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Some film industry representatives boycott controversial Avenue of Stars consultation

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Some members of the film industry refused to offer the government any advice or opinion on the expansion of the Avenue of Stars as they did not want to endorse the controversial public-private partnership.

The *South China Morning Post* learned that the Leisure and Cultural Services Department held a closed door invitation-only meeting yesterday with some members of Hong Kong's film industry to consult them on the plan.

It is the third consultation meeting that the government has staged since the controversy erupted in August.

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Shu Kei, chair of the school of film and television at the Academy for Performing Arts, who attended the meeting, said only a handful of industry figures and representatives from a few industry associations, including the Hong Kong Performing Artistes Guild, the Society of Film Editors and the Hong Kong Film Arts Association, were invited.

Shu said he was invited to attend the meeting only one week ago.

“[The department] claimed that it wanted to consult the industry about the design of the expanded Avenue of Stars, but they did not bring up the background of the project, future execution and how it will be managed,” Shu said.



[2]

He said those attending were briefed about the design, and one proposal was to house all film-related elements in a 3,000 sq ft film museum. “But they were citing references to the Shanghai Film Museum, which has 75,000 sq ft,” he said.

Shu said he urged participants not to offer any ideas on the current design. “We must clarify why we have this plan ... why we were consulted only after the decisions were made? Why did the government hand this to New World?” he said. “If we offer any opinion, it would make it look like we endorse the plan even though we don’t.”

“The biggest stakeholder of this harbourfront is the public. The department claimed there would be a public consultation only in January,” Shu added.

It is understood that New World Development contacted the Hong Kong Film Awards Association last year regarding the proposal.

A source close to the association said it supported the idea to improve the facilities on the Avenue of Stars.



[3]

“We also asked questions like whether the developer got support from the government,” said the source. “But apparently the plan made public today was different from the one we were told about last year.”

The Victoria Waterfront Concern Group will submit a petition letter to Chief Secretary Carrie Lam Cheng Yuet-ngor over the Avenue of Stars saga and then file a complaint with the Legislative Council today.

The department said focus group meetings were organised this month and last to gauge opinion from local groups, young people, the film and tourism sectors and other concern groups. The department said the Hong Kong Film Awards Association and other industry groups also attended the meeting yesterday.

The department will seek public opinions from October 26 to November 6 at the Cultural Centre, the Tsim Sha Tsui promenade, City Hall and Shatin Town Hall.

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