

Charter Fall Will Hurt Voice Of Eagle River

By RAY TYSON
Times Staff Writer

The Chugiak and Eagle River area has been left without representation on the Anchorage Borough Assembly should the proposed city-borough unification charter, with its six-section plan of representation, fail to win voter approval Sept. 9.

What began last night as an effort to firm up back-up reapportionment options ended with the majority of the assembly apparently siding with the reasoning of Assemblyman Tony Knowles who said, in no uncertain terms, the current

assemblymen are too politically biased to come up with a fair plan of representation.

Last night's action began with the assembly repealing its own apportionment plan of multi-representative sections that would have been placed on the fall regular election ballot if the charter failed.

If the ordinance had not been repealed by the assembly, a referendum asking that the assembly's choice be rejected would have had to go on the special election ballot on Sept. 9.

The assembly has indicated

strongly its desire to keep next month's ballot as uncluttered as possible.

It had been expected that the assembly simply would add an apportionment plan of 11 sections with single-member representation to its selection of a four-section plan with multi-member representation.

This would give voters a choice of apportionment plans and would have been in keeping with the intent of the referendum-initiative, which was instigated by Assemblyman Mary Frohne.

With the assembly unable to come to an agreement on any of five apportionment plans and unable to consider any other plans because of a limitation in the initiative, Knowles moved that the entire matter be postponed until Sept. 15.

"This just goes to prove that when politicians draw up their own (apportionment) map it is a conflict of interest," said Knowles.

It had been Knowles's intention to bring in the state Department of Community and Regional Affairs as an unbiased third party to draw up a plan of representation. But no action was taken on that

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suggestion, leaving Chugiak and Eagle River with no plan of representation should the charter fail.

The Department of Community and Regional Affairs, however, is expected to step in after Oct. 15 to reapportion if the borough does not take the initiative.

The borough has been malapportioned since last April when the Chugiak-Eagle River borough was dissolved. The state Supreme Court ruled that legislation leading to its formation as a borough was illegal.

The Chugiak and Eagle River area has been without any representative on the assembly since last winter when Ed Willis left the assembly to take a state Senate seat in Juneau.

Plan Is Off Shelf

The 1990 comprehensive plan was taken off the shelf last night and set for public hearings Aug. 21 and 28 with an assembly work session scheduled for Monday and a public information session to be held the next day.

Assemblymen Bennie Leonard, Chuck Evans, Ben Marsh, Dave Rose and Joe Gramam until last night successfully blocked the pre-charter-election

hearings.

But with the return of Assemblyman Chuck Eddy, who has been on vacation for the past two months, together with the votes of supporting Assemblymen Jessie Dodson, Mary Frohne, Tony Knowles, George Dickson and Lidia Selkregg, the motion to set the comprehensive plan for public hearings squeaked by 6 to 5.

Eagle River secession denied

By JIM BABB
Daily News Staff Writer

The Local Boundary Commission Thursday told Eagle River-Chugiak residents they could not secede from the Anchorage Municipality and establish their own borough government.

By a 4-to-1 vote, the commission rejected a petition which would have allowed residents of the area to vote on whether they wished to set up a separate government. The majority said the area did not meet standards set forth in the state constitution and other statutes, regulating the establishment of local governments.

"We are very disappointed," Lee Jordan, leader of the separatist movement said of the decision. Only commission member Gary Ackerman of Fairbanks voted for the petition. Ackerman argued at length for the need for more direct local control of their affairs by residents of small communities.

Jordan, who was mayor of the short-lived Eagle River-Chugiak borough in late 1974 and early 1975, said there would be a meeting of the Eagle River-Chugiak Association in

the near future.

Jordan said association will consider whether to take further legal action in an attempt to establish a separate government.

"We had a good thing going here," Jordan said. "Anchorage has never paid enough attention to our problems."

Eagle River-Chugiak residents had a separate government for a few months between the fall of 1974 and the spring of this year. However, in April a state Supreme Court decision ruled the independent borough was formed unconstitutionally. Commission chairman Sig Strandberg and members Sheila Jones, Josephine Anderson, and Oliver Leavitt said they did not believe the area met the standards of being and economically and geographically defined integrated community necessary for a separate government.

Under the new municipal charter the alternative of setting up a second-class city is foreclosed to Eagle River-Chugiak residents. In the event the commission's decision is not appealed, Jordan said residents of the area will probably attempt to set up a strong community council to press their desires upon the municipal government.