



Land Surveying Division

Sr Dr Conrad Tang LSD Council Chairman

A Dialogue with the Director of Lands on Smart Cities and the Land Survey Ordinance

Four LSD surveyors joined a Chinese New Year Tea Gathering on 22 February with representatives of the Lands Department. After a warm welcome address by Ms Bernadette Linn, Director of Lands and a briefing on our wishes for communication by our President, Sr C K Lau, we had a chance to discuss land surveying issues with the Director.

Prof Sr SC Leung brought up the issue of amending the Land Surveying Ordinance. He pointed out that without a legal sanction of land boundaries, colleagues at the Survey and Mapping Office could not efficiently manage land boundary matters. This would result in a waste of talent and resources and society at large eventually suffers. Hence, the Government should step up its amendment efforts on the land survey law.

The Director made an affirmative glance at her SMO colleagues nearby and replied that Lands Department staff strive to serve and tackle tasks in a professional manner. The Administration understands the need for a new version of the land survey law and will make this issue a high priority.

Smart City is the theme of a working plan for the LSD this year. We told the Director that the road to a smart city starts with the establishment of a government policy – preferably a top-down one that forms the administrative institutions and authorises the sharing of data amongst departments. The law, technical know-how, and specifications come afterward.

The Director replied that her SMO colleagues were eager to explore and implement GIS and a land information hub. Furthermore, the policy staff at the Bureau and Department have consented to the need to develop a Smart City. She welcomed HKIS members to contribute more ideas to the development.

A Dialogue with the Deputy Director of Lands on Access to Deposited Survey Information at the District Survey Office

The LSD had an opportunity to discuss this issue with the Deputy Director, Sr Paul Ng. Land surveying practitioners have difficulty gaining access to survey information that was deposited before the enactment of the 2013 version of the Personal Data (Privacy) Ordinance (Cap 486). Staff at the District Survey Offices could not provide copies of the searched plans and other deposited information by claiming that they had no authority to distribute the information, which came in two categories – information deposited by other government departments and by previous private practice land surveyors (later authorised land surveyors).

The SMO is the official holder of all land boundary information in Hong Kong. Its mission is to collect relevant land boundary information for the execution of surveying activities. Simply put, its duty is to share relevant survey information with surveyors who are now working on the subject area. If this law or any other statute and by-law has inadvertently hampered access to survey information previously available to the industry, the SMO should stand up and seek clarification on the particular functions of the law and arrange for a workable procedure to restore access to the necessary land boundary information.

Sr Paul Ng acknowledged that land surveyors in the private sector may face such difficulties. While the SMO administration should consider plausible answers, he advised that the Code on Access to Information could be properly utilised. A researcher of survey information may request the plans that were deposited by other government departments. The SMO should, upon receiving this request, communicate with the depositing department and properly seek consent from the relevant authorities.



Coming LSD CPD events

The following CPD talks will be organised by the LSD in the coming months, with more to come. Please stay tuned and we look forward to seeing you at the events.

Topic	Speake	Date
(Occupation + Greed) x (Record + Bureaucracy) = (Adverse Possession)	Sr Professor LEUNG Shou Chun	18/03/2016 7:00-8:30 PM
Roles of Engineering Surveyor in Engineering Projects	Sr Peter WONG	01/04/2016 7:00-8:30 PM
UAV Survey and application	Sr LAM Lit Yin	16/05/2016 7:00-8:30 PM
Seminar on Land Boundaries	Sr Simon KWOK	18/08/2016 6:30-8:30 PM