

Transcript of remarks by SDEV at media session

Following is the transcript of remarks by the Secretary for Development, Ms Bernadette Linn, at a media session after attending the Legislative Council meeting today (June 7):

Reporter: Secretary Linn, can the Government pledge that it will build housing on the golf course at the very least? Also, we want to ask will the Government give up on its housing plan due to opposition from the golf club and also some business representatives. If it won't, how will the Government plan to gain their support? Thank you.

Secretary for Development: First of all, I have to repeat and repeat again that we have not given up our plan to pursue a public housing project on the northern part of the Fanling Golf Course that 32 hectares to be returned to the Government. The 32 hectares, a large part of it, will be opened up to the public for conservation and passive recreation purpose. That is our intention. And that is why the Leisure and Cultural Services Department is now planning the exact arrangement to be made, come the first of September, when the land is returned.

As regard the northern part of that portion, it remains our intention to pursue a public housing development there, but we have to respect the statutory processes. In particular, I am talking about the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) process which just last month has given us a conditional approval. The condition is that we have to review the layout and the density of the public housing development to minimise the impact on visual and the landscape in that area, so we are doing what we have to do to respect a statutory system and I hope that the community will accord the same standard in treating our handling of this case and other cases which also have to go through other statutory processes. So if I, as the Secretary for Development, ignore the process and just make pledges without looking into the review that is being done to fulfill the condition, that will be irresponsible on my part I believe.

Reporter: Secretary, is it a normal practice to change the land use from "Residential" to "Undetermined"? And also about the Heung Yee Kuk plan, do you think it is a feasible and also a replacement for the Golf Course?

Secretary for Development: First of all, in the process of a statutory town planning regime, we are now in that process, we gazetted the Outline Zoning Plan last year and we are now about to proceed with the public hearing. In the process, if there are circumstances warranting a change in our recommendation to the zoning, the government departments will do that professionally, so this is not the first time in which the government department proposes a refinement to the zoning before the proceeding of the public hearing.

And secondly, what we are doing is to take forward and respect a condition set in the EIA statutory process. So pending that process, we believe it is only responsible and professional of the relevant government department to propose a practical zoning before their review is completed.

(Please also refer to the Chinese portion of the transcript.)