



## CITY OF WASILLA

290 E. HERNING AVE.

WASILLA, ALASKA 99654-7091

PHONE: (907) 373-9050

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### COUNCIL MEMORANDUM NO. 93-103

From: Deputy Administrator  
Date: October 27, 1993  
Subject: Construction of Utility Distribution Facilities

Many communities have become concerned about the visual impact of overhead utility lines and have enacted legislation to require burial of the facilities. The less developed a community is when such legislation is enacted, the less costly the resulting change in policy. Conversely, the longer a community allows overhead construction the more adverse the visual impact and the higher the conversion cost.

The utilities can be expected to object because of alleged higher construction costs. Assertions of higher costs should be weighed against several factors in addition to visual assault. These other factors may include the use of trees for poles, less frequent line malfunctions because of underground protection, more durable construction by use of underground single and multiple conduits in which lines can be pulled and replaced without excavation, etc.

The proposed ordinance is modeled after Anchorage's underground utility ordinance. The main differences are that our proposal does not set target areas for mandatory conversion to underground on time schedules nor does it require established dollar amounts for annual underground conversions. The proposed language may require a longer time (at less expense) to achieve undergrounding of existing facilities, but will eventually achieve the goal. At the same time, most, if not all, new construction of utilities will be underground.

The Planning and Utilities Commission reviewed and agreed to the proposed ordinance. The managers of MEA, MTA, and Rogers Cablevision were invited by letter dated September 27, 1993 to comment on the proposed ordinance. As of this date, no comments have been received. Recommend that Ordinance No. 93-41 be introduced and set for public hearing on November 22, 1993.

Robert E. Harris  
Deputy Administrator

7. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

- A. City of Wasilla Street and Road Classification, George Cannellos

George Cannellos presented updated information regarding the classification of the streets and roads within the City of Wasilla. He recommended that the Commissioners present written comments regarding this issue and give them to Administration as soon as possible so a decision can be made at the WP&UC meeting on October 12, 1993.

- B. Memo-Construction of Utility Distribution Facilities, Comments from Commissioners

The Commissioners all agreed to Ordinance Serial No.93-DRAFT as presented by the Administration.

- C. Vacation of 50' Public Use Easement

This issue was passed by the Council at last night's meeting.

The Commissioners expressed concern over the fact that the Council continues to pass issues that should be approved by the WP&UC first. Commissioner Chase will write a letter to the Wasilla City Council regarding the Commissioners concerns over this issue.

- D. Letter to Matanuska-Susitna Borough Planning Department

The Commissioners agreed that this letter will not be written at this time because a Planner should be hired before the WP&UC will be able to approve all planning actions concerning Wasilla.

- E. Memorandum to John Duffy from WP&UC, 9-28-93, Commissioner Chase and Letter to WP&UC from Daniel A. Kelly, 9-28-93.

Motion/Second: Chase/Hartrick

That Gordon Lewis prepare options and recommendations for the amended animal control horse section for the Development Code.

Passed unanimously.

(Mr. Gordon Lewis commented (as heard clearly on the tape): "Whineee". (Verbatim).)



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September 27, 1993

name~  
address~  
address1~  
city~

Dear name1~:

The City of Wasilla is in the early stages of considering regulations that, when adopted, will eventually result in the underground placement of nearly all present and future utility service and distribution lines in the City.

The enclosed draft document is modeled after Anchorage's utility distribution ordinance except that the scheduled relocations and required expenditures have been deleted. We hope that you will work with the City in developing an ordinance that will meet the underground placement goal in a reasonable time frame and at the least incremental cost.

We ask that you review and provide any constructive suggestions that may make the ordinance more compatible with the activities of your organization. We realize that you may not prefer the undergrounding requirement but it probably is not a matter of "if", but a matter of "when". The sooner we begin the process in a positive manner the less controversial and expensive will be the conversion.

We look forward to your comments.

Sincerely,

Robert E. Harris  
Deputy Administrator