

MCA to seek legal advice on EGM conundrum

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By Lee Long Hui

The MCA presidential council has resolved to seek legal advice on how to proceed with the extraordinary general meeting (EGM) sought by 14 central committee members led by deputy president Liow Tiong Lai.

The timing of the EGM was crucial as a new batch of central delegate will be voted in on September 22, which raises the question of whether it is the present batch or the new batch will get to vote on the EGM resolution.

Liow told reporters that he had agreed to the council's decision, but refused to confirm if that the EGM was unlikely to be held soon, stressing that he would prefer to hear from the legal team's findings first.

At a press conference after the council meeting today, MCA president Dr Chua Soi Lek said that while the council is seeking legal opinion, Liow's team was free to do the same.

"Liow can seek for any lawyer, there is no problem and no restrictions. If he wants to seek the British Queen's Counsel also no problem," he said. "We will seek opinion within and outside the party, to make sure that the final decision is correct."

When asked which legal team the party would listen to, Chua jokingly said that party leaders will draw straws to decide on the matter before relenting by stating that the leadership will resolve the issue based on "political wisdom".

Tee and Liew's status unclear

Chua also said that the legal team will also look into the suspension of the party membership of two central committee members - Tee Siew Kiong and Liew Yuen Keong.

Tee, who is the Johor Pulai Sebatang state assemblyperson, was appointed as a state exco member after the 13th general election, contravening the party AGM's decision in 2010 to reject government positions if the party cannot improve from its results during the 2008 general election.

On June 20, MCA's presidential committee accepted the disciplinary committee's suggestion to suspend Tee's membership for three years. Tee later appealed the

decision, claiming he was bound by royal decree.

On Sept 5, MCA central committee had decided to reverse the central disciplinary panel's recommendation to suspend Tee's membership. Liow's faction wants the suspension reinstated through the EGM in order to respect the AGM's decision in 2010.

According to Chua, one of the matters that the legal team will review is that whether Tee is still a central delegate as according to the party constitution, an MP or state assemblyperson from the party is automatically a central delegate.

On Liew's case, he said that some of the central committee members opined that should the committee suspends or sack any member, it should be done with the consent two-third of its members. This claim will be studied by the legal team.

On July 23, MCA presidential council decided to suspend five party grassroots leaders, including Liew, for not helping in campaigns of their colleagues who stood as candidates in the last general election.

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