

Huffman/O'Malley Community Council

It's your HOCC!

August 2009

Newsletter

July Meeting Recap

Although it's summer, the Huffman/O'Malley Community Council is still active! If you joined us at the July meeting, you learned of the upcoming special event that the Council will be involved in - the community celebration and volunteer day at Cross Family Park. You also heard about the upcoming August 31 meeting of the Planning & Zoning Commission regarding the Hillside District Plan, and the good news that Commissioners appear to be listening to the community! We also finalized a variety of new committees and their chairs. Look for further information in the next minutes.

News Flash! The Planning & Zoning Commission hearing date has been changed to August 31! The meeting will be held at the Z. J. Loussac Library, 3600 Denali Street at 6:30 PM.

Hot Button Issue

Council member Wayne Westberg gave an update of the Onsite situation at the July meeting. Some years ago, Onsite Services was moved from the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) to the Permitting Department. This changed the basic philosophy, as Permitting is a *revenue-based* department, while DHHS is a *permitting* and *monitoring* department. Most Councils representing residents with onsite services feel strongly that our wells and septic are not revenue sources, nor are they supposed to be, and desire the return of Onsite to DHHS.

Due to the current budget situation, the department handling Onsite Services was reorganized, eliminating the management position that was held by the one Municipal employee who was exceptionally well skilled in Onsite Services. His job duties were rolled in with another existing position in Permitting. In effect, this means that those residents with Onsite Services no longer have a full-time manager to prioritize their needs. Additionally, there is no one available who has the equivalent knowledge and experience of the individual whose position was eliminated. This is also problematic.

This change of philosophy into a commercial, revenue-producing department has placed residents in a difficult situation. There is no longer the expertise, training or experience regarding wells and septic systems. While Onsite has three experienced employees handling permitting, no one is managing the other programs which have been keeping our systems modern and safe.

Wayne shared interesting statistics about Onsite. There are approximately 16,000 couplets (well and septic systems) in the Anchorage Bowl, of which over half are located on the Hillside. Population figures show approximately 50,000 to 55,000 individuals served by these private onsite services. These numbers seem to demand appropriate staffing and oversight from experienced professionals.

Wayne will be working on this problem, and we will discuss potential solutions at the August meeting. If you have information to share or are similarly concerned, plan to attend this meeting.

Planning and Zoning Commission/Hillside District Plan Update

For those who have not had time to look at information on the Hillside District Plan, there are two main sources for information. The first resource is the HDP's Web site at <http://www.hillsidedistrictplan.com/> where you can download information on the most current HDP draft submitted to the Planning and Zoning Commission (PZC). Be patient, some of the documents take time to download.

The second resource is the Planning and Zoning's webpages located on the Municipality's Web site. Go to www.muni.org/planning/index.cfm and click on "**Cases Online**". This link should take you to the web page that allows you to research information on land use policies, cases or plans, such as the HDP, and ordinances or amendments related to land use matters within the Municipality.

If you enter the HDP's case number (2009-090) in the search window, information will appear related to this PZC case. You can also click on "**Staff Report**" and "**View Case Comments**" at the top of the web page to view additional information on the case. Eventually, the PZC will post the Municipality's Issue Response Report that was discussed in last month's E-News.

Although July 6th was the deadline to submit public comments that would be included in the Commission's packets for consideration, the public can still submit comments online by following the instructions above and clicking on the "**Submit Comments**" tab. It can not be guaranteed that PZC members will review the comments submitted after the July 6th deadline; however, staff at PZC have stated all comments are given to Commission members and all comments will be forwarded to the Assembly. Please plan to attend the PZC meeting on August 31st where PZC members will deliberate on the HDP, comments submitted by July 6th and the Issue/Response Report submitted by Municipal staff and consultants assigned to the HDP.

Elmore Road Water Project Update

AWWU has received bids for the construction, and hope to have Board approval and a notice to proceed by the end of July. A public open house/meet the contractor event is tentatively scheduled for August 11th at Shepherd of the Hills Lutheran Church, 11600 Elmore.

Cross Family Park Community Celebration and Volunteer Event August 23rd, 1-5 PM (Come rain or shine!)

The Anchorage Park Foundation along with the Adopt-A-Park group will be hosting a community event in the Huffman-O'Malley Community Council (HOCC) area that you and the family won't want to miss! This event is both a volunteer effort to finalize the community park "fix-its" and a day of fun, recreation, and entertainment for all ages. There will be educational booths, a birdhouse-building activity, food and refreshments, bear awareness information, and possibly a visit from Bird TLC and one of their raptors!

The Council urged support for the improvements for this community park, located on Birch between O'Malley and Huffman. After the park report card last year, we are excited that a number of park "fixes" are being made to the facilities, including the playground, trails, basketball court and baseball back-stop. Improvements were funded with grant dollars raised by the Anchorage Park Foundation and with hard work from the Parks and Recreation Department's Park Maintenance Division.

Bring the sunscreen or umbrellas for this fun community event. Contact Shawna Popovici at 343-4202 or PopoviciSL@muni.org for more information or if you'd like to sign up to volunteer. We hope to see you there!

Tanglewood Park Update

An exciting project for the city's Tanglewood Park in south Anchorage is taking shape on the school grounds of Bowman Elementary. Volunteers from the community and school are having work sessions to install sections of a 1,400-foot boardwalk with the goal of completing over half of the construction this year. The new boardwalk will loop through wooded and open areas in the southeast corner of the park, providing the community and students easy access to view wildlife and vegetation of these restored wetlands.

Thanks to the hard work of volunteers from the school and community, and generous support from grant sponsors and local businesses, the dream of an outdoor classroom and improved community access in Tanglewood Park is coming true. If you would like to volunteer on this project, call Bowen Elementary at 742-5600 and ask to have your telephone number or email address added to teacher Linda Hulen's volunteer contact list.

Question of the Month

The Huffman Road Reconstruction Project, including the four roundabouts, is underway. The Council's major concern with these roundabouts is that they completely eliminate pedestrian signal lights and may not be user friendly for bicyclists. Do you or your family members ever walk or ride bikes to this area? Are you concerned about the lack of pedestrian amenities? Let us know at hoccpresident@gmail.com.

Note: We had numerous responses to the July question about connecting Elmore Road between Abbott and O'Malley. Opinions were divided with some responders supporting the concept because it would decrease driving distances for them while others expressed

concerns about the cost, higher priority projects, the effect of increased traffic through existing neighborhoods, and negative impacts on Little Campbell Creek. Thank you for your input

Halo Update

The Home and Landowners Organization, Inc. will hold their August meeting on Thursday, August 6, 2009. HALO meets on the first Thursday of every month at the Holy Spirit Retreat Center, corner of Hillside & O'Malley, starting at 7 PM. Visitors are always welcome. The special guest at the August meeting will be Bobbi Wells. Bobbi is a long time Alaskan who has been tremendously active in the Chugiak/Eagle River Area, and has worked on both their roads, drainage plans, and their area District Plan. She will be sharing valuable information about their successes in organizing their community and creating their own District Plan.

Welcome New Members

New Members keep joining our community group! While everyone living or owning businesses within our council boundaries is in the HOCC area, dues-paying members are what keep the council going. A \$5 yearly contribution for each person's membership ensures that we are able to continue protecting and defending our neighborhoods, and allows us to better communicate with you. We can of course accept larger contributions to cover operating costs (please see information below for making contributions to HOCC). Thanks for joining us!

HOCC August Meeting

Plan now to attend the August meeting on Thursday, August 20th. Remember that we always meet on the third Thursday of each month at 7 PM. Our meeting location is the Christian Church of Anchorage, corner Lake Otis and O'Malley. Entry is on the O'Malley side of the building, and we meet downstairs.

Are your neighbors members of HOCC? Have you renewed this year? Has your information changed? Use this form as needed!

**Yes, I want to become a contributing member of HOCC
Enclosed is my contribution of \$5 per member for this year.**

Name: _____

**Physical
Address:** _____

Mailing Address:

Phone: (h) _____ **(other)** _____ **E-Mail** _____

**Comments &
Concerns:** _____

**Mail to: Huffman/O'Malley Community Council, 1120 Huffman Road Suite 24,
PMB 420, Anchorage, AK 99515**

Please note: Tax deductible donations in a higher amount are greatly appreciated and accepted. For these donations please make your check out to: FCC (Federation of Community Councils) on behalf of "Huffman O'Malley Community Council." Please send this donation to the above mailing address and a tax deductible receipt will be provided. Thank You!