

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

MINUTES
May 4, 2022
6:30 P.M.

- A. CALL TO ORDER: 6:33 p.m.
- B. ROLL CALL: ANDREWS X GUSTAFSON X LEEHY X
MEYER X WEHYEE X

STAFF PRESENT: LINEHAN X SORENSEN X

- C. PRESENTATIONS:

- D. POLICY ITEMS:

1. Introduction of New City Administrator

Jack's Introduction:

Jack introduced himself and Brennan Sorensen, the new administrative and communications coordinator. Jack plans to attend each commission to meet everyone and see how the commission works. Jack was born in Minneapolis. He grew up in Taylor Falls and went to Chisago Lakes High School. He graduated from Winona State with a degree in public administration and then went to Northern Illinois University, where he got his Masters in Public Administration. His mother grew up in Falcon Heights. So, he has a fond memory of Falcon Heights. He has been reaching out and getting settled in. Jack is learning the history and the streets of Falcon Heights. He is enjoying the process of being the City Administrator for Falcon Heights.

2. Meet and Greet with Council and Commission Chairs

Parks and Rec Commission:

Jack Linehan City Administrator: One of Jack's top priorities is the Community Park building.

The City is financially in a good place and has been saving for the past few years.

Mike Bradberry Parks & Rec Commission Chair: Preparing for spring ahead with the Community Engagement Commission. The Parks and Rec Commission is focusing on the Community Park building and expanding the Community Garden. We have toured various Roseville buildings to see what would best fit the City's needs. The Commission is leaning toward using the Lexington Park building in Roseville as the model for the community park building.

Mayor Gustafson: Talks with the University of Minnesota have slowed down on buying the land where the community park building is. However, if The University of Minnesota were to sell the land, they would want to keep it as parkland.

Council Member Leehy: At Spring Ahead, we should have table focused on the community park building for citizens to give ideas and feedback.

Environmental Commission:

Patrick Mathwig Environmental Commission Chair: recycling contract has to be finished soon. Climate emergency declaration meeting tomorrow to finalize and send it to the City Council. Finishing up the Climate Action Plan and recommends getting concrete goals. Keeping continued support for the home energy audit rebates was popular with citizens. Falcon Heights won for the most reimbursements per capita through Xcel. Recommends the City should look into using the partners and energy workshops. The workshops are free and a great way for citizens to see their utility usage. The workshops allow for Xcel to gather aggregate data to see the utility usage of homes and businesses in a particular area, then makes bring that information to the workshops and make recommendations for citizens. He wants to make sure the City can do the Xcel workshops. The Commission is working on electric vehicles, charging stations, native landscaping, and beekeeping ordinances. The Commission is also looking into No Mow May. There should be a survey to give people a chance to express their opposition.

Jack Linehan City Administrator: The City staff has been looking into No Mow May because of interest from citizens. A draft is being proposed to the City Council to stay the current ordinance for grass growth to 6 inches through May. This would be a test run for this year. Citizens would have to register with the City. The City is a little late to implement this stay, and if the resolution passed, it would be May 11. Another option is having a survey for next year for citizens' feedback on No Mow May.

Council Member Leehy: It is good to give people a chance to express their ideas and concerns with the survey.

Mayor Gustafson: This resolution would not force citizens to let their grass grow. This would be a volunteer action, and there would not be a penalty for not cutting your grass. The City should see how it works this year as a test run.

Council Member Wehyee: This resolution would only be temporary. I would like to see the draft before the next City Council meeting to go over it.

Council Member Andrews: She supports implementing No Mow May as soon as possible.

Scott Wilson Planning Commission Chair: We could make signs that explains No Mow May and spread awareness to the community.

Planning Commission:

Scott Wilson Planning Commission Chair: The Planning Commission is currently working on the vacant property ordinance. There have been issues on California St. where the City could not find the contact information for a vacant property. The Commission wants to make sure there is the contact information for vacant houses. The Commission is working on having a public forum in the spring for this ordinance. Some specifics of the ordinance include that if your house is vacant for more than six months, there will be a fine. The Commission is also looking into a development project. Developers have proposed a new property development where the old Shell gas station used to be. In addition, the developers are proposing building townhouses. The Commission also found out that Gibbs farm needs to be zoned for the City of Falcon Heights; it was previously thought that Ramsey County had zoned the farm. However, since the farm is operated by a non-profit, it does not fall under their jurisdiction but the City of Falcon Heights. Three properties in Gibbs Farm would have to be rezoned. Gibbs Farm wants to become a year-round operation. An organization has expressed interest in doing a study on Larpenteur. Also, there are two candidates for the Planning Commission.

Council Member Leehey: Some citizens have expressed interest in a bridge across Larpenteur.

Patrick Mathwig Environmental Commission Chair: Environmental Commission is interested in working with the Planning Commission.

Community Engagement Commission:

Julie Ebbesen Community Engagement Commission Chair: Julie has been on the Commission for a year and a half. The Commission has been focusing on how to identify to better communicate with under-served citizens—also working with the Parks and Rec Commission for Spring Ahead and Human Rights Day. In addition, starting to work on showcasing for the Snowstravaganza. The Commission's primary goal is to improve the City's communication with citizens after Spring Ahead is the Ice cream social and resource fair. The resource will help identify resources for underserved members of the community. The Commission enjoys working with other Commissions; it is a great way to build connections.

Scott Wilson Planning Commission Chair: Amber union will be an excellent opportunity for the City to improve its communications and outreach. The City should consider bringing back the 5k and use the fairgrounds, and the theme could be in memory of Philando Castile.

Jack Linehan City Administrator: This is an excellent opportunity for the City to enhance communication using the Nextdoor app. Staff cannot see chatter in the neighborhood on the app, which creates privacy for the citizens.

Patrick Mathwig Environmental Commission Chair: Having one dedicated seat for a college or high school student would improve inclusivity and communication.

Council Member Leehy: Advertise Commission seats in high schools would be a good way to get the word out to students.

E. INFORMATION/ANNOUNCEMENTS:

F. ADJOURNMENT: 8:06 p.m.

Dated this 11th day of May, 2022



Jack Linehan, City Administrator



Randall C. Gustafson, Mayor