

HALO Minutes for June 21, 2005 Special Hillside District Plan Meeting
Holy Spirit Retreat House

President Chris Hamre opened the meeting at 7:08pm. Other board members present were Sharon Clawson, Ryan Stencel, Judy Moerlein, John Weddleton, and Jeff Lenter.

Tom Nelson and Joanne Contreras of the MOA Planning Department spoke on the HDP funding and plans for its use. Of the \$100K, \$25K is from AWWU and a similar amount from Transportation, while the remainder is from the Planning Dept. The funds must be encumbered this year and they will be used to hire a project manager to prepare a scope of work and budget which will then presented to the Assembly in the early fall. The budget will likely cover two-years which is the time expected to be needed to complete the process.

The project manager will work with the Anchorage Fire Department, PM&E, Parks, AWWU, Traffic Department and others. Tom feels since the above departments will be administering the services in the future, that the HDP should be primarily the MOA's responsibility rather than contracting out the whole plan.

Tom said the HDP is unique in that much of the area it will cover is without basic infrastructure while other areas of town are developed. His original schedule called for doing this phase of the plan about one-two months ago, so he is behind schedule.

A concern was expressed that if we wait for all the research and data collection, that the rest of the city's neighborhood plans will be done and that would draw off monies from the HDP which will be more expensive than the others. There is a great interest and need to do many neighborhood plans in Anchorage. But the HDP is urgent, given all the undeveloped land that is fast coming into plat.

Regarding the issue of density and sewers, Tom said some people want sewers because their septic have reached the end of their useful life and need to be replaced. But there are 'institutional' hurdles to overcome when considering sewers such as setbacks plus drainage issues must be factored in and this can be a huge problem.

Janice Shamberg asked Ky Holland about how neighborhood plans worked in Portland where he was involved in them. He said the neighborhoods would submit plans to the city as the city didn't have the staff to prepare them and that they worked with the various city departments as well. But in Portland the process was already in place and there was a willingness by the city to get the plans done, where as Ky is not sure the same willingness exists here mainly because such plans have not been done before.

Tom reported that there have been only about a dozen amendments to the HWMP since the 1980s and that so far it seems to have worked well. But there needs to be a lot of research to determine where sewers would be best suited.

There was much concern that sewers would drive density and thus our input for quality of life issues and values would be nil.

Chris Hamre asked how do we begin the process and how do we get our community values plugged into the plan up front. The community wants the ability to make decisions as we live here and are uncomfortable when we hear that AWWU wants a lead position in formulating the plan.

Tom replied no one has a hidden agenda.

Ky asked that to allay fears that the first step should be for community input with priorities and then a later step would include the studies. He said he has heard that the departments don't want to give up control. He felt doing the studies first is not a good idea as it predetermines priorities. He would like to hear that the public values will come first.

Tom said that one of the first outcomes of this meeting is to determine what areas the HDP should cover. The members said Basher should be included because it has similar characteristics and it is now within the HALO boundary. Tom suggested that other ways to determine boundaries would be to use the AWWU map (or rather the area outside of it?). Or use the New Seward Hwy as a western boundary? Or Lake Otis Blvd? Question was raised that once the area is determined are we limiting ourselves to discussions on what services should be included in that area?

John Weddleton said that one consistent remark he has heard is for large lot size! And water/sewer is related to lot size. West of Lake Otis there are public utilities and small lots.

Sharon Clawson said we aspire for on-site utilities because that is associated with larger lot size.

Jeff Lentfer asked why extend the area to the New Seward Hwy when planning funds are an issue and that area is already developed and so would that mean that money would be taken away from the areas that really need more planning. Tom didn't think so and that the plan is also about service areas and the hwy is a good boundary to use for that. A show of hands resulted in a preference for using Lake Otis as the western boundary for the HDP.

Ky asked about process and the steps to be included in the process. Tom replied he would like to talk about that and how to define the process. Mentioned was household surveys as one step. Ky asked for funds for a meeting facilitator to run some neighborhood meetings and for sending out surveys. Tom replied there have already been studies done in the past and the main concern is the two-month deadline to get the scope and budget to the Assembly.

It was decided that a smaller steering committee would work with Tom and his staff to get the scope and budget done with perhaps weekly or biweekly meetings. The committee would contain reps selected by the affected councils and maybe a business/development member. The first meeting is scheduled for June 30th, 3-4:30pm at the Tudor offices. Ky asked that an agenda be prepared to expedite the process.

The issue of road service areas came up and the fact that bond funds can't be used on non-ARDSA roads. The concern was expressed that somehow someone could find a way around this limitation.

Adjourned 8:45pm.