

Committee seeks MB's help

Group still lobbying for realignment of MRT

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Photos by LIM CHENG KIAT

THE Selangor Mentri Besar is the latest person the Committee to Preserve Jalan Sultan and Jalan Bukit Bintang (PJSJBB) is seeking help from.

Its chairman, Yong Yew Wei, said the committee had exhausted all means to lobby for an MRT realignment so that the old buildings in Jalan Sultan could be protected and hoped Tan Sri Abdul Khalid Ibrahim could come to their aid.

"Kuala Lumpur was part of Selangor, moreover, the MRT alignment will start and end in Selangor so we hope the menteri besar can look into this and re-evaluate the alignment," he told reporters yesterday, at the Wui Leng Association's office in Kuala Lumpur.

Also in the panel were other stakeholders including Lok Ann Hotel representative Judy Tan, Yan Keng Benevolent Dramatic Association secretary-general Ng Siak Wing, Kuala Lumpur Gospel Hall elder Jimmy Chok and Kwong Fook Wing Tailor's owner Khong Kim Lyew.

They also claimed that the executive summary recently posted on the MRT Corp's website was misleading.

"The summary states that numerous dialogues were carried out but the stakeholders had never received any official notice.

"As per our request since last year, the committee wants a public consultation, a fair hearing and not some closed door meetings," she added.

She said even with the Mutual Agreement, the stakeholders would still be plagued with uncertainties.

"The company has only said it will appeal to the authorities to halt the acquisition process after



Calling for re-evaluation: The PJSJBB and representatives from Lok Ann Hotel, Yan Keng Benevolent Dramatic Association, Kuala Lumpur Gospel Hall and Kwong Fook Wing Tailor claim that there are inaccuracies in MRT Corp's executive summary.

we sign the agreement, and allow for continuous use of the properties if they are safe after the tunnelling. What if the appeal does not go through and the buildings are unsafe after that?" she asked.

Asked if the committee represented all the affected property owners, she said the issue had gone beyond the affected owners because it involved taxpayers' money.

Chok said the community was upset to be told that the realignment could not be considered as it had to serve the future development near Stadium Merdeka.

Khong said the iconic heritage buildings on the site might also have to make way for the development, despite millions spent on refurbishing Stadium Merdeka.

Ng said the association's 100-over members would be deprived of an

activity centre during the construction period.

Wui Leng Association chairman Soh Chee Hoong said since the closure of the three buildings in Jalan Sultan, carpark operators had raised the rate from RM1.80 to RM3 per hour, adding that the association had difficulty renting out their premises due to the bad traffic condition.

"Only three buildings are closed now and we can already see the impact. What will happen if the whole stretch is closed for six months? The associations survive on rental and we will all have a hard time," he said.

Yang also highlighted the social impact assessment and soil test report provided by the company after a long wait and on the construction's effects in Jalan Sultan.

"The Mutual Agreement provides a lot of protection for MRT Corp but little for the stakeholders and properties in Jalan Sultan. It does not offer any solution to the issues we brought up," he added.

He said the Kuala Lumpur City Hall had to gazette its draft Kuala Lumpur City Plan 2020 in July that had the Jalan Sultan area labelled as a heritage zone.

"Three buildings in the heritage zone are being torn down and a carving indicating that it was built in 1918 has been chiselled off. What do DBKL say to this?" he asked.

MRT Corp's strategic communications & PR director Amir Mahmood Razak said the fixed points were to ensure that the line benefits most people while acquisition was minimised, adding that Warisan Merdeka was part of the public display.

He said it was misleading to say the company had failed to engage the public.

"MRT Corp has held meetings with not just Jalan Sultan property owners, but other groups as well.

"These include sessions with the Prime Minister in March and Datuk Seri Mohamed Nazri Aziz in May," he said, adding that a three-month public display was organised from February to May 2011 at seven locations across the city, and more than 6,000 feedback received.

"At the end of the public display, 91% supported the project," he said, adding teams from SPAD and Prasarana also held more than 50 meetings with specific groups.

Amir said they had explained repeatedly that the land acquisition was a separate, government action.

"When MRT Corp took over from Prasarana, we talked to the government and asked them to stall or pause the process. Which in good faith, the government has. It is not an MRT Corp-issued acquisition.

"What we would like to do now is get the agreement of all Jalan Sultan owners affected, then report to the government that we have them on-board, so that the government can retract the process.

"That is not MRT Corp's decision. It falls on the government," he said.

He noted that "18 property owners in Jalan Sultan had signed the Points of Agreement, two had agreed to be acquired, one had just returned from overseas and was studying the agreement".