

Gov't snubs dialogue, Jln Sultan land owners fume
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By Leven Woon

Six government agencies today refused to attend a dialogue session with property owners along Jalan Sultan in Kuala Lumpur who are affected by the MRT project.

The six agencies are Kuala Lumpur City Hall (DBKL), Tourism Ministry, Information, Communication and Culture Ministry, Transport Ministry, Prime Minister's Department, Land Public Transport Commission (Spad) and MRT Corp.

A Spad official was seen at the Kuala Lumpur and Selangor Chinese Assembly Hall (KLSCAH) where the dialogue was supposed to take place, but left before the session started.

This forced event moderators Ngeow Chow Ying and Ho Yock Lin to fill in the empty chairs at the front of the room and begin the session attended by about 150 people.

Despite the cold shoulder from the authorities, participants utilised the three-hour session to criticise the proposed MRT route, which they claimed will damage the historical and cultural integrity of the Jalan Sultan community.

A major insult

Speaking to reporters after the session, Yong warned that the government to face "severe punishment" for boycotting the public-organised event.

"If they don't value this kind of opportunity, it is an insult to the public, because they are ignoring democratic process ought to be taken before a project starts," decried Yong who is also the Preserve Jalan Sultan Committee co-chairperson.

He said the organiser had sent a letter on June 27 informing the authorities of the public consultation, and a large number of them have inquired for more details through phone calls.

Yong said the frustration is felt over the past 11 months since the shop owners were issued with land acquisition orders.

"We already suffered 11 months of despair. We have been given cold shoulder all this while," he said.

Also expressing disappointment was concerned citizen Anand Ang, who urged everyone to vote out a government who gives no attention to the public.

"Those who do not turn up today, they are the public servant, they are paid by the rakyat to do their job.

"Since they don't want to come to a public event, then they should resign tomorrow," he said.

Where are the reports?

Meanwhile, Confucius Private School board committee deputy chairperson Loke Ching Chong

demanded the government agencies to release the three-part soil test report as instructed by the prime minister in April.

An engineer by profession, Loke said the a preliminary boring log report was currently made available to the KLSCAH but it did not draw a conclusion on whether the soil underneath Jalan Sultan was suitable for MRT tunnel.

"What's your intention (of withholding the complete report)? You are pulling wool over our eyes," he said.

Public transportation pressure group Transit, through its representative Rajiv Rishyakaran, pointed out that the authorities have kick-started the RM50 billion project while a British firm undertaken to study the project has yet to complete its report.

He also urged the government to come out with a comprehensive public transportation plan as many missing links were found in the current transportation system of Klang Valley.

"We are also asking for the ridership report to be released," he said.

Land grab

On the other hand, Lok Ann Hotel representative Judy Tan labeled the entire Jln Sultan MRT episode as an intentional "land grab".

She questioned which law under the Land Acquisition Act allowed the authorities to acquire their properties in the name of adding an additional clause separating underground land to the property title.

"When (the land title) is returned, are they going to add some other clauses?" she said.

She also demanded the government to stop passing the buck around and immediately withdraw the gazzetted land acquisition order onto their properties.

The session concluded with Yong tabling a decision to submit a compilation of these queries to the authorities.

He said should them fail to respond, the KLSCAH will take further action.