



Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it's the only thing that ever has.

-Margaret Mead

# SHEHRI

July-December , 2004 Vol. 14/No. 2

## INSIDE

- CCB
- Shehri Seminars
- Town Planning
- Global City
- KCR

## SHEHRI FACILITATES IN THE FORMATION OF A CCB

*In its continuous efforts to engage in a meaningful manner with the local government system, Shehri-CBE takes a leading role in the formation of a Citizen Community Board in Jamshed Town*

The Citizen Community Board (CCB) is a requirement of the new Local Government Ordinance 2001. The objective for setting up a Citizen Community Board is to energize the local communities for development and improvement in cooperation with the local government officials. Citizen's participation in all areas of local government has become necessary and essential for the sustainability of projects and for the delivery of quality service, as well as to imbibe the true spirit of democracy in our society.

Social indicators for Paksitan are the lowest in the world i.e. education, health, population, water supply and sanitation are the main areas which need mobilization of the community and improving service and creating a sense of ownership.

Realizing the importance of this initiative taken by the government, Shehri-CBE recently facilitated in the formation of a Citizen Community Board within the jurisdiction of Jamshed Town of the City District Government Karachi (CDGK).

### Zimmedar Shehri

The name of the society is *Zimmedar Shehri Citizens Community Board*.

Some of the important objectives for which the society is established are:-

- 1) To research, investigate, compile and disseminate information regarding existing laws, rules and regulations and/or contraventions thereof, or proposed legislation, pertaining to every aspect of the

### Role and Functions of CCB

The institution of CCB has been created to enable the proactive elements of the society to participate in development activities

- \* CCBs will be registered with the District Governments under Chapter X of the Local Government Ordinance.
- \* CCBs will mobilize communities and raise funds for local development
- \* Registration is valid in district of registration and shall not require renewal
- \* Registration can be refused on valid grounds in writing and with 15 days notice. CCB has right of appeal to DCO within 30 days of refusal and then to Zila Council for final decision



Launching of Zimmedar Shehri

Cont: Pg 3



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4. Mr. Danish Azar Zubay (*Architect*)
5. Mr. Navaid Husain (*Architect*)
6. Barrister Zain Sheikh
7. Dr. Kaiser Bengali (*Economist*)

**Contributions are welcome**

Interested contributors should contact the SHEHRI office for writers guidelines. SHEHRI newsletter readership is from students, professionals, environmentalists, policy makers, NGOs and other organizations.

Views expressed herein do not necessarily express the views of the Editor/Editorial Board.

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**EDITORIAL**

**Transport Blues!**

It is said that the state of a city's planning and management mechanisms is often reflected by its transport system. The more organized the transport system and infrastructure, healthier will be the urban environment of a city. Karachi's traffic and transport is characterized by mismanagement and chaos. Problems, though multifaceted and diversified in nature require an integrated problem solving approach, which is sadly lacking.

A city of over 12 million is not yet served by a public mass transit system. This is criminal neglect, plain and simple. The innumerable plans prepared over the last almost six decades have mostly been confined to the shelves. While no public mass transit system exists and the carrying capacity of our road network remains mostly unchanged, the roads are now flooded with private vehicles - thanks to the uncountable car lease schemes on offer and reduction in duties of motor vehicles. Measures such as flyovers (*the new fad!*) also discourage and restrict the movement of public transport.

In a well-planned city, traffic flow patterns are mostly predictable that facilitates planning for future schemes and projects. Due to the absence of a functioning Master Plan and continuous violation of zoning laws and regulations, few areas in the city can now be classified as purely commercial, residential or institutional. A locality like Gulshan-e-Iqbal, formerly a purely residential district, now houses thriving commercial centres, private businesses, government institutions, social/recreational outlets etc. As such, traffic pattern is chaotic with no discernable ebbs and flows. How can you plan amidst this chaos!

All this results in ever increasing levels of pollution, loss of time, energy and severe mental stress. This situation has reached a stage where urgent measures need to be undertaken on a war footing. Our planners and policy makers should adopt a holistic approach, take into account all the direct and indirect causes of the problem and integrate all plans and projects - instead of working at cross purposes. □



Mobilizing the citizens

environment, including but not limited to those aspects related to local/governmental representation and administration, crime control environmental pollution, community welfare, local/governmental fiscal control and taxation, health care, building contraction and control, land development and all other matters of civic concerns.

- ii) To create public awareness on issues pertaining to the creation and maintenance of a healthy and secure physical and social environment.
- iii) To provide technical assistance and guidance to local area citizen groups relating to problems of their local areas and environment.
- iv) To collect, compile and pub-

lish technical, statistical and other data and fact-sheets relating to the purposes of the society including measures devised for effective prevention and control of activities causing environmental degradation and community anxiety and unrest.

- v) To encourage, conduct, facilitate and participate in investigation, planning, development, discussions, symposia, seminars and research relating to the objects of the society and, in such connection, to organize and operate reference and research centres, consumer complaint bureaus and related organization.
- vi) To enquire into encroachment of amenity land and contravention of building laws and master plans and to provide legal assistance to citizens in this regard.
- vii) To study and make suggestions towards improving urban planning standards, master plans and to inquire into violations thereof.
- viii) To make efforts to save, protect, preserve old building and areas. □

### The Founding Members

The first members of the *Managing Committee* shall be:

- |                            |                          |
|----------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. Amber Alibhai           | 14. Khatib Ahmed         |
| 2. Victoria de Souza       | 15. Shabbir Alibhai      |
| 3. Radia Khatib            | 16. Akhtar Mirza         |
| 4. Shah Bano Alavi         | 17. Shahid Hussain Nasim |
| 5. Fareeda Masood          | 18. Masood Ali           |
| 6. Khadija Zaheer          | 19. Naveed Ahmed         |
| 7. Azra Aqil               | 20. Nasir Mehmood        |
| 8. Salmania Sajjad         | 21. Humayun Ahmed        |
| 9. Hasan Jamil Alavi       | 22. Muhammad Saleem      |
| 10. Hanif A. Sattar        | Farooqui                 |
| 11. Syed Raza Ali Gardezi  | 23. Shamim Ahmed         |
| 12. Sheikh Rizwan Abdullah | 24. Arifuddin Ahmed      |
| 13. Roland de Souza        | 25. Tariq                |

The CCBs through voluntary self help initiatives will take up

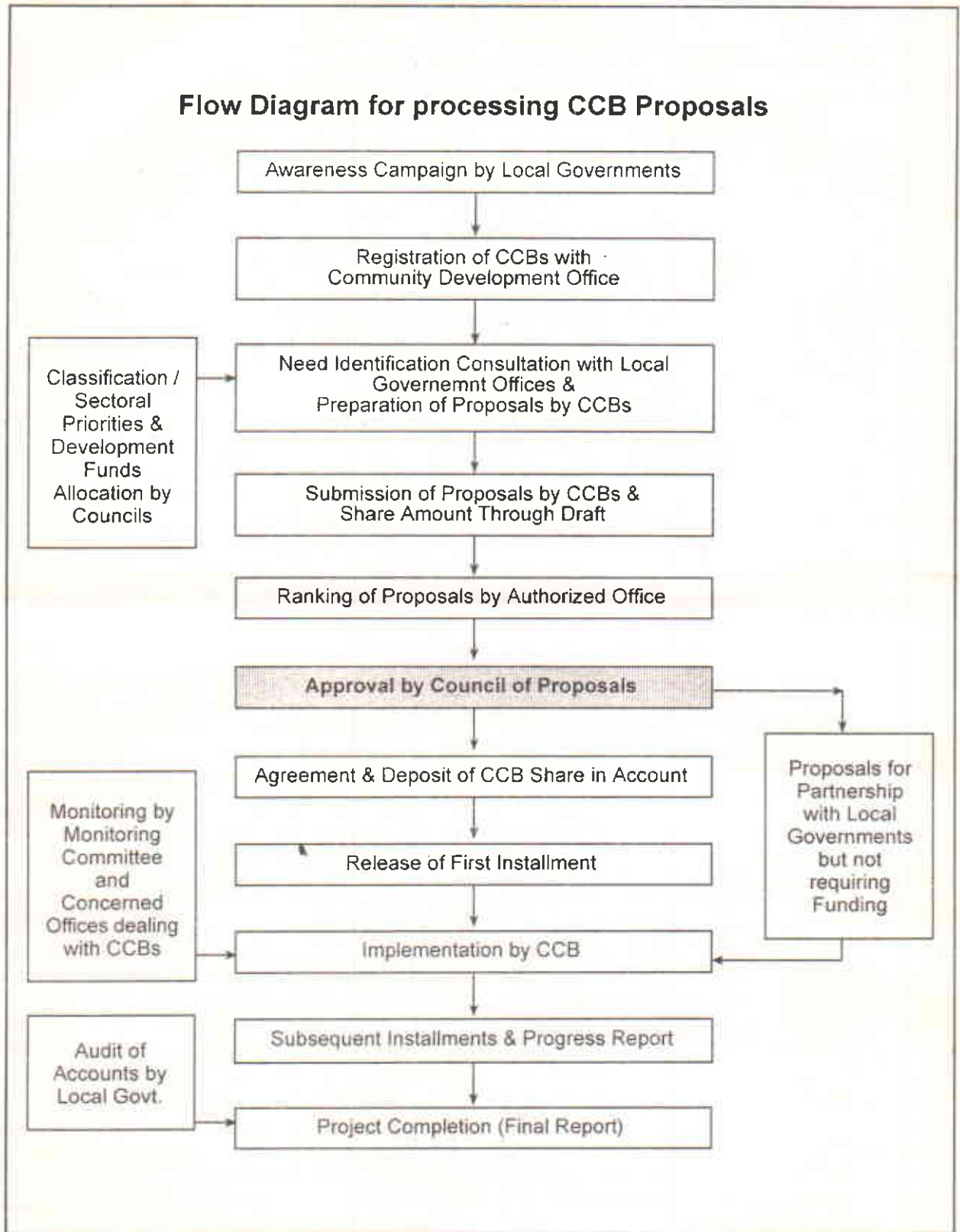
- a. Improvement of delivery of service
- b. Development and management of a new public facility
- c. Welfare of the handicapped, destitute, widows and families in extreme poverty
- d. Establishment of farming, marketing and consumer's cooperatives
- e. Identification of development and municipal needs and mobilization of resources
- f. Formation of voluntary associations such as Parent Teacher Associations, School Management Associations or Farmers or Water Users Associations; and
- g. Monitoring at the behest of the concerned Council

### CCB Code of Business

- \* Nonprofit Voluntary Organization
- \* General body having at least 25 members
- \* Office bearers elected for a two year term
- \* Quarterly meetings of Executive Committee (EC)
- \* Quorum - 40 percent EC and 25 percent GB
- \* Chairman to preside all meetings
- \* Secretary to record meetings and present annual accounts
- \* GB can remove members / officers
- \* Chairman and Secretary are custodian of property and assets □



### Flow Diagram for processing CCB Proposals





## SHEHRI ACTIVITIES

# Seminar - District Government System - The First Three Years- An Assessment (Saturday, September 18th, 2004 - Hotel Regent Plaza)

A seminar was arranged by Shehri-CBE to assess the performance of the District Government System during the first

local government system. He said that the citizens should not expect that the government officials could solve everything on their own. It is

nar then asked the first speaker, **Ms. Rehana Afroze, Chairperson, Education Committee, City District Government Karachi** to make her presentation. Ms. Rehana Afroze highlighted the achievements of the government in office. These included improved health and environment facilities for citizens, education, clean water and efficient sewerage/transportation system, provision of recreational facilities, community development etc.



(L - R) Kiran Bano, Mohammad Nauman, Qadeer Beg and Farhan Anwar

three years after its establishment. Issues that were discussed, included matters related to policy and planning, administration, financial management, project implementation and citizen participation. Constraints and shortcomings were identified and achievements were highlighted.

the responsibility of the citizens to participate in an enthusiastic and meaningful manner in issues that relate to their everyday lives. He regretted that the government has recently taken some unfortunate decisions like the regularization of illegal buildings, strip commercialization of roads and other zoning regulations. He urged the citizens to do whatever they can to safeguard and protect the interests of the city.

**Mr. Siddique Rathore, Nazim Union Council Liaquatabad**, then offered a critical review of the performance of the government in office. He said that councilors and Chairman's of the CDGK Council committees were not taken into confidence in the policy and decision making process and instead advisors and consultants were making all the important decisions.

The welcome address was given by **Mr. Roland deSouza, Chairperson, Shehri-CBE**. Mr. De'Souza highlighted the importance of citizen's role in improving the working of

**Mr. Farhan Anwar, Member Shehri and Moderator** for the semi-

He said that the City Council, that represented the elected officials of the city needs to be the supreme city body whereas in actual practice it was just a rubber stamp. He also regretted the fact that Union



Roland deSouza

Rehana Afroze

Siddique Rathore

Councils have been given inadequate authority to bring about meaningful change.

**Mr. Muhammad Nauman, Former Technical Advisor to Administrator KMC,** gave a detailed background of the newly established District Government System. He said that due to flaws in the system, the District Governments are not totally empowered. Financial control was still with the Federal Government.



Mir Hussain Ali

The Ombudsman Department had still not been created. He said that proper devolving of line departments like KBCA is not taking place that is hindering the work of the City

Government.

**Mr. Qadeer Baig, Deputy Director, NGO Resource Centre** talked about the functioning of the Citizen Community Boards and identified their strong potential for bringing about positive changes in the local governance system of the country.

**Ms. Kiran Bano, Environmental Engineering Department, NED University of Engineering & Technology** gave an overview of the establishment of an Environmental Department in the CDGK.

She discussed the policy and management framework of the Environmental Departments of the cities of Los Angeles, Chicago and Johannesburg and gave recommendations and suggestions on the possible functioning, framework and areas of work of the Environmental Department at the CDGK. She identified some flaws in the City Government notification issued in this regard.

**Mir Hussain Ali, DCO, CDGK** gave the concluding address. He said that despite some shortcomings in the system, it has performed very well and the level of coordination between the elected and appointed officials of the City Government has been satisfactory.



Qadeer Beg

He said that in the absence of an effective alternative system of the *Magistracy*, problems are being faced and work is delayed. He called for uniformity in the laws of CDGK and other civic bodies such as cantonment boards. Mr. Ali criticized the practice where the City Nazim has been given the authority of writing the ACR of the DCA. He said that departments like the SKAA, KW&SB and KBCA need to be devolved in the City Government.

Mr. Farhan Anwar then opened the floor for general discussion and the participants participated enthusiastically in the discussion. Mr. Anwar then concluded the seminar and thanked all the speakers and participants for attending the session. □



A number of stakeholders participated in the seminar



## Seminar - Save Gutter Baghicha Campaign (October 10, 2004-Gutter Baghicha)

An all parties conference on Gutter Baghicha on Sunday demanded that Karachi be renamed as Kolachi to restore its old glory. It also called for the safeguard of rights of natives on their ancestral land.

They criticised the policies of successive rulers for systematically demolishing the old Baloch settlements in the city by brute force.

Speakers of the conference warned the rulers to mend their ways and stop demolition of old settlements in Karachi on the pretext of development.

They also urged the government to take effective measures and make necessary laws for protecting the rights of natives and shun the policy of discrimination.

At the same time, they expressed deep concern over the fate of the Gutter Baghicha project, saying that despite the fact that President Musharraf had announced on April 28 last that a national park would be built on the site, no step had been taken for its construction yet.



Concerned Citizens

They said a major part of the project, which was once a green land in the locality, had now been occupied by land mafia in collaboration with the government agencies.

The speakers said the area of the Gutter Baghicha once comprised 1,017 acres, but the open space now left was only 480 acres.

They urged the Sindh and the city governments to execute the national park project as announced by the President in his April 28 speech.

They maintained that the people of these areas had always been deprived of the fruits of development and continued to suffer due to lack of modern facilities.

The conference was called by the

newly-established NGO Baloch Rights Council, Karachi with the cooperation of the Shehri. It was addressed by prominent Baloch intellectual and Chairman BRC Yusuf Naskand, PPP MPA Rafiq Engineer, leader Baloch National Party Ghulam Mohammad Baloch, Rauf Sasuli (JWP),

Salim Saleh Buzdar (PPP-SB), Hashim Khoso (JSM), S.M Altaf (Muzdoor-Kisan) besides others.

The speakers vowed that they would continue their struggle for immediate execution of work on the Gutter Baghicha project and removal of all sorts of encroachments from the project site.

A resolution called for scrapping the cooperative housing scheme reserved for the officers of the defunct KMC Officers and urged the government not to launch any housing scheme on the project site.

However, the meeting suggested that surplus land at the project site should be reserved for the rehabilitation of displaced persons of the Lyari expressway project. □



A number of eminent speakers participated in the seminar



## Seminar - Global City Karachi (Friday, December 3, 2004)

Politicians and intellectuals gathered at the seminar urged the government to prepare Karachi's Master Plan without any further delay. They emphasised the importance of portraying positive image of the city besides underlining need for making concerted efforts especially in the cultural sphere to make Karachi a truly global city.

**Former Federal Minister, Javed Jabbar** highlighted negative and positive aspects of the city. He pointed out that low living standards, lack of efficient transport system, limited choice of entertainment and lawlessness indicated backwardness of the city. However, he added, there were many aspects of the city which were truly global. In this regard, he cited diversity, connection with global network of media and capacity of some people to compete globally.

He said that the city was suffering from what he called transformation crisis. He said global cities of developed world also suffered from this phenomenon in 20th century when decay of inner city occurred due to migration of the poor people to the cities. Referring writings of novelist, Charles Dickens, he said exploitation of the poor child existed in London.

He suggested direct election of City Nazim on pattern of London and New York. He said there was need for

reducing jurisdiction of Karachi in order to avoid clash between different stakeholders such as Cantonment, DHA, KPT etc. He said enforcement of law was imperative in portraying good image of the city. He claimed that Motorway police was acting impartially for enforcement of law, a model to be followed. He urged integration of rural urban areas of the city besides investment in physical infrastructure.

**Noman Ahmed**, Chairman, Department of Architecture & Planning, NED University, said globalisation has brought about many changes in the development pattern of Karachi. Overwhelming rise of a nascent market economy, lack of state subsidies for the vulnerable people and communication revolution are some of the changes brought by the globalization process, he said

He said the globalisation also carries threats of social injustice to vulnerable people, loss of cultural and environmental assets and complete domination of non locals in decision making. He regretted that Karachi is portrayed as a notorious hideout of terrorists due to which foreigners usually consider it as a high risk city.

He suggested conscious increase in the number and scale of cultural

events to dispel image of terrorism. He also underlined the need of creating institutional mechanisms to streamline the inputs of willing stakeholders in development work such as businessmen, industrialists, philanthropists and mobilized interest groups.



(L-R) Farhan Anwar, Noman Ahmed, Qasim Parekh, Huma Baqai

**Huma Baqai**, a Lecturer at the Department of International Relations at Karachi University, said that Karachi has an undisputed place with reference to economy with a contribution of around 40 percent of the country's total revenue. She claimed that 50pc of Pakistani's University graduates are residing in the city. Literacy rate of men is 65 per cent while it is also the largest urban women workforce.

**Ahmed Qasim Parekh**, Nazim, Jamshed Town, Karachi said that he was confident that the citizens of the city had the talent and enterprise to compete with anyone in the world.

**Farhan Anwar**, Member, Shehri, said Karachi has potential of emerging global city but political instability, bad governance, poverty and technological backwardness stand in the way. □



(L-R) Farhan Anwar, Javed Jabbar

The Participants





## SHEHRI ADVOCACY

*In this section, we highlight some of our ongoing advocacy work and seek active citizen participation for ensuring protection of public interest.*

### Success of Citizen Activism - The City School Fiasco

Residents of Hall Road in PECHS were extremely disturbed when news came about the prospects of an illegal school branch of the *City School* network opening in their area. The residents were both angered and aroused. *Is this what the City School teaches its students?* asked an angry housewife.

The said plot (Plot 144/P/2-PECHS) has an interesting background of illegal handovers. The PECHS lessee of this plot on Hall Road, Mian Sajjad Amir Ahmed, had left the city owing to the growing law and order situation in Karachi.

In 1998, he unlawfully rented his residential premises to *Organon International* for a commercial office for a 10-year period. The neighbors and residents of the area conducted a protest campaign with the principals of *Organon International* in Holland, and some time later the company cut short their tenancy and moved away.

The area residents had now learnt that Mian Sajjad Amir Ahmed subsequently entered into a rental agreement with

a commercial venture, *City School*, that has numerous branches and their regional office established on residential plots in Karachi. When a local housewife objected to Sabir Qureshi, Administration Officer of the school, he stated that the institution would go ahead as they had signed an agreement and the neighbors could do whatever they thought best.



the school principals and government authorities; none takes notice to the indiscipline or the brazen violation of the law.



Conversion of land-use is prohibited under law - but then, who cares about the law in Karachi. According to the *Karachi Building & Town Planning Regulations 2002*, a window of opportunity was given to schools as follows: Regulation 18-4.2.8. "Residential plot within a residential neighborhood can be allowed to be used for education

by the MP&ECD after inviting public objection from immediate neighborhood, in consultation with Transport Department." No such public objections had been invited in the present case.

The residents filed a Suit No. 1249/2004 in the Hon'ble High Court of Sindh and obtained a stay before the college could open on 1st November 2004. A relentless public campaign ensued, with the result that the *City School* administration were forced to withdraw and vacate the premises. Three cheers for citizen activism! □

The schools have introduced chaos and mayhem into formerly peaceful residential neighbourhood, and despite complaints to





**KPT's proposed World Class Leisure Club**

We request the concerned authorities to make public copies of the guidelines for the proposed *Port Club*, to be established on 13,000 m<sup>2</sup> of *prime land* at Mai Kolachi.

*Our objections to the proposed World Class Leisure Club are as follows:*

- KPT must concentrate and improve on its core business - the operation of Karachi Port. The Senate has confirmed this.
- Land in KPT jurisdiction is meant for development of port facilities, not for housing, clubs etc.
- A *World Class Leisure Club* can cater to the elite and wealthy: 99.99% of citizens will not benefit. Does this come in the mandate of a federal government agency?
- What are the environmental impacts of the club project? Have the 13,000 m<sup>2</sup> of land been reclaimed from the sea?

We look forward to an early response in the interest of the citizens of Karachi. □

**Environmentally degrading Oak Tower commercial plot (Plot 1/Ry-10 Railway Quarter, M. T. Khan Road)**

We object to the proposed Oak Tower Commercial Project on the following basis:

The plot was planned for residential bungalows. We understand that it was unlawfully commercialized by KMC in 1978-80 (*without technical justification studies, without inviting/considering public objections, without Master Plan approval*) but the *commercialization* was cancelled by the government in 1987. M. T. Khan Road is not on the list of roads eligible for commercialization.

Such change of land-use (*bungalow to flat-site*) and over-building will damage the environment. Enhanced utilities and infrastructure have not been provided in the area, and the existing situation is pretty grim.

The plot is affected by a 140 feet cut off line for the widening of Moulvi Tamizuddin Khan Road. Has this been taken into account by setting back the boundary of the project by 60 feet? The COS required is in addition to this setback for road-widening.

Traffic congestion at the foot of the bridge (*which has also to be widened from its present one-lane each way status*) is already severe. More parking and traffic generated by such a project cannot be tolerated.

Please have mercy on the citizens of Karachi! □

**Traffic problems of the city**

We draw the attention of the concerned officials to three issues:

1. The over-crowding and densification of the city by KBCA and Cantonment Boards, who have *allowed* the construction of illegal/over-sized buildings in their jurisdiction.
2. Non provision or unlawful conversion of mandatory parking spaces in multi-storied buildings.
3. Inadequate parking and loading/unloading spaces being approved by KBCA, because they do not properly implement *Building Regulation 24 of 2002* properly, including:
  - a) *Regulation 24-3*, which requires a detailed parking layout plan to be prepared for each building
  - b) *Regulation 24-3*, which requires a minimum of two car-lifts (*we believe that the car-lifts system*

*should be discouraged completely).*

KCB, because they do not properly implement *Building Bye-Law No. 135* with the provision of parking and 5 meter x 10 meter loading/unloading spaces.

Many governors, chief ministers, mayors, city administrators, traffic police officials, and citizen committees have paid hypocritical lip-service to the cause of improved traffic in Karachi - but have not had the courage to tackle some of the basic and difficult issues and the situation worsens every day!

**Saving the Turtles**

A meeting was held on Sunday, September 26, 2004 at 3.00 pm at Hut# S-88, Turtle Lab, Sindh Wildlife Department, with the Hut Owners to identify a framework for Environmental Stewardship (*project - Helping the Turtles Survive*). The following agenda was discussed.

**Agenda**

1. Introduction of projects and activities for turtle/habitat conservation at Sandspit/Hawksbay beaches
2. Determining the role of Hut Owners as Environmental Stewards for the protection of turtles and their habitat
3. Any other business

The opening remarks were shared between Dr. Ejaz Ahmad of WWF Pakistan and Ms. Naila Ahmed of Shehri-CBE. They briefed the participants on the agenda for discussion and requested them for their enthusiastic participation. In the discussion forum arranged jointly by Shehri-CBE, the Sindh Wildlife Department and WWF Pakistan.

Ms. Naila Ahmed, Moderator for the discussion then invited Dr. Fehmida Firdous, Turtle Conservator of the



Sindh Wildlife Department to speak to the participants about the program of the Sindh Wildlife Department.

Dr.Firdous informed the participants about the various threats faced by the nesting turtles and how the visitors to the beaches could contribute to the protection of the turtle habitat. She said that the program of the Sindh Wildlife Department deals with the documentation of the turtles visiting the Sandspit/Hawksbay beaches.

The number of turtles coming to the beaches, the number of eggs they lay and the number of hatchlings that hatch are all counted. The turtles are also tagged to monitor their movement and breeding patterns.

To provide protection to the eggs and the new born turtles, the Sindh Wildlife Department has constructed three hatcheries on the beaches where the eggs are placed in protective cages. Dr.Firdous also asked the participants to help the Department in its efforts to save the turtles and their habitat.

Ms.Naila Ahmed then asked Mr.Farhan Anwar, Coordinator of the project, Helping the turtles survive to speak about the project. Mr.Anwar said that the project Helping the Turtles Survive was not in any way aimed at duplicating the efforts of the Sindh Wildlife Department and WWF Pakistan. On the contrary, it had been designed to supplement the ongoing programs.

An effort was being made in the project to prepare a Habitat Management Plan for the turtle habitat in the project area. The Hut Owners had been identified to play the role of Environmental Stewards since they were the people who had acquired space on the turtle habitat and bore a major

responsibility for protecting the sensitive habitat.

In order to facilitate their role as Environmental Stewards, the project team had developed an interactive training program for the Hut Chowkidars who were present on the beaches most of the time and were in the best position to contribute positively to turtle conservation efforts.

Mr. Anwar also informed the participants that contact has been established with the City Government and KPT for seeking some amendments in the Hut Lease Deeds so that the sensitive ecological nature of the beaches could be acknowledged. The participants requested to be involved in the process. Mr. Anwar then asked the participants to nominate their Hut Chowkidars for participation in the Training Program.

Ms.Naila Ahmed then opened the floor for general discussion. Some participants felt that it was mainly the responsibility of the City Government and KPT to protect the habitat. In this regard it was pointed out that recently the City Government had raised the charges for using the huts to Rs.25,000/- a year without any improvement in the facilities/utilities provided to the Hut Lessees.

The participants also felt that they were quite responsible in the use of the beaches while people who made unauthorized use of their huts were mainly responsible for the pollution

on the beaches.

Some skepticism was raised about the use of Hut Chowkidars for the protection of the beaches as the participants felt that they themselves were mostly responsible for taking people to see the nesting turdes and disturbing the nesting process. The Chowkidars also allowed unauthorized use of the Huts.

It was suggested that private garbage collectors should be engaged for clearing the garbage on the beaches, as the City Government cannot be relied upon for efficient service. The participants however appreciated the efforts of the conservation groups and also ensured that they would fully cooperate in efforts to protect and conserve the turtle habitat.

It was suggested that private garbage collectors should be engaged for clearing the garbage on the beaches, as the City Government cannot be relied upon for efficient service. The participants however appreciated the efforts of the conservation groups and also ensured that they would fully cooperate in efforts to protect and conserve the turde habitat.

Ms.Naila Ahmed then thanked the participants for attending the discussion and offering their valuable input. □

### PARTICIPANTS TO THE DISCUSSION

Name	Hut #	Name	Hut #
Mr. Bashir M. Vohra	102-A	Mr. S.U. Ouraishi	80
Mr. Ashraf Lakhani	101-A	Mr. Saeed Amiad Ali	80-S
Mr. Abdul Oadir	59	Mr. Abdul Ghani - Local Res.	
Mr. Aqeel Merchant	106-A	Mr. Mahmood Maulvi	97
Maj. Abdul Qadir	52-N	Mr. Altaf Agha	109-N
Mr. Dilawar Agha	92-N	Mr. Yousuf Karamally	103-N
Mr. Abrar Moorai	105-N	Mr. M. Jamil & Shahida Tamil	96
Mr. Taria Dawood	19 - I	Mr. S.A. Hadi	101-N
Mr.&Mrs. Mehdi Chagla	89	Mr. Feroz Afaa Ahmed Khan	18
Mr. & Mrs. Adamiee	126-N		

## COMMENTS

# The District Government System - An assessment of the first three years

*As the three years tenure of the present local government reaches completion, Roland de'Souza analyses the achievements and failures and stresses the importance of active citizen participation for bringing about positive changes.*

**W**e Pakistanis tend to be eternal optimists. Whenever there is a change in government or administrative system, we initially believe that the new order is going to be better than the previous one.

Yet we personally remain the same kind of people that we always were. We only expect others, especially the ones in power, to transform themselves, while we cling to our old ways of living, working, and interacting. Do we actually believe that if everyone were to behave like we presently do, the world would be a better place? Be honest. Are we the model citizens, the speakers of the truth, the hard-working, law-abiding residents who will transfigure Karachi into the city of our dreams?

It is not only the Nazims, the city or union councils, or the DCOs, or the TMOs, or their teams that are responsible for the problems that we see around us, and for their solutions. Each one of us has a distinct and important role to play in refining the quality of life for our fellow citizens and ourselves.

We will have to confess, rather shamefacedly, that we have not been pulling our weight. We have been selfish. We have ignored the needs of others, and, consequently, have not even been effectively able to address our own needs and dreams.

Over 50% of the city's population lives in katchi-abadis, a mute testimony to the abject failure of the formal systems of city planning to cater to the basic human right of the vast majority of citizens. This proportion

of the deprived and their absolute numbers are increasing as the population swells by 1,400 persons, or 230 households, every day (*half-a-million million annually*). We do virtually nothing to pro actively cater to this poor majority of our city.

On the other hand, we ~~are~~ deliberately destroying (*or apathetically allowing others to destroy*) the fine town-planning that was the hallmark of this Karachi City during the first thirty years of its life as the predominant urban area of Pakistan.

In the recent past, the government has taken four measures that critically affect the built environment of Karachi:

- 1) *Regularization* of thousands of illegal buildings, including unlawful conversion of land-use
- 2) Strip *commercialization* of 19 roads, allowing up to ten times the originally planned amount of construction on front-line residential plots
- 3) *Regularization* of illegal allotments, conversions and exchanges of land
- 4) Approval of building plans in great excess of what is permitted by zoning regulations and land-

grant conditions.

All of these procedures are being carried out without the obligatory town-planning studies and without providing the enhanced utilities and infrastructure required. Do we actually believe that such short term, ad hoc strategies will bring about an improvement in the quality of life for our fellow citizens?

**Over 50% of the city's population lives in katchi-abadis, a mute testimony to the abject failure of the formal systems of city planning to cater to the basic human right of the vast majority of citizens. This proportion of the deprived and their absolute numbers are increasing as the population swells by 1,400 persons, or 230 households, every day**

We must asked ourselves, if there is something that we could change or improve, if there is some time we could give to the development of our neighbourhood, our union council jurisdiction, our town, our city district - let us not wait. Let us show that we care, that we realize that without

the active participation of all citizens, no governance system can be successful.

And whenever you get discouraged, remember the inspiring words of the famous anthropologist, Margaret Mead:

*Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it's the only thing that ever has. □*

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