

READINGS IN MALAYSIAN URBAN AND REGIONAL PLANNING

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CONTENTS

List of Tables		iii
List of Figures		iv
Foreword		v
Preface		vii
Contributors		ix
CHAPTER 1:	AN INTRODUCTION TO PETRI-NET	1
	Syahriah Bachok, Mansor Ibrahim and Ummi Aqilah	
CHAPTER 2:	PLANNING LEGISLATION IN A VIEW OF 'FEDERALISM' IN MALAYSIA	8
	Azila Ahmad Sarkawi	
CHAPTER 3:	HOTEL ROOM SUPPLY AND DEMAND IN WORLD HERITAGE CITY OF MELAKA	16
	Mohammad Abdul Mohit, Syahriah Bachok and Syakir Amir Ab. Rahman	
CHAPTER 4:	AN ANALYSIS ON THE FACTORS INFLUENCING THE DEVELOPMENT OF GATED AND GUARDED COMMUNITIES IN KUALA LUMPUR	22
	Mariana Mohamed Osman, Syariah Bachok and Noor Suzilawati Rabe	
CHAPTER 5:	DETERMINATION OF SPATIAL FACTOR IN MEASURING URBAN SPRAWL USING REMOTE SENSING AND GIS APPROACH	32
	Norzailawati Mohd Nor and Alias Abdullah	
CHAPTER 6:	DEVELOPMENTAL STATE OR NEO-LIBERAL POLICY? HOUSING PROVISION IN MALAYSIA AT THE CROSSROAD	39
	Syafiee Shuid	

CHAPTER 7:	RESIDENTS SATISFACTION WITH YOUNGER AND OLDER CONDOMINIUMS IN KUALA LUMPUR, MALAYSIA	49
	Mohammad Abdul Mohit and Ashim Oladimeji Ogundele	
CHAPTER 8:	KUALA LUMPUR DRAFT CITY PLAN 2020 LOCAL INQUIRY: AN ANALYSIS OF ITS SHORTCOMINGS	61
	Alias Abdullah, Zulaikha Nurulzuhri Zahar and Muhammad Faris Abdullah	
CHAPTER 9:	ENVIRONMENTAL AWARENESS ANALYSES AMONG STUDENTS IN INTERNATIONAL ISLAMIC UNIVERSITY MALAYSIA (IIUM), GOMBAK CAMPUS	67
	Mariana Mohamed Osman, Syahriah Bachok and Aisyah Nadhrah Ibrahim	
CHAPTER 10:	HEALTH IMPACT DUE TO PARTICULATES MATTER EMISSION FROM CONSTRUCTION SITE	74
	Shamzani Affendy Mohd Din and Nik Nurul Hidayah Nik Yahya	
CHAPTER 11:	PUBLIC FACILITIES PROVISIONS IN HOMESTAY PROGRAMME: A CASE OF HOMESTAY SUNGAI HAJI DORANI, SABAK BERNAM, SELANGOR DARUL EHSAN.	81
	Noraini Tukiman, Muhammad Ali A. Rahman and Mansor Ibrahim	
CHAPTER 12:	LOCAL GOVERNMENT IN MALAYSIA: ISSUES AND CHALLENGES	90
	Raja Noriza Raja Ariffin and Rustam Khairi Zahari	
CONCLUSION		99

CHAPTER 8

KUALA LUMPUR DRAFT CITY PLAN 2020 LOCAL INQUIRY: AN ANALYSIS OF ITS SHORTCOMINGS

Alias Abdullah, Zulaikha Nurulzuhri Zahar, Muhammad Faris Abdullah

INTRODUCTION

The recently concluded local inquiry of the Kuala Lumpur Draft City Plan 2020 (KLCP 2020) gives rise to mix conclusions. On the one hand, the Kuala Lumpur City Hall, which is the local planning authority of Kuala Lumpur area and the owner of the KLCP 2020, should be lauded for their commendable efforts to engage the public in the public in the preparation of the plan by conducting a substantive public hearing and local inquiry over the KLCP 2020 objections. The conduct of public hearing and local inquiry over the numerous objections filed by the public regarding KLCP 2020 are not only indications that the City Hall is engaging the public into the plan-making process, but also are indications of increasing public awareness regarding their rights and roles in shaping the environment that they live in.

On the other hand, there is also a feeling of incompleteness over the whole public hearing process. Despite the lengthy public hearing and local inquiry, a number of the objections that were subjected to local inquiry are still without conclusive resolution.

This paper identifies the shortcomings of the recently concluded local inquiry of the KLCP 2020 in order to find the reasons why the panel members were unable to make conclusive resolution to a number of the objections. In doing so, the authors interviewed the KLCP 2020 local inquiry panel members to gain their insight and assessment of the local inquiry process. It is hoped that the findings of this paper would be beneficial to local planning authorities in enhancing the process of local inquiry of their development plans.

DEFINITION OF LOCAL INQUIRY

Local inquiry is a part of public hearing which is required in the plan-making process in Malaysia. It refers specifically to the process of investigating the objections made over a draft plan. It has to be noted here that not all of the objections made during public hearing are subjected to local inquiry. An objection will only be subjected to local inquiry if the panel members of the public hearing find that they need more information before recommendations regarding the objection can be made. Thus, local inquiry is in fact the act of investigating or gathering of further information in order for the panel members to judge and make recommendations. The specific use of the term local inquiry in Malaysia is therefore different from its usage in Western countries where in those countries, local inquiry is equivalent to public hearing in Malaysia.