

CITY OF FALCON HEIGHTS
 Regular Meeting of the City Council
 City Hall
 2077 West Larpenteur Avenue
MINUTES
 December 9, 2020 at 7:00 P.M.

NOTE: THIS MEETING WAS ALSO HELD BY WEB CONFERENCE

- A. CALL TO ORDER: 7:00 pm
- B. ROLL CALL: ANDREWS_X_ GUSTAFSON_X_ LEEHY_X_
 MIAZGA_X_ WEHYEE_X_
 STAFF PRESENT: THONGVANH_X_

Administrator Thongvanh

I would like to request that the agenda be changed to move the drive through ordinance to item 2 on the Policy Agenda.

- C. PRESENTATION
- D. APPROVAL OF MINUTES:
 - 1. December 2, 2020 City Council Workshop Meeting
 - 2. November 18, 2020 City Council Regular Meeting

Mayor Gustafson mentioned few typographical edits to the minutes.

Council Member Andrews Moved, Approved 5-0.

- E. PUBLIC HEARINGS:
 - 1. 2021 Truth in Taxation and Budget Presentation

Administrator Thongvanh

In Falcon Heights, taxes are impacted by changes in the tax levy made by the city, county, school and taxing jurisdictions, changes in the market value of your property, legislative changes, or new taxes approved by referendum. From 2020 to 2021, Falcon Heights median home value increased by 3.7% from \$303,450 to \$314,600. The county accounts for the largest share of taxes, followed by the school district, city, and special district. Falcon Heights is in sixth place for tax rates behind Roseville. Since 2015, the City no longer draws from its reserves to support the General Fund.

The adopted preliminary budget was 8.9%, but after direction by the Council at the last workshop to contract Fire Services, we were able to reduce the levy to 5.2%. This levy projects a \$39 increase on a median value home in Falcon Heights.

City expenditures in 2021 include 44% for General Fund. The City receives an exemption from sales tax which saves us about \$6,000 per year. Public Safety makes up the largest share of general fund expenditures.

The 2021 proposed budget includes an increased police services budget by \$30,830, a 9.8% renewal rate for employee health insurance, and comparable license and permit revenues to 2020. Possible apartment housing in the TIES building would impact this.

Sue Majerus, 1381 Iowa Ave

What is the \$30,000 increase in the police services budget for? Are the PPE expenditures involved?

Mayor Gustafson

Increased operation costs for 2021. In the budget packet we received in September from Ramsey County Sheriff's Office, there was information on their 2021 budget detailing the increase. The PPE expenses were in year 2020. The City must notify RCSO in March 2021 if we plan to not renew the contract after 2021.

Council Member Leehy

I received a question via phone from the owner of a rental property. They had an increase of about 11% which is different than the increase seen by single family homes. Is that because there are other factors included that don't apply to single family homes?

Mayor Gustafson

If your property values increased substantially over last year, that could cause the increased number.

Administrator Thongvanh

Depending on the type of rental property, that could impact the rate. There is a tax rate on the property, which could further impact their total property tax. For example, a homestead property has a lower rate than a commercial property or a property that is not homestead.

Council Member Leehy motioned to approve Resolution 20-50 to adopt the 2021 tax levy and Resolution 20-51 to adopt the 2021 Budget; Approved, 5-0.

F. CONSENT AGENDA:

1. General Disbursements through: 12/01/20 \$8,830.82
Payroll through: 11/30/20 \$17,340.18
2. Approval of City License(s)
3. Appointment of Prosecuting Attorney
4. Appointment of City Attorney
5. Appointment of City Engineer
6. Appointment of City Auditor
7. Designation of Official Newspaper
8. 2021 Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA)
9. Statutory Tort Limits Liability Coverage for the City in 2021
10. Adopting Fee for Beekeeping Permits
11. City Fee Schedule

12. Joint Power Agreement - Establishment of The North East Metropolitan Area Municipal Internetworking Collaborative, to be known as "METRO-INET"
13. Appointment of Dana Dumbacher to the Community Engagement Commission
14. 2020 Year End Budget Amendment(s)
15. Northeast Youth and Family Services Cooperative Service Agreement
16. Extension of Professional Service Agreement for Administrative Direction and Command Services for Fire Service from the City of Roseville

Council Member Wehyee Moved, Approved 5-0.

G: POLICY ITEMS:

1. Garden Ordinance

Molly Just, Interim Community Development Coordinator with WSB

Earlier this year, the City Council directed staff to convene a subcommittee to study gardens in Falcon Heights and prepare language for an ordinance. A survey was conducted and received 322 responses. The subcommittee discussed residential gardens and community gardens. The draft ordinance allows edible landscaping gardens as an accessory use in residential and business districts. The guidelines follow the restrictions in place for native landscaping, requiring them to follow setback requirements. Retail sales of produce from these gardens is not allowed.

The Environment and Planning Commissions have recommended that the City Council adopt the ordinance as written.

Council Member Leehy

I just want to clarify that residents can sell produce grown on their properties elsewhere, the code prohibits selling produce on-site.

Molly Just, Interim Community Development Coordinator with WSB

Correct, thank you for that clarification.

Valentine Cadieux, resident

I am curious whether there is a policy available for renters or other individuals to join community gardens?

Mayor Gustafson

The City has a community garden at the Community Park available for reservation. We have expanded the garden for next year, it has been in operation for a number of years.

Administrator Thongvanh

The City will also reserve a few of the plots for renters and individuals who would not otherwise have access to space for gardening.

Council Member Andrews motioned to adopt Ordinance 20-07 and Summary Ordinance 20-07 to amend Chapters 113 and 154 of City Code; Approved 5-0.

2. Amendment to Chapter 113 Regarding Drive Throughs

Molly Just, Interim Community Development Coordinator with WSB

The City has received a request from the owner of Dino's Mediterranean Fresh at 1700 Snelling Avenue for an ordinance amendment regarding drive throughs at eating establishments. The City Zoning Code currently prohibits drive throughs for establishments other than financial institutions. City staff have prepared an ordinance on behalf of the applicant that would accommodate their requested amendment. It should be noted that the ordinance would still require the owner to obtain a conditional use permit, which is not a component of this request.

Should the amendment be adopted, the applicant would have to apply for a conditional use permit and this would be reviewed and acted on at a later date.

On November 24, the Planning Commission met and held a public hearing on the ordinance and the majority of the comments received were in opposition. The Commission voted to recommend that the City Council deny the request. Staff recommend denial of the ordinance amendment as written.

Council Member Miazga

I support the staff analysis and would support denial of the ordinance amendment.

Wendy Noble, 1539 Crawford Avenue

On behalf on the neighbors, we appreciate you hearing our voices on this issue.

Administrator Thongvanh

We need a motion to deny the ordinance amendment. A yes vote would be in favor of denial.

Council Member Leehy motioned to deny the draft ordinance amendment and the draft summary amendment to Chapter 113 regarding drive throughs; Approved, 5-0.

3. Accepting Plans Specifications and Ordering Advertisement for Bids for the 2021 Pavement Management Project

Jesse Freihammer, City Engineer

The City has a mill and overlay project for 3.8 miles of city streets proposed for 2021. The cost is still estimated at \$1.1 million, and would include some drainage improvements at Lindig Street.

Tonight, the Council will need to move to approve plans and specifications and order advertisement of bids for the project. In February, the City would open bids and award the contract with construction beginning in May and concluding before the State Fair in August. The final assessment hearing would take place in September 2021.

Council Member Leehy

Thank you for the presentation and for the clarity on the project schedule.

Council Member Wehyee

Will the streets be done simultaneously?

Jesse Freihammer, City Engineer

In the past, work has progressed from west to east or east to west. Most areas will only take 2-3 weeks, but I would anticipate that the roads will not all be done at once.

Council Member Miazga motioned to approve Resolution 20-55 and the summary to approve the plans and specifications to order advertisements for bids for the 2021 Pavement Management Project; Approved, 5-0.

4. Drainage Easement at 1605 Fulham Street

Jesse Freihammer, City Engineer

This is related to the Seminary Pond project. This easement would document the outfall area and would allow the City to do current and future maintenance. Property owners have already signed it. I would recommend approval of the easement as presented.

Council Member Wehyee motioned to approve the drainage easement at 1605 Fulham Street and authorize the administrator to execute all necessary documents; Approved, 5-0.

5. No Parking Resolution - Cleveland Ave from Larpenteur Ave to Como Ave

Jesse Freihammer, City Engineer

As part of the Cleveland Avenue project which is currently under design by Ramsey County, they are asking the City to document the current no parking designations on Cleveland Avenue between Larpenteur and Como. The City will have to enter into agreement regarding cost sharing probably in February, but this is an administrative action the County needs to take first.

Council Member Andrews

Is it correct that this is not changing current restrictions?

Jesse Freihammer, City Engineer

Correct, the parking will still be restricted.

Council Member Andrews motioned to approve Resolution 20-56 prohibiting parking to various sections of Cleveland Avenue; Approved, 5-0.

H. INFORMATION/ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Council Member Andrews

- The first Community Conversation took place last week, it went well. I hope that more people will participate in the next two.

Council Member Leehy

- Also grateful for the first Community Conversation. The next dates are Thursday, December 17 from 6-7:30pm. The final one will be January 7, after which there will be a summary available of all three conversations.
- Registration for the Holiday Light Tour goes through December 14, and the map will be available December 18.

Council Member Miazga

- I would echo Council Member Leehy; A few streets in the area have great holiday lights.

Council Member Wehyee

- The second Community Conversation will be focused on public safety.
- We have Human Rights Day on Thursday, December 10 at 7:00pm. The event will be focused on immigrants and we will have a speaker from the International Institute as well as a panel of community members sharing their experiences.

Mayor Gustafson

- I would like to thank our fire department as we move forward from our community based model and towards a contract with another entity. I would also thank them in advance as we transition to our new contract for fire services.

Administrator Thongvanh

- I'm working on an agreement with Amber Union, the developer that purchased the TIES building. The developer is currently projecting 60% AMI, and they are requesting that we reduce that to 50% AMI so that they can be more competitive. There would be some gap financing they would need, so they are currently looking at submitting a proposal for TIF. The City would continue to receive the base taxes, but taxes incurred on the increased value added by the developer would be waived for a period of time. This would be a proposal brought before council at a future meeting.
- I would like to thank Nalisha Nandkumar for her 18 months with the City.
- After this meeting, any meeting moving forward until further notice will be held by Zoom to reduce risk of COVID-19 spread.

Council Member Leehy

- Public works is looking at creating and maintaining an additional pleasure ice rink this year at the Community Park, weather permitting.

I. COMMUNITY FORUM:

Please limit comments to 3 minutes per person. Items brought before the Council will be referred for consideration. Council may ask questions for clarification, but no council action or discussion will be held on these items.

Mike McKay, resident Holton Street

I have been a member of the fire department since 2000. Thank you for letting us serve you. I've enjoyed serving with the department and serving the community. I am disappointed with the lack of transparency with regard to how the dissolution of the department went. It was in the minutes that the public would be able to communicate during the workshop, however this was not allowed. This decision was made last Wednesday, it was not included in the newsletter it was barely mentioned at this meeting. The whole process struck me as if the decision was made in advance and there was very little the community had input on. I don't believe it was in the best interest of the community, and I wish the community would have had an opportunity to have more input.

Hadi Kazemi, resident

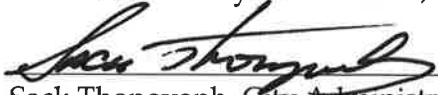
I also think that we should maintain our fire department. I don't think that we need to give up the autonomy that we had so far. I feel it has been rushed, my understanding was that it would be an ongoing discussion but it seems that it has already been decided.

J. ADJOURNMENT: 8:36 pm



Randall C. Gustafson, Mayor

Dated this 9th day of December, 2020



Sack Thongvanh, City Administrator