

CITY OF FALCON HEIGHTS
City Council Workshop
City Hall
2077 West Larpenteur Avenue

AGENDA
July 1, 2020
6:30 P.M.

NOTE: THIS MEETING WILL BE HELD BY WEB CONFERENCE

- A. CALL TO ORDER: Mayor Gustafson called the meeting to order at 6:39 p.m.
- B. ROLL CALL: ANDREWS X GUSTAFSON X LEEHY X
 MIAZGA X WEHYEE X
 STAFF PRESENT: THONGVANH X MARKON X

C. PRESENTATIONS:

D. POLICY ITEMS:

1. Guidelines to Request Agenda Items

City Administrator Thongvanh introduced the historical nature of how agenda items are placed on a City Council agenda. Currently, there is no formal process. Thongvanh shared an example from Lake Elmo, MN, which is part of their City Code. He compared an agenda topic similar to the legislative process in the State Legislature.

Miazga noted that he had met with the League of Minnesota Cities to discuss this topic, and he asked how the process would involve Commissions. Thongvanh noted that most likely after Commission, it would go to a City Council Workshop, but at this point anything could be customized for Falcon Heights. Miazga noted that he would like guidelines be written down. Gustafson noted that a structure on agenda topics and public comments would be positive, with more discussion at an August workshop. Leehy, Miazga, and Wehyee agreed. Wehyee noted that as a new Councilmember, a formal process would be helpful. Thongvanh also noted that it would be helpful for Commissions as well.

Andrews asked whether any topic could not be discussed unless it had gone through a workshop. Thongvanh affirmed. Gustafson noted that special meetings would be an exception, which Lake Elmo has written into their City Code. Andrews said she is supportive of moving forward as well. Thongvanh also noted that the Request for Council Action should be the vehicle for how agenda topics are introduced, whether the topic is from an elected official or resident. He shared that it would be best for those requesting discussion to send a paragraph or two and supporting documents to himself so that staff can put it on the agenda.

Thongvanh said that he would move forward with a draft for City Council consideration at the next City Council workshop.

2. Fire Services to the City of Lauderdale

Thongvanh shared that the City of Lauderdale is looking to end fire services with the City of Falcon Heights on December 31, 2020. The current contract with the City of Roseville will also end at the end of 2020, and Thongvanh noted that his preference is to request an extension with Roseville. He feels that the Falcon Heights Fire Department is moving in the right direction with recruitment and establishing new leaders and would benefit from further assistance from Roseville.

Wehyee asked for clarification on whether the letter was received. Thongvanh clarified that a draft letter was presented at the Lauderdale City Council meeting, which was approved by the City Council, but the City of Falcon Heights has not received the letter.

Andrews asked about other options, such as contracting fully with Roseville, given the window of opportunity. Leahy said she feels extending the contract with Roseville would provide more time to look at a deep dive at the department. Andrews asked if the rest of 2020 would or would not be enough time for a deep dive. Gustafson said that the rest of 2020 may be enough, but it will be important to do right by our fire department. Miazga asked that a full contract with Roseville be part of the discussion. Thongvanh said he will provide the City Council with many options as discussions continue.

Thongvanh noted that even as a volunteer on-call department, all of the same equipment as a full-time department is needed. He also noted that the recent fire department audit called out upcoming costs for replacing equipment.

3. Public Safety Contract

Thongvanh reported there was a request from the Community Engagement Commission (CEC) to look at the public safety contract and have the Ramsey County Sheriff's Office provide a town-hall meeting. Wehyee noted that the CEC would like to look at the services provided in the contract, possibly have a group study the contract, and have the Sheriff's Office have a community meeting about the contract.

Leahy said that she would like to have a community meeting with Sheriff Fletcher, which happened twice in the first year of the contract in 2018. She also asked whether a yearly report is provided by the Sheriff's Office. Thongvanh said that in previous years, a report and presentation were given by the Sheriff, but that has not happened in the past few years.

Wehyee noted that the contract specifically notes the Sheriff's Office should attend meetings when requested by the municipality and whether that stipulation should be included in a letter. Andrews cautioned that threatening could appear negatively on the city. Thongvanh also noted that if the Sheriff's Office left the contract, they would still provide services, but only for emergencies.

Wehyee said a task force could facilitate conversations within the community about diversity and inclusion and future conversations with the Sheriff's Office. Thongvanh clarified future conversations could facilitate recommendations that could be brought to the Sheriff's Office.

Wehyee clarified that the CEC could have the discussions surrounding emergency management and crime prevention as part of their mandate in the City Code. Leahy noted that previous facilitators have reached out and are willing to help with conversations about policing in a forum

for the entire community. Thongvanh noted that it will be important to revolve the discussion around public safety services provided in the community, not specifically on the contract. Thongvanh read the mission of the Community Engagement Commission as stipulated in the City Code. Leehy noted that while she was on the CEC, a representative from the police department and fire department attended meetings, but that is not happening now. She also said that the CEC could use the Policing and Inclusion Take Force recommendations as a tool.

Georgiana May, a resident and CEC member, spoke and clarified that the CEC wanted to look at the contract, not negotiate, and provide citizens with the opportunity to have conversations and have the Sheriff's Office respond not react to situations. Leehy clarified that a study group could spend a meeting or two looking over documents in preparation for a community conversation. May agreed.

Mayor Gustafson summarized that the City Administrator will handle contractual discussions while a subcommittee or full group of the CEC could study the contract in preparation for future conversations about what services are provided and how are they provided. Leehy noted that it would be prudent for the CEC to coalesce ideas for discussion and provide those topics to facilitators before a conversation.

4. Community Conversations

Maria from the Minnesota Department of Administration offered to work with the city to revisit the Inclusion and Policing Task Force recommendations.

Andrews noted that she discussed with May about both policing and anti-racism and that both discussions are important but separate.

Gustafson summarized the discussions that took place in and after 2016, which were largely done without a script and have led to now. Leehy noted that continuing conversations will help deplete anxiety. Wehyee agreed and said that it would be beneficial to have a few conversations.

Thongvanh noted that he will discuss with Maria about the city's intentions, what they could facilitate, what staff capacity would be, and what a timeline could be.

5. Sanctuary Ordinance

Wehyee summarized that an ordinance would establish that people are not turned over to ICE and that people are welcome regardless of immigration status. He also noted that the ordinance could be framed as a welcoming community.

Andrews and Gustafson asked about the need for this ordinance. Wehyee answered that the ordinance would be preventative and a way to express support. Leehy also noted that there is a risk of possibly losing funding.

Thongvanh noted that since 2016, the city has adopted policies that pertain to topics that the city has control over, which the cities of St. Paul and Minneapolis have when it comes to policing, but Falcon Heights does not since we are served by other agencies for law enforcement.

Gustafson asked if the ordinance would direct city staff's interaction with residents as it pertains to immigration status and interaction with ICE. Leehy noted that such a direction would be in an appropriate scope. Wehyee affirmed that such provisions would be effective along with

supportive language and direction to include discussions surrounding immigration during policing contract negotiations.

6. Noise Control Ordinance

Markon notes that the current ordinances surrounding noise are limited and vague and that staff would like direction on moving forward to bring more enforceable code in light of complaints. These complaints usually revolve around construction noise.

Miazga noted that most noise complaints that he receives are about boom cars. Markon noted that other cities do stipulate vehicle noise in their noise ordinance, which is something that could be considered as an ordinance is drafted.

Gustafson noted that enforceability of these ordinances should be a consideration as it relates to city and sheriff's office capacity and that the topic could be part of future community conversations around policing.

Leehy asked about noise complaints related to snow removal. Markon said that these typically are about private companies removing snow at various hours, sometimes at multiple houses on the same block. He further noted that other communities exempt snow removal operations and that the final ordinance should be explicit about snow removal.

Councilmembers felt that this topic should be discussed further at a later date but is not at the top of the current priority list.

7. Community Park Building Assessment

Thongvanh noted the report from Bolton and Menk, but he felt the costs to rehabilitate the building were low. He said there will not be any renting for the remainder of the year.

Andrews noted that while the structural assessment is helpful, but no mention is made of the mechanical system. She also asked if no action is taken for a year, what would further deterioration look like. Thongvanh noted that deterioration will continue, with fixes applied for high-priority issues. He said that there will be a larger discussion at a later time around continuing to fix or replace the building.

E. INFORMATION/ANNOUNCEMENTS

Councilmembers and Thongvanh shared updates on upcoming meetings.

Thongvanh noted that the Amber Union building received historic designation.

Thongvanh noted that the basketball court is almost complete, and the next project will be medians near Fairview Avenue.

F. ADJOURNMENT: The meeting was adjourned at 10:30 p.m.



Randy Gustafson, Mayor

Dated this 1st day of July, 2020



Sack Thongvanh, City Administrator