

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

FHB(FE)252

(Question Serial No. 4148)

Head: (49) Food and Environmental Hygiene Department

Subhead (No. & title): (-) Not specified

Programme: (2) Environmental Hygiene and Related Services

Controlling Officer: Director of Food and Environmental Hygiene (Miss Vivian LAU)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Food and Health

Question:

With regard to the implementation of the regulatory regime of private columbaria under the Private Columbaria Ordinance (Cap. 630), please advise on:

1. the attendance rate of members of the Private Columbaria Licensing Board;
2. the number of applications that have been examined by the Private Columbaria Licensing Board, and among them, the number of licence applications refused and the number of licence applications granted; and
3. the number of applications pending examination and the estimated time required for the Licensing Board to complete the examination.

Asked by: Hon CHAN Tanya (LegCo internal reference no.: 111)

Reply:

1. From the establishment of the Private Columbaria Licensing Board (PCLB) in September 2017 to early March 2020, the PCLB has held 54 meetings and the overall average attendance rate of members was 85%.
2. As at 6 March 2020, the PCLB has granted 5 licences and approved in principle 2 licence applications and 1 application for a temporary suspension of liability. It has also refused 15 sets of applications for specified instruments (including 12 licence applications).
3. As at 6 March 2020, the PCLB was processing 287 applications for specified instruments submitted by 116 private columbaria. The time the PCLB takes to process a licence application depends on the actual circumstances of the case, particularly on whether the private columbarium has complied with all the requirements for licence application stipulated in the Private Columbaria Ordinance (Cap. 630) and those specified by the PCLB (including the requirements relating to planning, land, buildings, fire safety, electrical and mechanical safety, management

plan, right to use the premises, environmental protection, etc.), and whether the applicant has submitted sufficient documents to prove that the private columbarium has complied with the requirements. Upon receiving the documents or information required for an application, the Private Columbaria Affairs Office (PCAO) will invite the relevant departments to provide comments. The applicant will then be asked to take the necessary follow-up actions and submit reports, which will be forwarded to the relevant departments for their vetting. After confirming that a licence application has complied with the application requirements, the PCAO will arrange for the submission of the application to the PCLB for determination.

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