

HALO Neighbors!



The Newsletter of Home and LandOwners
Organization, Inc
Fall, 2019

In this issue:

- Message from the President - page 1*
- New Stormwater Utility - page 2*
- Solving Homelessness in Anchorage - page 3*
- HALO Board of Directors - page 3*
- HALO Membership Renewal Form - page 4*
- HALO's Firewise Committee Report - page 5*

Message from the President

"May you live in interesting times" is an old curse. Well, life this summer has been interesting. Yes, the weather was great - if too hot - but the vegetables loved it. And then there was the wind.

But the major issue facing us was fire and smoke. The MLK fire and fires at Service High hit too close to home. The current AFD Firewise Program focuses primarily upon what individuals should do with respect to their own homes and property. HALO will be working towards an area-wide solution that will involve all Hillside residents and a community-wide effort. To begin this process, James Kaufman, Chair of HALO's Firewise Committee, has put together an exercise in which we hope you will participate. The worksheet at the end of this newsletter includes a statement of the problem facing Hillside and two tables where you can provide potential improvement ideas. What can a fully networked community achieve to reduce the potential for wildfire ignition and to respond effectively in case of a major fire?

What would work for your area? Do you have a secondary "escape route" in case of evacuation? Is there a water source on your property that could support fire suppression efforts? Are your roads and driveways large enough for emergency vehicles? What ideas do you have to resolve wildfire dangers on your property, and in your neighborhood? What could your community or your government do to assist you? Provide your input using the worksheet at the end of this newsletter. You can email your input, questions, comments etc directly to James at jkaufman@gci.net

Our next meeting will be Thursday, October 3rd. Remember, we meet on the first Thursday of each month at 7 pm at the Holy Spirit Retreat, corner of Hillside and O'Malley. This is an odd numbered year with no State elections and therefore no Candidate Forum.

Meanwhile, if you or your neighborhood have any specific concerns, please feel free to contact your area representative.

Please come out and join us!

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New Stormwater Utility Coming

At the September meeting, Assembly Representative John Weddleton presented an update on the new city-wide Storm Water Utility (SWU). This new utility will be a separate utility, much like the current AWWU. This will not be added to our property taxes and therefore not under the tax cap. Instead, it will be based on fees charged to property owners.

Weddleton is concerned with how the Anchorage Hillside will be treated in this process. For the most part, we are outside of the ARDSA (Anchorage Roads and Drainage Service Area), and the majority of our neighborhoods do not have curbs and gutters that send our stormwater into storm drains. Instead, with our large lots and minimal lot coverage, most of our stormwater is treated on-site, i.e., it seeps into the ground and regenerates our aquifers.

Weddleton and Assembly Vice-Chair Suzanne LaFrance are proposing several Amendments to AO-2019-87, which creates the Storm Water Utility.

Floor Amendment #1 states that the organization of the SWU will begin with a rate study which will be presented to the Assembly for acceptance before continuing.

AO 2019-113, creating an oversight utility commission that will review the final submission to establish the Stormwater Utility, including long-term fiscal plans, service level and rate structures. This new commission would include one or more Hillside residents.

They are also submitting AO 2019-106, which establishes districts that include the Anchorage Hillside, will ensure that the rate structure be based on the concept of 'cost causer should be the cost payer", that the rate structure should provide incentives for good stormwater management with fee reductions for retention and detention onsite, and that LRSAs and RRSAs can opt to continue their own drainage work and be reimbursed by the Stormwater Utility. It would also lower the tax cap levied in service areas to reflect the reduction in areas for drainage and stormwater infrastructure maintenance and operations.

Public Hearing on all of these Amendments will be held at the Assembly meeting Tuesday, Sept 24th, at the Assembly Chambers on the first floor of the Loussac Library.

If you have comments on any of these items, please submit them to Weddleton at weddletonj@muni.org or 770-0685 and LaFrance at LaFranceS@ci.anchorage.ak.us. Public Testimony on these Amendments will also be heard on the 24th. All documents can be found online at www.muni.org/assembly.

Solving Homelessness in Anchorage

Ric Davidge was the featured guest speaker at our September meeting. He explained his in-depth study of the issue of homelessness and his proposed solutions to solving homelessness in Anchorage. Davidge believes our current administration is not interested in transitional or temporary housing, but that these steps are necessary towards facing the issue. He described the current attitude of spending money on symptoms rather than a potential solution. Anchorage currently has 40 non-profits and 22 government agencies that are receiving publically-funded grants to solve the issue. Are they succeeding?

Problems caused by homelessness include wildfire danger and health risks from fecal matter, e-coli and debris. Creek contamination, discarded needles, and unsafe and unsanitary conditions affect us all. He has discovered numerous homeless camps in FBNP and throughout Hillside.

For a copy of the Report and Resolution that Davidge shared with HALO, contact Ric at rdavidge@aqueoususa.com

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Your 2019 HALO Board of Directors:

<i>Area G-1 Seat A</i>	<i>Kurt Rein</i>	<i>344-5554</i>
<i>Area G-1 Seat B</i>	<i>Sarah Denson</i>	<i>2LPS4SJD@gmail.com</i>
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<i>President Katie Nolan</i>	<i>PresidentHALO@gmail.com</i>
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For Your Calendar

HALO Meeting 7 pm Thursday, October 3rd, at Holy Spirit Retreat
(corner Hillside & O'Malley)

Join HALO

If you haven't already paid your dues this year, you can do it now or bring this form to the next meeting. HALO is supported solely by membership dues and donations. Dues are just \$10 per year, and your participation ensures the future of this worthwhile organization.

Do you have a neighbor who should be involved in HALO? Forward this E-Newsletter to them, or bring them with you to the next meeting!

If you can't attend the event, fill out and return this for your membership renewal:

Name: _____

Phone: _____

E-Mail Address: _____

Physical Address: _____

Mailing Address: _____

New Member _____ Renewal _____

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www.AnchorageHALO.org

HALO Firewise Worksheet

Problem Statement:

A large percentage of the area represented by <https://anchoragehalo.org/> is located within sloped, forested/brushy terrain that is easily ignited, burns readily once ignited, and due to the combination of fuels, contour and wind, spreads quickly and is difficult to contain or extinguish. This combination of characteristics creates a potential “when, not if” scenario.

Some areas are not readily accessible, and the same may be said for access to water for firefighting. Many (most) of the neighborhoods do not have public water for hydrants, so water must be transported and staged for each incident. The accessibility issues also create challenges for safe evacuation, as there are areas that could become cut off from evacuation routes.

The HALO service area’s geographic placement also increases the source of ignition risk, as activities occurring upon public land maintained by federal, state and local entities have resulted in recent fires, most notably the parklands fire near the intersection of Martin Luther King avenue and Elmore Drive, and the latest fire at Service High School/Bicentennial Park. Both were human caused.

Should a large fire occur, become widespread and destroy a significant swath of the HALO service area, there would be tremendous loss of property, and potential loss of life. The enduring impact of a large event would compound the immediate loss, including toxic compounds released by the fire, destruction, loss of surviving properties value, diminishment of property tax base, depressed business activity, short to mid-term housing crisis, potential exodus of residents not otherwise bound to the area, and other negative impacts.

Solution:

While it is not possible to entirely remove risks described in the problem statement it should be possible to; (a) reduce or at least defer the probability of it occurring, and; (b) to reduce the negative impact should the risk be realized. This leads to a twofold strategy that will be addressed in our program as “Risk Prevention” (reducing the likelihood of occurrence) and “Risk Mitigation” (reducing the level of damage should the risk be realized).

Within those two major categories of Prevention and Mitigation, there are also subcategories of responsibility, capability, organization and span of control. These include entities such as the State of AK, Municipality of Anchorage (MOA), Non-governmental organizations (NGO) and “Individuals” (owners and/or residents).

Putting the categories together, a framework of opportunities is developed, as illustrated in the following tables:

Prevention: What can realistically be done to prevent a fire from starting and initially spreading? This includes management of ignition sources, early detection and suppression.

Entity	What could be done to prevent risk
Federal and subordinate agencies	
State of Alaska and subordinate agencies	
MOA and subordinate agencies	
Organizations such as HALO	
Individuals	

Mitigation: What can be done to reduce severity should the event occur

Entity	What could be done to mitigate risk
Federal and subordinate agencies	
State of Alaska and subordinate agencies	
MOA and subordinate agencies	
Organizations such as HALO	
Individuals	

If you have questions, comments or input, contact James directly at jkaufman@gci.net.