation work for the revalidation, Dr K M YEUNG highlighted that local engagement was an essential part of a global geopark programme. The Authority had endeavoured to strengthen local engagement by new initiatives, such as partnering with local communities in the operation of geoheritage centres, publicity and education activities, and producing geopark gourmet. Further efforts would be made to enhance visitor facilities such as the planned Volcano Discovery Centre, improve accessibility to various geo-areas and conduct more research on geoscience research.

301/13 The Chairman was of the view that the Authority should consider the initiatives which would bring more economic benefits to local communities. She also suggested that the Authority might consider allocating more resources to geoscience research by means of designated funds or matching funds.

302/13 A member was of the view that the Authority should consider allocating resources to promote R2G and A2G brands to the public so that substandard geopark guides would be eliminated naturally in open market through the brand effect. Besides, he was of the view that promotion for geotourism might be comparatively weak among the eight areas of preparation work because the locals did not foresee great benefits from geotourism. He suggested that the Authority should consider allocating resources to launch more geo-tour projects in which the locals had wider participation and to provide more training to the locals to better equip them with the knowledge of geo-tourism and basic guiding skills. He supplemented that promotion for geotourism would be enhanced by better cooperation of departments concerned.

303/13 A member remarked that geopark guides who could present information in an interesting and easy-to-understand way were very popular with tourists. He suggested that geotourism would be promoted by providing geopark guides with interesting and easy-to-understand information.

(Ms LO Po-man attended the meeting at this juncture.)

304/13 A member observed that in many occasions tourists stayed at Kat O Geoheritage Centre for several minutes only and simply took away the leaflets. He was of the view that it might be preferable to develop a bigger venue to attract the users.

305/13 As regards the Chairman's enquiries about whether there were Q & A sessions in connection with science popularization and feedback channels for visitors, Dr K M YEUNG replied that any questions or feedback could be sent to the email address info@geopark.gov.hk and responses could be provided by Geopark staff.

306/13 Dr K M YEUNG answered to a member's enquiry about the service quality of the operator of Kat O Geoheritage Centre that the Centre was operated by a Kat O villager who was being trained to be a quality guide. He agreed that to engage and train up local villagers as quality guides was very important to the revalidation.

307/13 Dr K M YEUNG responded to a member's enquiry that it was time-consuming and not cost-effective for deploying an urban dweller to operate a geoheritage centre located in countryside or rural areas such as the Lai Chi Wo Geoheritage Centre.

308/13 The Chairman suggested that the Authority might consider employing those young villagers, who worked weekdays in town and returned to their villagers in weekends, as tour guides at geoheritage centres in weekends.

309/13 A member shared his experience as a geopark guide. He was of the view that it was not appropriate to have material changes in the preparation work at the time being and advised that the Authority should carry out the preparation work as planned.

310/13 After thorough discussion, the Chairman concluded that members were very supportive of the preparation work of the Authority and appreciated the efforts of subject officers as well as the new approach adopted for conservation of geopark. She remarked that members were enthusiastic to give their comments since they wished Hong Kong Geopark to score well on the revalidation. She agreed to the member's view that popularization of geopark information to visitors was an enduring process. She thanked Dr K M YEUNG and Mr Boris KWAN for attending the meeting.

(Dr K M YEUNG and Mr Boris KWAN left the meeting at this juncture.)

V. Summary Report of Country Parks Committee (CPC)
(Working Paper: WP/CMPB/7/2013)

311/13 As Prof CHU Lee-man, Chairman of the Country Parks Committee, could not attend the meeting due to other commitment, Mr Joseph SHAM presented the Summary Report on his behalf. The Report summarized issues discussed at the CPC meeting held on 26 April 2013. Members noted the Report.

VI. Summary Report of Public Relations Committee (PRC)
(Working Paper: WP/CMPB/8/2013)

312/13 Ms Tennessy HUI Mei-sheung, JP, Chairman of the Public Relations Committee, presented the Working Paper WP/CMPB/8/2013. The Report summarized issues discussed at the PRC meeting held on 22 February 2013. Members noted the Report.

VII. Country and Marine Parks Authority Progress Report
(Working Paper: WP/CMPB/9/2013)

313/13 Mr Joseph SHAM presented Working Paper WP/CMPB/9/2013 on Country and Marine Parks Authority Progress Report for the period from 1 December 2012 to 31 March 2013.

314/13 In response to a member's enquiries about visitor statistics, Mr Edmond LAM explained the current counting mechanism of country parks visitor statistics. As all the geosites were encompassed by country parks and the counting was conducted mainly at the main transportation hubs and entry/exit points of country parks, he remarked that it was not likely to derive geopark visitor statistics from country parks visitor statistics.

315/13 Mr Edmond LAM answered to a member's enquiry that some country parks were visited by their visitors around 6 times on average and about 40% of the visitors visited a particular country park for the first time in accordance with a recent country parks visitor survey.

316/13 Mr Edmond LAM answered to a member's enquiry that visitors aged 35+ preferred hiking while young visitors were observed to have lower visitation to country parks than elder visitors in accordance with a recent country parks visitor survey. The survey recommended AFCD to strengthen its efforts to promote country parks to young people.

317/13 As regards a member's enquiries about the number of cases of illegal entry of bicycle and illegal entry of vehicle, Mr Edmond LAM replied that the report period was the peak season of outing and so the number of cases of illegal entry of bicycle could not be taken as the average of the annual figure which was about 500 cases. He remarked that the number of cases were comparatively higher for the report period because more complaint cases of biking were reported. In contrary, there was a decrease of number of cases of illegal entry of vehicle because AFCD had stepped up vehicular control at main entry/exit points of country parks.

318/13 Dr LEUNG Siu-fai, JP remarked that there was an increase in the number of mountain cyclists to country parks in recent years and a lot of cyclists might not know clearly the areas in country parks which were designated for mountain biking. AFCD was considering more publicity for these designated areas with a view to mitigating illegal entry of bicycle.

319/13 A member observed that monkeys searched the litter bin for food in Kowloon Pass (九龍坳) on Lion Rock and gave rise to hygienic problems at the site. He suggested that litter

bins should be replaced by a notice board to remind people of bringing litter home at the locations where monkeys were found. The Chairman agreed to the member's suggestion.

320/13 Mr Franco NG responded that AFCD had been tackling the problem and would consider the member's suggestion. He supplemented that notices had been placed at the trailheads of hiking trails to inform the public to bring litter home.

321/13 A member also agreed that litter bins should not be placed at the locations where monkeys were found; on the other hand, hikers should be educated to take litter home.

322/13 A member remarked that public education should be conducted to deter illegal feeding of monkey.

323/13 Dr LEUNG Siu-fai, JP responded that a long-term wild monkey contraceptive programme had been launched to control the population growth of monkeys in Hong Kong since 2007. It was found that the overall birth rates of wild monkeys were decreased and the total population of wild monkeys in Hong Kong had dropped from about 2,500 to about 2,000. Besides, AFCD had been devising quick response measures to assist affected residents in handling monkey nuisance problems.

324/13 Members noted the Report.

VIII. Any Other Business

(a) Vote of Thanks by DFAC

325/13 Since this was the last meeting of the current term which would end on 31 August 2013, Dr LEUNG Siu-fai, JP, Director of Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation (Acting), thanked the chairman and members for their enthusiastic support to the work of the Board. The Chairman also expressed her gratitude to members for their valuable contribution to the Board.

326/13 Members had no other business to discuss.

IX. Date of Next Meeting

327/13 The Chairman informed members that the date of next meeting was tentatively scheduled for 27 September 2013.

328/13 The meeting was adjourned at 5:35 p.m.

– End –