

Businesses needing consent of neighbour before doing renovations

# LC move counter-productive

## Sohan Das

LABUAN: An additional requirement by compelling businesses undertaking renovations of their premises to get written consent from the neighbour is self-defeating and a damper to business.

Labuan Chinese Chamber of Commerce Chairman

Datuk Wong Kii Yii said this is a disappointment and likely to discourage upgrading of premises and affect investments on Labuan property.

"The island is already being suffo-



Wong

cated with so many requirements/regulations and here comes another stumbling block that provides no help to the bleeding local economy," he said.

He said under the new requirement it appear that the neighbour is also part of the local approving authority.

He said Sabah and Sarawak have no such regulations.

"Labuan cannot follow the regulations imposed in other Federal Territories like Kuala Lumpur or Putra Jaya because the island was way back compared to them.

Wong also an investor opening a shop first in the neighbour may not be happy to provide approval for fear that a shop similar to his may affect his business.

"For example, a coffeeshop, eatery or a mini-market would risk losing their business with another opening next door. There may be also demands for commissions to provide the approval."

He suggested that major enterprise doing major renovation works such as entertainment outlets, hotels or hypermarts to mall to comply with the rule but not the small players.

Wong also regretted that despite several pleas LC was still slow in endorsing development plans even though submitted by professional bodies. He cited the case of a traditional physiotherapy shop at Times Square.

"Though it was a minor renovation, it took months to get the approval and

when the owner was unable to bear no income from the rented premises, was slapped with a compound fine of RM10,000. The plan was submitted by a qualified architect."

Wong said with such approach by LC, Labuan's progress would be slow and the economy remain in the doldrums.

He also said the present CEO of Labuan Corporation should meet more often with relevant NGOs to understand the (local) situation better than bulldoze when so by Putra Jaya. He said the previous CEOs often met with the business community for feed-back.

"Even if the CEO is busy, we have no objection having a dialogue after office hours," said Wong.