

# HAINES ALASKA NEWS AND COMMENT

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- **Focused on Energy**
- **Scientist's Administrative Leave has Nothing to do with Polar Bear Study**
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- **Bill Ends Park Service Enforcement in Yukon-Charley**
- **Apparent Suicide Claims Haines Resident**

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## No Slack for Off-Premises Signs

*Assembly discriminates against non-Main Street businesses*

By Roger Maynard

At the Haines Borough Assembly meeting on July 26, the assembly struck down a proposed change to the borough signage ordinances that would have allowed business owners the ability to obtain a permit for "off-premises" signs that direct customers to their shop.

Presently, Haines borough code prohibits "off-premises" signs, that is, signs that are not on the property where the advertised business is located, with certain exceptions. However, some small businesses that are not located on Main Street have placed "off-premises" signs in strategic locations to help prospective customers find their business. So far, the law has not been enforced.

In June the Haines Borough Planning Commission, after consideration, voted 5-0 to allow the display of off premises signage as a conditional use, because that would be helpful in promoting local businesses that are not on main throughways to travelers. This was the

*(Continued on page 3)*



Photos by Roger Maynard

**Some current off-premises signs of businesses not on Main Street.**

## Pete Lapham

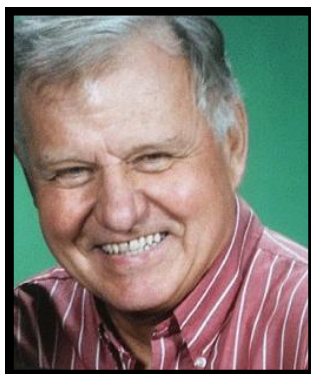
*He made a difference*

By Roger Maynard

Pete Lapham passed away Sunday after a lengthy fight with cancer. He was 65.

Pete Lapham cared deeply about Haines. His infectious smile and easygoing personality were well known in the community, and he chipped in to help wherever he could.

His long history in Haines was one of constant involvement in the community, and he served Haines in a number of ways. He retired from the Alaska Department of Transportation after 32 years, and was a member of the Haines Volunteer Fire Department for 40 years. Over the years he was a member of the American Legion, Elks, Haines Borough Assembly, Haines Energy & Sustainability Commission, Haines Borough Planning Commission, and the Chilkat Snowburners snow machine club. For many years Pete and his wife, Diana, managed the Alcan 200 snow machine race from the border to Dezaedeash Lake on the Haines Highway. They were active in the Yukon snow machine racing scene as well.




Pete Lapham

*(Continued on page 2)*

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# Haines Recall Effort Moves Ahead

By Roger Maynard

In less than 2 weeks, the Haines Recall Committee has gathered 186 signatures on petitions to recall assembly members Daymond Hoffman and Joanne Waterman. Committee members have 60 days to gather 275 signatures, which would then trigger a recall election.

According to committee chairman Jim Shook, the group is interested in having the issue on the October 4th municipal ballot, rather than making the borough and its voters go through another special election. To do this, the completed petitions would need to be submitted to the borough clerk no later than August 12—just 9 days away.

“We have permission to gather signatures in front of Howser’s, Olerud’s and the Quick Stop,” said Shook, “But we’re not scheduling folks to be there—they show up when they can.”

Ten sponsors are circulating petitions; however, if folks want to sign they only need to call Jim Shook or one of the other sponsors and arrange to meet them.

The recall effort is an indication of continuing frustration with a liberal assembly that appears to be ignoring the needs of the Haines business community and voters in Haines. The present assembly has built a track record of ignoring Haines business owners and voters in favor of their own special interest groups over the past two years—some examples have been contentious issues such as treatment of tour operators, the heli-ski industry and Connelly Lake hydro.

During the 2010 election Greg Goodman ran for Assembly Seat E, without meeting the residency requirements in Haines Borough Code. When Karen Hess, who received the second highest number of votes, contested the election, the assembly seated Goodman anyway—prompting Hess to file an appeal with the Juneau Superior Court. The court over-ruled the assembly and declared Seat E vacant.

Borough code requires the assembly to fill a vacancy in 30 days. The assembly—the same folks who refused to

seat Hess last fall—refused to seat her in Goodman’s place, though she is qualified and a logical choice to fill the temporary position. During a heated meeting on May 16th, the assembly ignored the majority of voters in the room who testified in favor of Hess’ appointment, and decided to leave the seat vacant until a special election for the seat in October.

During the discussion assemblyman Hoffman let voters know that the assembly did not feel any necessity to obey either the voters wishes or the law when he said, “What are they going to do to us, throw us in jail?”

Shook emphasizes that the recall against Hoffman and Waterman is not about changing the makeup of the assembly, “Regardless of the recall’s outcome,” he said, “this should be a big wake-up call to those on the assembly—they have to follow the law.”

If the assembly members don’t feel bound by the law, then it’s time to show them what CAN be done—and that is to recall them.

## PETE LAPHAM

(Continued from page 1)

Pete was one of the charter board members of the Alaska Alliance for Commerce, Inc., which publishes the Haines Alaska News, where his knowl-

edge of the community and its history was a valuable asset.

Pete loved Haines and its people, and he made a difference where he could. Haines is a better place for him having been part of it.

\*\*\*

*Services for Pete Lapham will be held 11:00 Thursday at the Chilkat Center, followed by a procession to graveside services at the Haines Cemetery. After the graveside services a potluck in Pete’s honor will be hosted by the Haines Elks and Emblem Club—they will provide the main course.*

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## Focused on Energy

By Roger Maynard

The Fourth Southeast Alaska Integrated Resource Plan (SE IRP) Advisory Work Group met in Haines on Tuesday, July 26, 2011. The group, working under the authority of the Alaska Energy Authority (AEA), is focused on development of a 50-year Regional Integrated Resource Plan (RIRP) for Southeast Alaska from Yakutat to Metlakatla.

According to Jim Strandberg, AEA SE IRP project manager, "There is an energy crisis in Southeast Alaska brought on, in part, by the sudden increase in fuel prices." He went on to explain that there are serious concerns about a population decline and poor economic conditions driven by high energy costs and transportation costs.

As more hydro and other energy projects come on line, the state is seeing an increas-

ing load on those systems because people are changing over their homes and business from oil-based heating systems to lower cost electrical heat. The result is an increasing need for electrical power, even in communities that are presently "hydro-rich."

Recognizing that Southeast Alaska is in competition with the rest of the state for limited energy development funds, the group's goal is to have a cohesive plan that will underpin regional energy development for all of Southeast Alaska.

"This is a call to action," said Strandberg, "More than just a document." He described it as a structured planning work to be directed by the people of Southeast Alaska.

The group is funded by a combination of legislative appropriations and AEA discretionary planning funds. Members include representatives from energy companies, local

governments, state agencies and environmental groups. The final version of the plan will be compiled by the consulting firm of Black & Veatch, a company experienced in infrastructure planning.

At the conclusion of the SE IRP meeting, Strandberg and Chairman Dick Harris of Sealaska addressed the Haines Borough Assembly committee of the whole with an overview of the program.

The group recognizes that many smaller communities are being "decked" by high fuel prices, and they are looking at immediate, as well as long-term solutions. The solution will probably be a combination of energy conservation, additional generating capacity such as hydro power and other alternatives, and a power grid that includes most communities in Southeast Alaska.

The advisory group is currently about half way through their study.

## OFF PREMISES SIGNS

(Continued from page 1)

recommendation that was given to the borough assembly, and the proposed ordinance 11-06-270 was scheduled for its second (and final) public hearing at the July 26 assembly meeting.

### Public Hearing

The only public comment was from Debra Schnabel, owner of a building on Main Street and member of the Downtown Revitalization Committee.

Schnabel testified that the ordinance should not be passed because it is not specific enough, saying,

"This interests me because it doesn't identify what would be allowable as an off-premise sign. So the language does

certainly say what kinds of signs are not allowable... a sandwich sign or a movable sign, so it doesn't say that we will allow signs if they are permanent off-premises signs.

But my concern is that off-premises signage can proliferate to a point where it can be very competitive... I've always kind of prided the community on the willingness to keep advertising the businesses on their own property. We have never had billboards and we have never allowed them... in the past, and I think that it's a good quality in our community that we don't. Because it does become competitive when somebody starts to advertise their business off-premises then there's a need to be competitive with others to do the same.

So without more information about the type of signage that would be allowed, the size and shape, and all the rest of that, I would ask the rest of the assembly to consider not approving it at this time."

Assembly member Waterman's argument wasn't much better — she recognized that the planning commission was attempting to address an issue that is already in existence, but said she voted "no" because she didn't know if there might be a conflict with state statutes. Apparently she has neither the skills nor the inclination to look at the state statutes and make an informed decision.

The motion to adopt the ordinance failed 4-0.

(Continued on page 4)

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**SIGNS 2**

(Continued from page 3)

Voters should be concerned about this issue for two reasons

First, the assembly chose to disregard the recommendation of the planning commission, a deliberative body with the experience and authority under the borough charter to issue conditional use permits through a public process involving the public hearings in each instance. Instead, they chose to listen to a Main Street business owner who is a member of a self-appointed "Downtown Revitalization Committee" — a committee that has already shown a tendency to encourage discrimination against non-Main Street businesses.

Secondly, in a town where everyone is concerned about

a shrinking economy, each of the businesses that have off-premises signs are trying to direct customers to their front door. It is disingenuous for the assembly to make it harder for customers to find these businesses.

Once again, the assembly has chosen to cater to a special interest at the expense of the rest of the community. The question is, which business are they going to cripple first?

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**PUBLIC NOTICE**

**PUBLIC HEARINGS  
Haines Borough Assembly**

At 6:30pm, on Tuesday, August 9, in the Assembly Chambers at the Public Safety Building, 213 Haines Highway, a public hearing is scheduled for the following:

**Ordinance 11-07-271**  
(First Hearing)

An Ordinance of the Haines Borough Alaska amending Haines Borough Code 3.80.220(a) to delete the designation of one percent sales tax proceeds for use for tourism development and promotion of economic development subject to voter ratification.

**Ordinance 11-07-272**  
(First Hearing)

An Ordinance of the Haines Borough Alaska providing for the addition or amendment of specific line items to the FY12 budget.

**Important Reminder!** – Sign-up prior to or at the beginning of the assembly meeting is required in order to make comments during a public hearing. It's as easy as contacting the Clerk's Office ahead of time to have your name added to the list or you can sign up yourself at the start of the assembly meeting.

More information is available at the Borough Clerk's Office or on the website: [www.hainesborough.us/consider.html](http://www.hainesborough.us/consider.html)

Oral comments may be made at the public hearings (if you sign up) or you can send written comments to P.O. Box 1209, Haines, AK 99827 or [jcozzi@haines.ak.us](mailto:jcozzi@haines.ak.us).

Posted 8/1/2011  
Julie Cozzi, MMC, Borough Clerk

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