

**Huffman/O'Malley Community Council**  
***It's your HOCC!***  
**October 2010**  
**Newsletter**

**September Meeting Recap:**

Did you attend the September meeting? If so, you heard the latest about Chugach Electric's "Abbott Loop" Substation. This large facility will be crammed onto a R-6 lot at the corner of Hane and O'Malley, and HOCC is asking that it is moved to one of the more appropriate locations we have pointed out. This controversial project removes residential property and creates an "industrial" facility in an established neighborhood. Read "Hot Button Issue" for more information.

You also heard from three State candidates, including Janet Reiser, Cathy Giesel and Lupe Marroquin, and got the chance to ask each of them your questions. We thank those leaders and potential leaders who take the time to visit with the community!

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**Huffman Park Needs YOU!**

You know that a lot of hard work has been happening to revitalize Huffman Park. Now we need you to help pitch in and make this a success!

Huffman Park, on the corner of Huffman and Elmore Roads, has been a tangled, dark nightmare, with decrepit exercise equipment, dangerous overgrown trails and its own swampland. The trail was unsafe for our children to use to access Huffman Elementary School, and kept them on the side of the road instead. Clearing, cleaning and trail widening were accomplished by some dedicated individuals. The rest of the effort needs some cold, hard cash.

In the spirit of "doing for ourselves" instead of looking for tax dollars, the HOCC is asking if each of us would write a check for \$5 per person or \$10 per family and send it to the Anchorage Park Foundation. In the "memo" section, write "Huffman Park". This ensures that your money will go directly to this project. None of your donation will be spent anywhere else.

Make your check out to the *Anchorage Park Foundation* and mail it to Anchorage Park Foundation, 715 L. St., Suite 200, Anchorage, AK 99501.

HOCC hopes to gather \$250 to donate to this endeavor. Thank you for helping us reach this goal!

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**SAWIP Phase II Construction**

Apparently the new SAWIP line has a little leak somewhere...

Until this is resolved, the line won't be pressurized and the fire hydrants will be kept under burlap. As soon as they are unwrapped, call your homeowner's insurance carrier and ask for the reduced insurance rates that come with local fire hydrants! For those along Elmore Road it's the only good thing that came out of that project! (Well, that and half of a new road.)

Construction on the 5-million-gallon water tank at the corner of Elmore and Huffman will begin next spring. For more information on this project, visit [www.awwu.biz/SAWIP](http://www.awwu.biz/SAWIP)

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## **Hot Button Issue New Chugach Substation and Tower on O'Malley**

HOCC and the neighbors appeared at the advertised Public Hearing on Sept 13 to add testimony regarding the proposed location for the new "Abbott Loop" Substation. The item was called and the Chairman immediately announced that the Public Hearing was closed and that the Commission would make their recommendations. Needless to say, the numerous HOCC residents in the audience, including the Rector of the Greek Church holding a petition from his congregation, were stunned at this announcement.

Although virtually all of the Commissioners mentioned that they certainly would not want such a giant substation in their neighborhood, the PZC voted 6-1 to approve the facility, voting against several motions to make the industrial site more palatable to the neighborhood. They determined that clear-cutting the lot and replanting with shrubs instead of "danger trees" was adequate.

HOCC representatives forced the issue of the advertised Public Hearing, taking pictures of both the online Public Hearing notice and the posted "Public Hearing" signs immediately after the Commission meeting. With this evidence, one Commissioner filed intent to make a Motion of Reconsideration at the next meeting, Oct. 11th. A Motion of Reconsideration allows a matter to be reopened. The motion was made and seconded, which allowed discussion.

During the ensuing discussion, several Commissioners agreed that cutting off the properly noticed Public Hearing was confusing to the Public, who had every expectation that they would have an opportunity to have their voices heard. They stated that the Commission should err on the side of caution and reconsider this case for a new hearing at a later date. However, the body voted against the motion, stating that, although the public had been confused by the contradicting information available via the Planning and Zoning and Municipal web sites and the posted Public Hearing notice, they determined that this was the same process that had always been done in the past. They acknowledged that it was probable and very likely that the same confusion may have occurred in past cases. However, no one had ever complained to the Commission before. Therefore the Commission saw no reason to allow for reconsideration in this case, regardless of the public perception of disenfranchisement. The Commission agreed that the system may be flawed, but it had been flawed in the past and the Commission saw no reason to attempt to correct these flaws at this time. The Chair of the Commission closed the discussion by verbally chastising the Public for lack of attention to what is happening to and around them. She asserted that it was the responsibility of the Public to search out the information via the various City Web sites to find out what was happening in the City that may affect them and make a timely response to that

information.

What the Commissioners failed to comprehend is that, in this case, the public process may have been turned on its ear by advertising a Public Hearing and then not allowing a Public Hearing.

Additionally, the letter of the law in regards to Public Hearing notices is inadequate for large lot zoning districts. Public Notice is only required for those properties within a 500' distance of the subject property. In this case, with oversize R-6 lots, only three property owners required official notice. To add to this is that the substation, which will impact the entirety of Hillside, was noticed only to HOCC and Abbott Loop Councils. HOCC is the only area Council that meets during the summer months. The result of this situation is that most of the public is unaware of proposed major projects until shortly before the Public Hearing. It is easy to see why many of the area residents feel disenfranchised, and that this disenfranchisement is deliberate.

The position of Chugach Electric is that HOCC is just upset because we lost.

HOCC will be working on two fronts. First, Public Notice regulations need to be adjusted, especially for non-residential uses in large lot areas. For example, current regulations require notice only to those within 500 feet of the proposed use. In this case, only three neighbors are within that boundary. Additionally, only piecemeal information is given to councils, with new surprises each month. In this case, the HOCC was under the impression initially that the substation would be about the size of the one in place at the corner of Huffman and Elmore, a small, unobtrusive facility on a large lot. Only slowly did the information trickle out that showed the immense size of this facility and the sudden addition of the giant communications tower. We are asking that public utilities create a voluntary guideline regarding increased standards for both public notice and open meetings for public input for these type of projects. To this end, we will be working with the Administration and the utilities.

Secondly, HOCC President, Christine Monette attended the Chugach Electric Operation Board meeting. We had previously presented community issues and concerns regarding this substation location. The CEA Board respectfully listened to our issues with this location choice and even went so far as to commiserate with the adjoining property owners, acknowledging that they would not want to live next to a substation. Chugach project representative assured the Board that Chugach will continue to look for a larger and more suitable location, and will endeavor to address the wish of the community to have this substation built in an area more suited to the industrial nature of the facility. We will continue to monitor and address the community wishes with Chugach in the months and years ahead, and hope Chugach will be successful in moving this facility.

If you would like weekly updates on the progress of this situation, please let us know. A full update will be given at the next HOCC meeting.

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### **Public Record Notices going Online Only!**

As of Sept 1, the Muni will only publish Public Notices online! They will no longer be in either the ADN or Alaska Journal of Commerce.

Property foreclosures and a few other items will still be published in print, but the only place to find meeting notices will be through the Muni website, [www.muni.org](http://www.muni.org). The exact page is: <http://www.muni.org/publicnotice/Pages/default.aspx> From there a variety of searches are available.

The Heritage Land Bank also places its commission meeting agendas on its own web page, so that there are two locations for opening and downloading upcoming agendas, as well as finding recent meeting agendas: <http://www.muni.org/Departments/hlb/Pages/HLBCommission.aspx>

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## **Upcoming Meeting**

Put it on your calendar now! Our next meeting will be held Thursday, October 21, 2010. Remember that HOCC always meets on the third Thursday monthly at 7 PM, 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.

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## **Items of Interest?**

Do you have an item of local interest you would like to share? Does your Homeowners Association, Road Service Area or Neighborhood group have information that needs to get out? Is there a particular concern on your street? Let us know! We can put your short pieces in the body of the newsletter, or link to longer items. Email your items to [hoccpresident@gmail.com](mailto:hoccpresident@gmail.com).

You can also attend our meetings and share your concerns in person. Community Councils exist to serve the community!

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## **Hillside Road Issue: Huffman / Pintail / Cange**

Some of you may be aware of the dangers at the morning commute time at the intersection of Pintail/Cange on Huffman Road. Years ago, HOCC and Grace Christian School requested the city address traffic problems and slow down the traffic in this area by adding a school crossing zone. DOT refused, as the state will not create school crossing zones that would serve a private institution. Three years later, the City/State decided to improve the intersection by widening it and adding turn lanes and a center "through" lane to speed traffic. This "improvement" did not fix the problem but has actually made it worse. There have been numerous accidents - as many as 14 that we are aware of - since improvements were made, with two of those just since school started this fall.

Grace School parents contacted the DOT with their concerns regarding this intersection and have received a response from Scott Thomas in which he outlined the future DOT plans. According to Thomas, the DOT is requesting planning funds to make final recommendations for funding up to nine intersections on the Hillside in one block of funding. The City will then prioritize which intersections will be next in line for upgrades and what the associated costs will be based on congestion and crashes. The Huffman/Pintail/Cange intersection is one of the nine South Anchorage intersections that are under consideration, each with traffic volumes and conflicts, that will be weighed against the needs of the others.

In the meantime, to address the issue, the city has been plowing back the snowbanks each winter. Thomas also recommended Pintail drivers accept the “peak period delay” and “wait to make a turn when you can see around the cars waiting to turn from Huffman Road, or by changing travel routes by making a right turn instead during the short peak periods”. He does caution that drivers make their own judgments when traversing this intersection as a number of the past crashes were due to parents entering the intersection when someone waved them across.

Not satisfied with the DOT response, the parents at Grace School have started a grass roots effort, by gathering names on a petition requesting that the DOT put in a turn signal light. When this intersection was upgraded it was prepped with the infrastructure for a signal light for future need. The Parents at Grace School feel that “future need” has arrived.

If you would like to add your name to this petition please contact Melissa Schmiedt at 522-4013 or *email jdsch1957@hotmail.com*.

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### **HALO Update**

The next meeting of Home and Landowner's Organization, Inc. will be held Thursday, November 4th. HALO always meets on the first Thursday monthly, 7 p.m., at the Holy Spirit Retreat, corner Hillside and O'Malley.

Instead of their regular meeting in October, HALO held their Candidates Forum at O'Malley's on the Green. The event featured candidates from the major races of interest to the Hillside residents. Written questions from the audience were submitted and responded to by the various candidates who wish to represent us in Juneau. Refreshments were provided by HALO and Hillside Community Councils. The event was an informative and successful evening for all those in attendance.

For additional information on HALO please visit [www.anchoragehalo.org](http://www.anchoragehalo.org)

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### **Just a Random Thought...**

What would have happened if we would have had September's clear, sunny days in June?

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**Welcome New Members!**

Thanks you 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 \$10 per person each 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, office supplies 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, because YES you can make a difference if you get involved. Feel free to pass this e-Newsletter on to your neighbors, then remind them to join.

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

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Physical Address:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Mailing Address:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Phone: (h)** \_\_\_\_\_ **(other)** \_\_\_\_\_

**E-Mail** \_\_\_\_\_

**Comments & Concerns:** \_\_\_\_\_

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

**Please note:** 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!