

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

## Newsletter

### August Meeting Recap

Did you attend the August HOCC meeting? There was a lot of information shared, including discovering that instead of a simple re-pave, Huffman Road is now being upgraded to "Urban Standards", which fits well with the Planning Department's vision of a higher density urban Furrow Creek area. You also discovered that there are still unanswered questions about constructing roads in frost-susceptible areas and drainage issues. We also were informed about an issue faced by one of our neighborhoods, and are taking steps to resolve the situation. The HOCC is a great place to come with your community concerns!

We learned that the Planning Department and Agnew::Beck have released the "Issue Response Document" for the Hillside District Plan. In essence, they are maintaining their original stances on issues of importance to us, including the idea of a high-density Furrow Creek area. We also had the opportunity to discuss the drainage situation on Elmore north of Huffman with DOT, and the need to address the neighborhood and street issues with AWWU's SAWIP construction. With our Senator Con Bunde in the audience, we hope that issue will be addressed!

### Hot Button Issue:

## Huffman Road Reconstruction

DOWL HKM's Shawn Hall and ADOT/PF's Kim Strickland provided an update on the Huffman Road Reconstruction project between Pintail and Lake Otis at the August HOCC meeting. The original State plan was to simply repave this strip of Huffman Road. Instead, the following points of information about the project were presented and discussed:

- Construction would remain within the existing right-of-way
- The deteriorated roadway would be replaced with a new urban pavement design (curb, gutter, shoulders, etc)
  - Subsurface drainage problems would be resolved and accounted for in the project design
  - Pedestrian facilities would be upgraded and reconstructed
  - Two 12 ft traffic lanes would be constructed
  - A 4 ft shoulder would be constructed on each side with curb and gutter
  - A 5 ft sidewalk would be constructed on one side and a 8 ft paved multi-use trail constructed on the other side
  - The project design and right-of-way issues would be addressed/finalized during Fall/Winter 2009
  - During the Spring of 2010, utility relocation and construction would begin
  - Spring and Summer 2011 construction would continue; however, any construction would depend on the allocation of funding.

Issues raised by the HOCC included:

- (1) the revised project being designed without input from or notice to the neighboring property owners and area stakeholders;
- (2) the fast-track planning nature of the project;
- (3) the drive to incorporate an urban design when the community didn't request it and there isn't any Federal mandate to do so as well as the lack of utilization of Context Sensitive Design mandates;
- (4) the fact that the Council has asked for all future designs to incorporate a single multi-use trail on the North sides of our East-West corridors;
- (5) the project engineers' lack of understanding about the drainage problems which facilitated the deterioration of the road surface and subsurface; and
- (6) the unwillingness to incorporate LED street light design into the project which would complement the efforts of the MOA to retrofit all street lights to LED.

Ms. Strickland (ADOT/PF) took careful notes from our discussion and stated that she would work with the HOCC to get local input (e.g. going door-to-door, setting up a "booth" at Carrs Huffman, open house at one of our HOCC meetings) on the project design and also promised that we would have an opportunity to review the 75% Design document. Ms. Strickland also pointed out that the urban design presented at our meeting was the first rendition and that available funding may not even be available for constructing such a project. ADOT/PF's first priority is to build a stable road; the pedestrian amenities would be constructed if funding is adequate to do so. ADOT/PF hopes to attend our September meeting and update us on the project and any changes.

## **Planning and Zoning Commission/Hillside District Plan Update**

For those who could not attend the Planning and Zoning Commission's (PZC) deliberations August 31 on the Municipality's Issue/Response Document regarding the Hillside District Plan, not to worry. Planning and Zoning Commission deliberations will continue on Wednesday, September 16 at 6:30 p.m. at the Loussac Library's Assembly Chambers. Discussions at the August 31<sup>st</sup> hearing ended while still trying to clarify issues related to the Furrow Creek area and its proposed overlay district. For those who live in this area, the Huffman O'Malley Community Council recommends that residents visit the consultant's, Agnew Beck, Website and look at the Issue/Response Report along with the related Staff Memos 2 (modified land use map) and 3 (additions issues recommended changes to the HDP) by going to <http://www.hillsidedistrictplan.com/>. Please pay particular attention to Staff Memo 2 which explains modifications to the Land Use Map highlighting the Furrow Creek area and the proposed overlay district.

To download all the memos, updated maps and the original Issue/Response Report, simply click the following link below: [http://www.hillsidedistrictplan.com/pdf/PUBLIC\\_HEARING\\_DRAFT/2009-090-Issue-Response\\_ALL.pdf](http://www.hillsidedistrictplan.com/pdf/PUBLIC_HEARING_DRAFT/2009-090-Issue-Response_ALL.pdf) (this is a large document and it may take a few minutes). If the proposed rezoning changes to the Furrow Creek area in the Hillside District Plan approved by the PZC, then Commission members will be sending these recommendations to the Assembly for final approval. This scenario could allow for rezoning to higher densities for the Furrow Creek area.

Also, there is another update for those who have been following the HDP process. Unfortunately people who may have just learned to navigate the Planning and Zoning

Departments webpages, the Municipal website has been completely changed. First, go to the Planning Department's home page found by following this link: <http://www.muni.org/departments/planning/pages/default.aspx>, and then click on the **Boards and Commissions** link on the left side of the web page or <http://www.muni.org/Departments/Planning/Pages/Boards.aspx>. Scroll down to the Planning and Zoning Commission section to see a contact telephone number and the calendar of meetings/hearings.

For additional information regarding Zoning and Platting cases along with district plans such as the HDP, go back to the Planning Department's main home page and click on the link **Public Participation** listed on the left side of the web page. Or just click on <http://www.muni.org/departments/planning/publicparticipation/Pages/default.aspx>. Follow this link to yet another link by clicking on "**Check out what is going on in your neighborhood**" or <http://munimaps.muni.org/planning/home3.htm>. Here you will find the original "**Cases On-line**" web page. Type in HDP case number 2009-090 in the search window and you will be able to find documents related to this district plan's case. It appears that individuals can still submit comments. However the official public comment period has ended, so while PZC members may still be given comments submitted, they will most likely not be incorporated into future deliberations by the PZC.

Please plan to attend the continued deliberations on the HDP. HOCC members hope to see you there on Wednesday, September 16<sup>th</sup>, 6:30 p.m. at the Loussac Library.

### **President's Message: What AWWU Will Cost You**

By Christine Monette, HOCC President

When my husband and I bought our Hillside home, we were specifically looking to live in an area outside of the AWWU service, and we settled on a large lot below Elmore Road. Should water and sewer be forced on our neighborhoods, we may well be one of those no longer able to afford our home. How does this happen? I had the opportunity to sit down with some experts in tax assessment recently and find out the real answers.

I knew about the hook up fees that can run from \$100K to \$250K per lot, depending upon the terrain and your amount of frontage. I knew that, while the Municipality or AWWU itself cannot force you to hook up, no lender will accept a mortgage or refinance on a property that is not hooked up to available service. That means no property can ever be sold without taking on this debt.

What I did not know is what happens to our property taxes after AWWU comes into the neighborhood. Property values within the new service area increase by nature of Public Utilities being available and assessed to the property once it is sold or refinanced. Once this happens the value of surrounding properties are increased to match the value of the property that has been sold or refinanced, thus drastically increasing the Municipal assessed property value of your home or land and thereby increasing the amount of tax assessed on your property annually. So while the framers of the Hillside District plan and the proponents of the extension of the maximum perimeter of sewer into the Furrow Creek Area continually stress that you will not be forced to hook up or pay the assessment of the utility until such time as you wish to hook up, they are disingenuous as to the actual cost with the prospect of your taxes increasing. While HDP framers insist that it would take quite a long while to have the increase in density they are seeking, I am of the concern that the way the value of the property in the Furrow Creek

Area will be assessed once the services have been established, that most of the home and landowners of this area will be forced to sell their property due to the increased taxes that they will be subject to. The area of Furrow Creek is mostly hardworking middle class families or retired persons who have lived and owned their property in this area for 20/30/40 and 50 years and due to the financial restraints of their middle class and retired status they will have little recourse other than sell. The results of this situation, which will trigger the moment the first piece of property is sold, will drastically alter the Furrow Creek Area in a very short term and disenfranchise the many people who have over the years called this area home.

## Question of the

### Month

Have you or your neighbors had any issues with crime in your neighborhood this summer? Have you been the victim of burglary, theft or vandalism on your property? If so, did you file a police report? Why or why not? Have you had issues with speeding vehicles? Loud parties? Property theft? Have you called for extra enforcement in your neighborhood? Why or why not?

If you are interested in looking at reported crime statistics in our neighborhoods, visit <http://www.crimemapping.com/map/ak/anchorage> All filed reports go immediately into this databank, and you can view them by dates and addresses.

*Thanks to all who responded to our question about pedestrian amenities for the new roundabouts. You told us that you, too, are concerned about this potential issue, especially for those riding bicycles. We hope this issue will be resolved prior to construction.*

## Legislative Update

We were pleased to have both Senator Con Bunde and Representative Bob Lynn attend the August meeting. They reported on the successful Special Session held in Anchorage, and thanked those that attended this event. Senator Bunde reported on the \$1.4 Billion deficit from last year and the fact that it will be even higher this year. He held a discussion regarding the "gas tax holiday" that has cost the state \$60 Million, much of that revenue from tourist dollars. The State spends about \$100 Million on highway maintenance each year. None of the gas taxes are dedicated to highway funds. The Senator also shared information regarding the Seward Highway dangers and the difficulty of finding solutions. Upgrading to four separated lanes is financially impossible, and other potential solutions cause their own difficulties. He invited people to read his newsletter for complete details. He can be reached at:

[Senator\\_Con\\_Bunde@legis.state.ak.us](mailto:Senator_Con_Bunde@legis.state.ak.us)

You can also keep updated on House of Representatives issues by reading Representative Bob Lynn's Blog at [www.alaskadistrict31.blogspot.com](http://www.alaskadistrict31.blogspot.com)

## FCC Update

The Federation of Community Councils met August 19th after a couple of months off for summer hiatus. In attendance were representatives from many of the 38 community councils that make up the FCC board of delegates. We had a presentation from a member of the school board with regard to the enrollment numbers for the school district, as well as the opening of the Clark Middle School. We also had a presentation

from the Anchorage Equal Rights Commission. The commission is governed by nine commissioners who are appointed by the Mayor and confirmed by the Anchorage Assembly. The Commission was established in the Anchorage Charter in 1975 as the Municipal law enforcement agency charged to eliminate and prevent unlawful discrimination under Title 5 of the Municipal Code within the geographic boundaries of the Municipality. The commission meets on the 3rd Thursday of odd numbered months, except July, at the Mayors conference room. The commission enforces the law by impartially investigating and resolving complaints alleging illegal discrimination or harassment based on Race, Religion, National Origin, Sex, Pregnancy, Parenthood, Physical Disability, Mental Disability, Martial Status, Age or Retaliation. Discrimination is unlawful in Employment, Housing, Public Accommodations, Educational Institutions, Financial Institutions, and Practices of the Municipality. For further information on the AERC you can visit [www.muniorg/aerc](http://www.muniorg/aerc).

The representatives of the individual community councils each took a few minutes to give an update on the issues facing their respective councils and bringing the group up to date on their status. Elections were held for a new board with Dick Tremaine, elected as Chair, Jason Bergerson as Vice Chair, Sheli Dodson as Secretary and Berni Bradley as Treasurer. The FCC meets again on Wednesday September 16th.

## **Cross Family Park Work Day**

Thank you to everybody who made this day such a success! Close to a hundred volunteers participated in this event, clearing trails, cutting brush, and improving the area. We enjoyed hot dogs and snacks of fruit and veggies, listened to music, enjoyed games, built birdhouses that were placed around the park, and made new friends. The Huffman O'Malley Community Council set up a booth with members volunteering their time to man the booth.

We handed out information on our community council, The Federation of Community Councils and a lot of general handouts such as our State Constitution, Legislative information, Gardening and Conservation information obtained from the Department of Natural Resources. We also had fun handouts for the kids. This was a wonderful family event hosted by the Parks and Recreation Departments. Stop by and see the newly remodeled Cross Family Park. It is located on Birch Road between O'Malley and Huffman Roads. The playground is all new, and is a wonderful site for family fun!

## **Welcome New Members!**

The new additions to dues paying membership in HOCC are greatly appreciated! Thank you all for your support, and we look forward to your participation!

If you are not yet a dues-paying member, use the form at the bottom of this newsletter!

## **HOCC September Meeting**

The September meeting will be held on Thursday September 17. 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 and come downstairs!

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

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

**Phone: (h)** \_\_\_\_\_ **(other)** \_\_\_\_\_ **E-Mail**

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**Comments &**

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**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!