

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

# Newsletter

Oops! We goofed!

Lead with your mistakes, right? Well, we made a doozie! Let's try it again. "Work force housing" is indeed the new code word for lower-income housing, and this "lack of work force housing" is, according to HUD, one of the indicators of a "city in decline". However, the current Secretary of Housing and Urban Development is Shaun Donovan, not Henry Cisneros, whom we inadvertently named. And no, the mistake was not reporting that HUD calls Anchorage a "city in decline". They did. FCC members (community council Presidents, including our own Chris Monette) did respond to the HUD representatives seeming call for high density "work force" housing in Anchorage.

## **February Meeting Recap:**

We had several featured presentations at the February HOCC meeting: The South Anchorage Water Improvements Projects (SAWIP) and Huffman/Elmore water tank; changes to the Huffman Road Project; and the latest information from Assembly Representatives Chris Birch and Jennifer Johnston. Read the full details in this Newsletter.

We also had a busy time discussing some proposed By-Laws changes and our response to the Hillside District Plan's plans for the "Furrow Creek Transition Area".

As a reminder: the "Save our Furrow Creek Neighborhood!" petition is still up. Have you signed yet? Have you told everybody you know to add their names? Go to <http://www.ipetitions.com/petition/FurrowCreek/> to find the petition. Uniting together, our voices must be heard.

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## **Dues are Due!**

Dues are due every new year, and while we hope everyone will "re-up" before our Annual Meeting in April. If any of your contact information has changed, make sure to give the Secretary an update at [HOCCSECRETARY@gmail.com](mailto:HOCCSECRETARY@gmail.com).

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## **Hot Button Issue**

**Hillside District Plan - Public Hearing March 23rd!**

The Assembly will hear Case 2009-090 and the Planning & Zoning Commission Resolution (PZC) 2009-047 on Tuesday, March 23rd. The business meeting will begin at 5 pm, with the case being heard sometime that evening, probably after 6 pm.

At an Assembly meeting, each case is introduced. Then, the Public Hearing is opened. During this time, anyone can offer testimony. For controversial issues, there may be a sign in sheet with the Clerk, and individuals wishing to testify will be called up in order of sign up. Otherwise, any person may come to the microphone and speak.

Testimony at these events is limited to three minutes for individuals, five minutes for persons representing a group. It is always wise for information to never be repeated except for the underlying point. For example, if you wish to say "please remove the Furrow Creek Transition Area from the Hillside District Plan", say so, but do not repeat points already mentioned. It is not necessary to use your entire three minutes. If you have handouts showing particular information (petitions from your homeowner's organization, letters of support from your neighbors, maps, photos, etc.), have eleven copies available to hand to the Clerk, who will pass them out to the Assembly members.

Following your testimony, any Assembly member may ask you a question. If you do not know the answer, do not be afraid to admit it. Those offering testimony will include Muni employees who are the creators and enforcers of this document.

Each person testifying before the Assembly should be somewhat familiar with the document and the major points. You can learn more at <http://www.hillsidedistrictplan.com>, including finding the "public comments" offered on the draft hearing plan. Good rebuttals can be found in the comments offered by HALO on page#105 and the HOCC on page #112. On the page <http://www.hillsidedistrictplan.com/publications.htm#PZCresolution> you will find Resolution 2009-047, which includes the recommendations of the PZC.

Major points of contention for HOCC include: calling **all** Hillside area soils "limited" for onsite services; including the Furrow Creek Transition Area for potential high density; failure to protect our established R-6 suburban (large lot) residential area; allowing altered zoning in an established large-lot residential area; causing additional unknown and irreversible effects on drainage; inappropriate soils; adding to waste effluent of the Cook Inlet; financial burden on residents; and broken promises throughout this process.

If you are not comfortable speaking, your presence is even more important. At some point in the evening, someone will ask "how many in attendance are against the plans for Furrow Creek?" If every hand were to be raised in a room full of people, this would be our most potent display.

For the really dedicated, there will be an hour-long Assembly worksession on the Hillside District Plan on Friday, March 19, at 11 am, in the Mayor's Conference Room #830. Many of your HOCC Steering Committee members will attend this worksession.

The Meeting Agenda for the 23rd has not yet been set. You can watch for it at [www.muni.org](http://www.muni.org) and click on "Assembly", or go to <http://www.muni.org/departments/assembly/pages/default.aspx>; and, just in case, we'll also send it to you as soon as we get it! If you discover that you will be unable to attend, please email your comments to the assembly clerk the week prior to the hearing.

Whatever role you're most comfortable holding, be there!

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# SAWIP Update

The Elmore Road Reservoir Project will create a five-million gallon concrete water tank and adjacent control building on the corner of Elmore and Huffman. The Site Plan will be reviewed by the Planning and Zoning Commission in April.

Project personnel report that they have done much to reduce visual impact on the neighborhoods. They presented photos showing the current view and anticipated new view from each of the surrounding properties. The mockups shared show a new vegetative barrier including young evergreen trees. Included is a security fence, retaining walls, and a structure rising from 5 to 8 feet above existing elevation. Construction is scheduled to begin in 2011.

For more information regarding these SAWIP scheduled projects, please go to [http://www.awwu.biz/public/project/sawip/project\\_frame.htm](http://www.awwu.biz/public/project/sawip/project_frame.htm)

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## **AFD Eliminates Special Rescue Teams** by Brian Partch

How many of America's cities can boast that their residents can fish, canoe, kayak and raft in rivers and lakes, scale cliffs, climb mountains, even kite-surf all within their city limits? These activities make Anchorage truly unique, but may also add a bit of danger to life in our community.

In an effort to save \$150,000, the Muni has decided to eliminate certain aspects of some special rescue teams that were a part of the Anchorage Fire Department. There will no longer be a Backcountry Rescue Team to serve Flattop or Hillside, McHugh Creek and Turnagain Arm trails. The Water Rescue Team has been downsized, and will no longer respond to distress calls in Cook Inlet. Depending on staffing, there may be no response during the winter months.

The Swift Water Rescue Team has been disbanded, and the staffing of the Hazardous Materials Response Team that handles incidents within the City, including the Port, the Alaska Railroad and Ted Stevens International Airport, has been decreased.

While the incidents that these teams have responded to make up only a small percentage of AFD's total call volume, their specialized nature requires full staffing, proper equipment, and fully trained members. The 300,000 people who work, live, play and travel through Anchorage each day deserve a Fire Department capable of providing adequate first response to all nature of incidents.

To learn more about AFD and current staffing levels, go to <http://afdstatus.org>

*Brian Partch is a Firefighter with AFD and a member of the HOCC Steering Committee.*

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## **Huffman Road Reconstruction Project** **Update**

Steve Noble, representative from DOWL HKM and a council member, provided a brief update on the Huffman Road Project from Lake Otis to Pintail. The newest plans of the Alaska Department of Transportation & Public Facilities (DOT&PF) announced a change to the lane configuration. Staying within the existing 100' right-of-way, the constructin will now feature two 12' traffic lanes and a 14' center turn lane that they don't like the community calling a "suicide lane". This "center turn lane" will extend from Lake Otis to Pintail. The project will still include a paved trail and a multi-use trail.

Information should be posted soon at [www.hillsideroads.com/huffmanscope.htm](http://www.hillsideroads.com/huffmanscope.htm). Comments are still being accepted at <http://www.hillsideroads.com/huffmansubmit.htm>.

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## Upcoming Meeting

Put it on your calendar now! Our next meeting will be held Thursday, March 18, 2010. We meet 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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## By-Laws Revision

HOCC member Mark Schroeder is working on a By-Laws revision for the Council. Your Steering Committee members will be collaborating through Google Docs. If you have any ideas you'd like to share, contact either Mark or the Secretary at [hoccsecretary@gmail.com](mailto:hoccsecretary@gmail.com). We hope to have the revision ready to be posted in March and voted on at our annual meeting in April.

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

Why is it that Municipal elections historically have the lowest turnout? It isn't the Federal Government that decides how many police officers and firefighters we have, or what constitutes R-6 zoning. It isn't the state that determines how many hours our libraries are kept open, or the flower beds that welcome visitors to downtown, or how often the bus will run. It isn't the President that sets our garbage disposal rates, or Congress that sets our building codes and fees. Washington D.C. doesn't tell us where to build new schools, can't limit how big our convention center can be, does not set our traffic code and fines, or determine our property tax mil rate.

All these things are determined by our elected Municipal officials.

While questions like 'cap and trade' and the health insurance reform package take center stage nationally, what directly affects the lives of each and every one of us each and every day is our local government. The election in April will likely determine the future of Anchorage, and touches every aspect of our lives. Will the proposed Title 21 rewrite be adopted? Will the Hillside District Plan become Code? Will the School District become more efficient in spending our money?

Therefore, it is up to each and every one of us to carefully learn about the candidates, study the ballot propositions, and make that trip to the polls. Attend one or more of the candidate debates, and bring a friend. Encourage your family to become informed on the issues, and remind them to vote on that first Tuesday in April. Show off that "I have voted!" sticker. Our future is in your hands.

Christine Monette, [hoccpresident@gmail.com](mailto:hoccpresident@gmail.com)

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## Items of Interest?

Do you have an item of local interest you would like to share? Does your Homeowner's 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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## Question of the Month

When is the Public Hearing on the Hillside District Plan?

Yes, it's a trick question. It is Tuesday, March 23rd, and it should already be on your calendar!

*Wow! We really had some input from our last question about drainage issues! Sounds like break up is going to be difficult this year for some of our residents. Please keep us in the loop on your drainage issues so that we can try to address these major concerns.*

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## HALO Update

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 (Home and Landowners Organization) please visit [www.anchoragehalo.org](http://www.anchoragehalo.org)

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## Just a Random Thought...

Although most signaled intersections now have audible crossing alerts, sight-impaired individuals are also taught how to listen for oncoming traffic when crossing intersections. The new electric cars are virtually soundless, and have caused issues for these independent citizens. What does a sight-impaired individual do when faced with electric cars in roundabouts?

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## 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 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. We like that "two-way" thing!

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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:**

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**Physical Address:**

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**Mailing Address:**

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**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!