

Huffman/O'Malley Community Council

It's your HOCC!

March 2011 Newsletter

February Meeting Recap:

The February meeting had a full agenda, including updates on several community concerns and a reminder about the HALO Candidate Forum.

Those at the February meeting also heard all about the plans for construction at South Anchorage High School's baseball and football/soccer fields. Do you live near South High? Do you have an opinion about these plans? Please let the council know!

Hot Button Issue

SAHS Sports Field Expansion

While students and their parent booster clubs are excited about the potential expansion of SAHS football and baseball fields, nearby residents are concerned about the negative impacts currently experienced and the potential of exacerbating these negative impacts.

Most of these impacts were to have been reduced by the creation of a 40' vegetative buffer next to the 40' utility corridor on the south boundary of the school property. Unfortunately, it appears that the planned re-vegetation of this buffer was either not sufficiently done or has not grown as expected. The homeowners experience light and noise pollution from the school.

HOCC will be addressing these issues. If you want to be part of this process, please contact HOCC President Christine Monette at hoccpresident@gmail.com or call her at 344-8782.

There will be an administrative hearing on the field expansion at the Planning and Zoning Commission on Wednesday, April 13. Unless the public asks for a Public Hearing, the expansion will be approved without discussion. If you wish to comment on this expansion (Case #2011-036) or current conditions, you must go online to <http://munimaps.muni.org/website/htmlviewer/generic/casebody.asp?case=2011-036> before **March 25th** to submit written comments on line or send directly to the Planning Department. The staff report is to be available online by April 2nd. If you desire a Public Hearing process please indicate that in your email or mail. For additional questions contact Sharon Ferguson at the Planning Department at 343-7938.

Information topical to your comments should include how the school impacts your life, both positively and negatively; how the field expansion will affect you personally; and what conclusion you would like to see approved. Please make your comments specific, especially if you desire a Public Hearing.

Huffman Park

Almost 2 years ago, a staff member of the Municipality of Anchorage (MOA) Parks and Recreation Department came to the Huffman-O'Malley Community Council asking for help with Huffman Park. As we know, students use Huffman Park as a route to Huffman Elementary. The specific program described was the "Safe Routes to Schools" program. Last summer, members of Trinity Church, Huffman Elementary, HOCC and the public at large briefly collaborated to begin improving the routes to the school through Huffman Park. Matching funding was provided by the Anchorage Parks Foundation and donations from HOCC and the public, specifically for this purpose.

Work last summer included some route clearing, and additional work is scheduled to commence this summer. In the interim, the Anchorage School District is designing improvements to the school's traffic patterns. These improvements included closing off one of the designated "Safe Routes to School", ironically, for "safety concerns". After volunteers had worked on improving these routes, it became clear that more communication was needed to make sure that these efforts were more carefully coordinated.

At the March 17 HOCC meeting, representatives of the School, the Park, and the Safe Routes to School Team will meet to answer questions and coordinate plans for the school and the park. The goal of of this discussion will be to give our children safe access to their schools. Please attend the meeting to find out what is planned for the school and the park and to make your opinion known. We wish to establish true communication and unite the objectives for these projects. Working together, we can create a safe park and school that will be used and appreciated for many generations.

Submitted by Mark Schroeder, HOCC Steering Committee Member

HOCC - Area Crime Statistics

The HOCC area and surrounding neighborhoods are not crime free! If you are a crime victim, please be sure to report it to the Anchorage Police Department so that the information is logged into the MOA's crime statistics database. The cumulative amount of reported offenses (beginning December 17, 2010 to date) are in parentheses. Compiled crime statistics for the HOCC-area (January 20, 2010 - February 17, 2011; no data generated for February 1 -3):

Assaults: 1 (5)	Other Undefined Offenses: 4 (5)
Burglaries: 3 (6)	Theft Reports: 2 (8)
Disturbances: 0 (2)	Vandalism: 1 (1)
Drugs: 1 (1)	Vehicle Theft: 0 (1)
Fraud/Forgery: 0 (4)	Weapon Offense: 0 (1)
Liquor violations: 1 (1)	

The majority of these crimes continue to occur in a corridor between Lake Otis (east), New Seward Highway (west), O'Malley Road (north), and DeArmoun Road (south).

Compiled by Wayne Crayton, HOCC Steering Committee Member. Information is from Anchorage Police Department records at <http://crimemap.muni.org/>

Upcoming Meeting - Thursday March 17th

Put it on your calendar now! Our next meeting will be held Thursday, March 17, 2011 - Saint Patrick's Day! 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.

Remember that this meeting will include representatives from the Parks & Rec, ASD's planners, Rasmussen Foundation and our elected representatives working on a solution to Huffman Elementary/ Huffman Park and continued discussion regarding the SAHS field improvements. Attend and make your voice heard!

Anchorage Receives Federal Grant To Maintain Public Safety

The Anchorage Fire Department has received a \$5 million SAFER grant for the purpose of adequately staffing our fire department. The SAFER (Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response) Grant was created to provide funding directly to fire departments to help them increase the number of trained, front-line firefighters available in their communities. Anchorage is currently in need of additional firefighters to fully staff existing equipment and provide relief from excessive overtime demands.

What does this mean for us as South Anchorage residents? First and foremost, this will allow the fire department to begin staffing Medic 7 in the Sand Lake Area that was approved by voters last year. Right now the Ambulance (Medic 9) that serves our area has a response area from Indian to O'Malley and Bear Valley to Southport. One medical transport call can essentially take that ambulance off-line for 1 and half hours (this attributed to response time, patient care, transport, and patient transfer to a care physician).

Will the SAFER Grant cost the taxpayer more money for Fire/Ems services in the future? No; currently the Anchorage Fire Department is seeing an attrition rate of 15 plus firefighters a year, this due primarily to retirements. The SAFER grant provides funding for up to 29 personnel in a 2 year period, so you can see that as we lose firefighters we will simply place the newly hired SAFER Firefighters into the existing seats left by those retiring thus not changing our operational budget from its current amount

while gaining new trained firefighters.

The Municipality of Anchorage received this Grant on February 11th from the efforts of our Washington DC delegation and their commitment to public safety in Alaska. It was recognized that the Fire Department had not hired firefighters since 2007, leaving large gaps within their staffing model, so they acted and we now have a hire group 4 years later to help provide adequate safety and care for Anchorage. As of 3/4/11 the candidates applying for these positions were still within the testing process with expectation of them being on the line by next month.

As always, remember that you are always welcome at your local Anchorage Fire Station. These public servants are there to serve you 24 hours a day 365 days a year.

Submitted by Anchorage Firefighter and HOCC Resident Brian Partch

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.

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

Message from the President

As March brings winter out of the darkness and deep freeze and the longer days of sunshine energize us, we turn our attention to the impending Spring and Summer and the many important items facing our neighborhoods and our council. I would like to take a minute to share just a few of those items with you.

We are continuing to monitor for the implementation by the Municipality of the Hillside District Plan, with the guidelines and protections it ensures for the neighborhoods and area of the Hillside, during the upcoming construction season.

Huffman Park will be under going a cleanup and restoration this summer with the help of a Park Foundation grant and labor volunteers from Trinity Church, Huffman School PTA, and members of the surrounding community. Additional volunteers are needed and I encourage everyone to get involved.

South Anchorage High School is planning upgrades and additions to its Baseball Field and Football/Soccer Fields that will include electronic score board on the baseball field, with lighting and concession areas for both fields.

Huffman Road upgrades are scheduled to begin this summer from the New Seward Highway to Pintail/Cange, bringing along with it all the headaches of road construction. We are also continuing to monitor the unintended consequences of the Pintail/Cange upgrade done several years ago, resulting in increased traffic issues and accidents at that intersection and possible solutions for these issues.

The HOCC will continue to support all the interests and efforts of our community. We invite and encourage all our members to get involved. With all that is happening in our community it takes us ALL to speak up and stand up and together we can effect change.

Look forward to seeing you and all of our neighbors this summer at the Council Meetings.

Christine Monette, President

HALO Update

The next meeting of Home and Landowner's Organization, Inc. will be held Thursday, April 7th. HALO always meets on the first Thursday monthly, 7 p.m., at the Holy Spirit Retreat, corner Hillside and O'Malley. For additional information on HALO please visit www.anchoragehalo.org

Just a Random Thought...

Instead of "springing forward" and "falling back", for Daylight Savings time, why don't we split the difference, set the year on the half hour, and call it good?

Public Record Notices going Online Only!

Have you noticed that the Municipality no longer published Public Notices in print? Instead, we must seek out the Public Notices online. It is up to each of us to search for issues important to our neighborhoods.

As we have learned the hard way, information published online and public notices are not always accurate. We urge you to verify all public notices by making a phone call to the agency involved if the notice involves your neighborhood. The phone number for each particular agency is listed in the Public Notice.

Find public notices at: <http://www.muni.org/publicnotice/Pages/default.aspx>

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.

**Yes, I want to become a contributing member of HOCC
Enclosed is my contribution of \$10 per person for this year.**

Name:

Physical Address:

Mailing Address:

Phone (home & other)

E-Mail

Comments & Concerns:

**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!