

Huffman/O'Malley Community Council
It's your HOCC!
November 2009

Newsletter

October Meeting Recap: What you missed

The October meeting had a full agenda, including a welcome appearance by both of our Assembly Representatives! Jennifer Johnston and Chris Birch shared updates including the current budget status and answered our questions about the state of the city. We had presentations from the Knik Area Bridge and Toll Authority and from DOWL HKM on the plans for Section 36.

John Weddleton of the Planning and Zoning Commission joined us to explain the Commission's decision to throw our Furrow Creek neighborhood under the bus, and to let us know "this is not a rezone" but instead, simply clears the way for a rezone.

In addition, the personnel from Station 9 stopped by to remind us that it's time to change batteries in our smoke detectors and have our fireplaces cleaned. We appreciate the opportunity to ask questions of our public safety representatives, and hope they will have a slow winter!

HOCC Joint Meeting with DOT&PF!

Put it on your calendar now! The November meeting will be held on Thursday November 19th starting at 6 PM! The DOWL HKM and DOT&PF open forum will begin at 6:30.

Generally, meetings are held the third Thursday monthly at 7 PM. We meet at the Christian Church of Anchorage, corner of Lake Otis and O'Malley. Enter on the O'Malley side, come downstairs, and enjoy some cookies and conversation.

Hot Button Issue

Led by members John Weddleton and Nancy Pease, the Planning and Zoning Commission unanimously accepted the initial steps for the Planning Department's goal of rezoning the Furrow Creek area to higher densities.

Commissioner Pease was disturbed that there was no public support for these density increases, and that not one single person had spoken in favor while there was large and vocal opposition to the plan. She stated that she "still has mixed feelings", but despite this, she was "swayed by the careful crafting of a package of requirements" created by the Planning Department and the PZC subcommittee and will be voting against the community.

Commissioner Weddleton explained that "every area of Anchorage is facing increasing densities" and that this section of Hillside has been chosen and "must take some of that" increased density. He was comforted by the idea that "the wording requires public benefits", and stated that "over the course of the plan the density has decreased", as the BLM lots originally slated for high density were dropped from the HDP after our objections. In later conversation with HOCC, it became apparent he does not believe the fact our area is already over the density mandates of the 2020 Comprehensive Plan is a viable reason for opposing this further increase, and he is not concerned about the precedent this sets for further high density expansion up Hillside and towards the south.

Commission Chair Jones reminded the members that they need to be sure their words include "significant findings of fact" placed "on the record" as their recommendations will go to the Assembly. To accomplish this, Commissioner Pease read the words created by the subcommittee and the Planning Department into the record, stating that for these official reasons "large parcels can be developed to higher densities". Officially, then, this will become the language used to thwart the will of the public. Commissioner Weddleton stated that the commission "must explain why this area has been singled out as an area of special interest". Unfortunately for the rest of Hillside, this justification, if successful, will set the precedent that can later be applied to numerous other areas of Hillside.

What does this mean to us? Unless we make our Assembly representatives aware of our overwhelming opposition of rezoning our Furrow Creek neighborhood to high densities, and convince them to strongly oppose this idea, we are going to lose that entire area. With a successful "urban creep", the next victims will be uphill towards Birch Road, around Goldenview, and the BLM lots between DeArmoun and Rabbit Creek, as the conditions in all these areas are identical to the conditions quoted by Commissioner Pease, and the BLM lots potentially the next victims.

For residents, this also means massive increases of property taxes, forcing entire areas onto expensive public services, crowded roads and schools, less permeable areas to absorb and regenerate water tables, increased drainage issues and decreased wildlife corridors, and increased amount of waste effluent going into Cook Inlet. It must be remembered that going "public" will cost a minimum of \$150,000.00 per typical R-6 lot plus the addition of monthly utility bills.

We hope all readers will contact their Assembly representatives and ask that the plans for Furrow Creek be removed from the Hillside District Plan. We will also need to contact the other Assembly members and ask for their support.

NEWS FLASH! The Huffman/O'Malley Community Council is sponsoring a petition to Save our Furrow Creek Neighborhood. Go to <http://www.ipetitions.com/petition/FurrowCreek/> to find the petition, and add your signature and your comments. Forward this Newsletter and the link to all your family, coworkers, friends and neighbors. All we need is a name, no personal information. This petition will be handed to the Assembly at the hearing. Uniting together, our voices must be heard.

*Save our Furrow Creek Neighborhoods!
Sign the Petition NOW!*

**Section 36
Master Plan Update**

Section 36 is a square mile of property currently managed by the Heritage Land Bank. Upon completion of the master plan, it will be transferred to the Parks and Recreation Dept for management. DOWL HKM is now in the process of designing this conceptual plan and is seeking public involvement in the decision of which of three conceptual ideas should be forwarded.

Susan Luescher of DOWL HKM presented the three ideas to the Council at the October meeting. The first plan is simple, just providing sustainable trail access, portable toilets and some parking at the trail head. Concept 2 is slightly more development, including several different and diverse trails, and constructed restrooms in expanded parking areas. Concept 3 would add more trail heads and a low impact structure that would function as a winter warming hut.

Luescher is seeking public input before Nov 30. Go to <http://www.muni.org/parks/Section36> to view the plans and comment on your preferences. If you have specific questions, email her at sluescher@dowlhkm.

KABATA! The Knik Arm Crossing

Guest Kevin Hemenway, CFO of the Knik Arm Bridge and Toll Authority, gave an informative presentation on the proposed crossing at the October meeting. The project will take an estimated four years to complete, cost an estimated \$700 Million, and will provide over 5,000 new jobs during construction. At the Government Hill side, it will cost twelve structures, nine of which are private homes, for the tunnel under Government Hill.

The major impact of the proposed crossing will be felt in MatSu, the area with the highest percentage of growth in the state. With the lack of Industrial-zoned properties in the Anchorage Bowl, it is expected that much of the area around Point MacKenzie will serve this purpose. Housing on that side of the arm is also expected to boom, and much of those lands are already in the hands of developers. The expected effect of this will be to lower the pressures on high density throughout the Anchorage Bowl and provide commercial development opportunities.

Studies have shown that Anchorage property tax dollars will stay steady, as most of the growth will be in MatSu.

The AMATS Policy Committee released the Plan for public review, which closed Oct 23.

Important Notice - Huffman Road Reconstruction Meeting!

NOVEMBER 19 HOCC MEETING STARTING AT 6:00 PM WITH PUBLIC MEETING
STARTING AT 6:30PM

We asked for input. Now we have a chance! The Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities (DOT & PF) and DOWL HKM will be co-hosting a meeting with HOCC regarding the Huffman Road Reconstruction project at our November meeting. This is the section from Pintail/Cange to Lake Otis.

The HOCC was dismayed to be notified that suddenly this section had gone from a simple resurface job to a design to "urban" standards. We expressed our concern, and our desire to share in this decision. This is your opportunity to comment! Do you want curb and gutters, twin trails, storm drain improvements and "urban" standards and their associated problems? How will the drainage alteration affect your property? Will the twin trails impact you? Do you simply want the resurfacing we asked for?

The improvements from Lake Otis to Old Seward are nearing design completion, and right-of-way acquisition is in progress. Information about all phases of this project will be available at this meeting. Plan to attend, and bring your neighbors and family. This is important.

For more information, you can visit www.hillsideroads.com for more information on the project.

**President's Message:
By Christine Monette, HOCC President**

Top 10 Reasons to attend your Community Council Meeting

10. Be the first person on your block to learn about rezone applications, road improvements and new proposed regulations that will affect your neighborhood.
9. Join the group of people who will decide how to respond to government's requests for input on new projects, parks, roads, utility fee increases, or Capital Improvement Projects.
8. Department heads and employees of the various government agencies and departments actually come to you!
7. Help decide which battles to wage.
6. Grill all those nice people who want you to "Vote Yes!" about how much their "little" bond will actually cost you for the next thirty years.
5. Discover someone who will listen to your opinion, find ways to address your problem, or just let you gripe.
4. Free cookies!
3. Where else can you get more than three minutes to talk to your Assembly Representatives, give them your input, ask them questions, and demand answers?
2. Meet the people who are making decisions for you and tell them they're nuts and you can do a better job.

and the number one reason to attend your Community Council meetings:

1. You will wonder why all of government can't work this well together.

Question of the Month

Road Maintenance -- Has it been good or not-so-good this year? Were your curbs cleared? Hard surface trails swept? Potholes fixed? Is your road falling apart, or holding well?

Let us know! If you've got specific issues, please state either the name of the road or tell us whether it is a Muni, State or local maintenance.

Thank you for your responses to our question about wildlife! We're still putting together your replies, so if you forgot to respond, do so now.

FCC News

The Federation of Community Councils (FCC) is an organization consisting of one representative from each of the 38 community councils in Anchorage, Eagle River, Chugiak, Eklutna, Indian and Girdwood. The FCC meets on the the 3rd Wednesday of every month to go over issues facing the city, the community as a whole and the councils individually. It is a unique and interesting opportunity to obtain information and to share information about issues important to different councils. While there are universal concerns, each council area faces some unique challenges. When we know what each council is facing, we are able to support their efforts. The FCC business office coordinates and mails our newsletters and works to keep the councils informed of information being disseminated by the city government. You to can be informed about what is happening by simply logging on to FCC at www.communitycouncils.org. You might just be fascinated by what you discover. The site has a map outlining the individual Community Council boundaries, and provides you a handy link to your Community Council information. It also provides links to most of the City Government Offices you might have need to contact, as well as links to your Assembly Representatives.

News flash! Funding for our FCC Offices has been completely cut from the muni budget!

This will place a huge burden on every one of the community councils, including building and mailing newsletters, information sharing, and resources. Please contact your Assembly representative if you feel this is worth funding!

HALO Update

"Home Fire Defense on the Hillside": It is a subject that concerns all of us. The Home and Landowners Organization, Inc., (HALO) will host a meeting for the Hillside community with guest speakers from the Anchorage Fire Department. Plan on attending this event on Monday, December 3, at 7 PM. For additional information on HALO (Home and Landowners Organization) please visit www.anchoragehalo.org

Just a Random Thought...

If Roundabouts are the "Greatest Thing Since Sliced Bread", and the "Future of Anchorage Roads", why is the brand new intersection at Elmore and the just-completed Dowling Road extension an old-fashioned signal intersection?

Welcome New Members!

Thanks so for your support! Dues paying members are vital to our mission of two-way conversation and grassroots community input.

If you are not yet a dues-paying member, simply use the form at the bottom of this newsletter. Membership fee is only \$5 per year, and yes, we do accept larger contributions (please see instructions below). Your donations pay for a gratuity for our meeting location, community outreach events, and our priority - this newsletter! For our "snail mail" residents, you can become an "email person" by just letting us know, and save us some postage in the process!

And remember to contact us with your comments and concerns. We like that "two-way" thing!

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

**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 donations to be tax deductible, 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!