

Date: 14 Jul 15

From: dana hallett

To: Members of the Haines Borough Assembly

Re: Citizens' Concern for our Representative Democracy

Thank you Madam Mayor Hill and members of the Haines Borough Assembly.

At issue for me tonight is the state of our representative democracy here in Haines, Alaska. Over the past several months, it has become clear that I am not the only one with concerns about this topic.

During the past year, issues have been brought to this body ranging from concern about property qualifications for seats on various committees, to the misalignment of policy and code regarding the establishment of the Assembly Meeting agendas.

Some issues look trivial, such as where "agenda code" states that for *regular and Special Assembly Meetings*, ***"the clerk shall furnish each member of the assembly, the mayor, manager and chief fiscal officer with a copy of the same in packet form, five calendar days in advance of the assembly meeting."***

It may seem of little consequence whether the public gets the packet five days, or four days, before an assembly meeting, but to me, the public is best served when the code is followed. People are busy. The extra day spelled out in code, is more time to read through the packet, process the information, and if necessary, become more involved.

The community has read in the Chilkat Valley News headlines like, "Deadline for harbor job not set in stone," and, "Assembly members deride testimony."

Are our elected officials ~~are~~ having a difficult time, in some cases, understanding and adhering to the code? The code is the law. The law needs to be followed . . . by all members of our community, whether they have taken an oath to uphold the law or not.

I don't believe that our elected officials are *purposely* playing loose with our laws, but the public is finding more and more issue with the way that our government does business. It **is** less efficient to involve the public, but public involvement provides the oversight *crucial* in a democracy. The responsibility for healthy governance does not rest *only* on our Mayor and Assembly; it rests with the residents of the Borough.

Responsible public oversight is done without rancor or insult. It is **appreciative** of the careful work that elected officials do, in support of, the codes and laws that *the public* has chosen to live by.