

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

**MINUTES**

July 6, 2022  
6:30 P.M.

- A. CALL TO ORDER: 6:42 p.m.
- B. ROLL CALL: ANDREWS X (Attended Remotely pursuant to 13D.02- Limited Exception) GUSTAFSON X LEEHY X  
MEYER    WEHYEE X

STAFF PRESENT: LINEHAN X SORENSEN X

- C. PRESENTATIONS:
- D. POLICY ITEMS:

1. Just Deeds Resolution and Presentation

Jack Linehan, the City Administrator, stated that Mapping Prejudice recently published its findings on racial covenants in Ramsey County. A total of 2,400 property deeds were found to have a racial covenant, of which over 100 properties in Falcon Heights have a covenant, with most located in the Northhome/Northeast Quadrant areas.

Just Deeds was a presenter at the 2021 Human Rights Day. Just Deeds is a group of attorneys working with the City of Golden Valley, Mapping Prejudice, and local realtors to help homeowners discharge the racial covenants on their deeds.

The Community Engagement Commission approved the attached resolution to have the City of Falcon Heights join as a Participating City. By becoming a participating City, Falcon Heights would work with Just Deeds to create a registration form on our website that would put homeowners with a racial covenant in touch with Just Deeds. The City would also work to promote the project and notify homeowners listed on the Ramsey County Mapping Prejudice map of the status of their deed.

Attorney Jared Shepherd of Campbell Knutson is one of the attorneys working with Just Deeds and will be present at the meeting to introduce the topic.

Jared Shepard, Just Deeds Attorney, explains what Just Deeds is. Coalition members provide free legal and title services to help property owners find discriminatory covenants and discharge them from their property titles. The Coalition also provides education opportunities to help communities acknowledge this racist history and pursue reconciliation and anti-racist solutions. Our member organizations share responsibility for creating and correcting systemic racism in housing. We acknowledge the racist systems in our communities and are working together to

dismantle them. Then Shepard explains what it looks like for a City to be involved with the process. No formal action is required to join the Just Deeds project, but most cities join by passing a resolution of support. All cities wishing to participate in Just Deeds must:

- Commit to the Just Deeds mission statement in word and action.
- Dedicate resources to support the Just Deeds mission. Some examples of how other cities are participating include:
  - Devoting staff or volunteer time to connecting residents with free help from legal and title professionals to discharge discriminatory covenants (required).
  - Discharging covenants on city-owned property.
  - Engaging in community conversations on race and housing.
  - Identify anti-racist action your City and community can take to address housing barriers.
  - Engaging your City's Human Rights Commission and City Council.
  - Joining with other Just Deeds cities to create new equity tools tailored to city government.

Shepard also states that the City will need to create a web page with information and resources for residents. In addition, Just Deeds is still exploring how to discharge covenants from residents with Ramsey County.

Mayor Gustafson asks, does discharge a covenant eliminate the covenant from the deed?

Shepard says no, it does not get rid of the covenant. This process is all about acknowledging the past, so no, it does not get rid of the covenant.

Council Member Wehyee asks are there any hidden costs?

Shepard states no, as far as we know Ramsey County is waiving the recorder fees, title companies usually waive this fee, and the lawyers are pro bono.

The Mayor asks what the length of the process is for residents and will more covenants be discovered in Ramsey County?

Shepard states it takes roughly 3 to 6 months per resident, and yes, mapping prejudice believes there will be more uncovered in Ramsey County.

Council Member Andrews asks, what if people don't have access to technology?

Linehan states that City staff can help with any questions and the City's commitment to this initiative.

## 2. Climate Emergency Resolution

Linehan explains the Climate Emergency Resolution. Many cities around the state have adopted Climate Action Plans addressing the pressing climate change issues.

City Council had requested the Environment Commission study the issues and actions the City has taken so far and identify future action through a Climate Action Plan.

On March 14, 2022, staff, directed by Council, presented a framework resolution for a Climate Action Plan Statement to the Environment Commission. At that meeting, the Commission proposed forming a small committee to further develop and fine-tune this resolution. The committee met several times to finalize a version for the Commission.

At the May 9, 2022, Environment Commission meeting, the EC approved the resolution with the idea that Chair Mathwig would incorporate recommendations from the meeting into a final plan to present to Council. The draft recommendations were submitted to staff in early June, with July 6 being the next workshop.

Mayor Gustafson asked what the implications of the Climate Action Plan are, such as cost.

Council Member Wehyee stated the goal of this plan is to acknowledge that climate change is an emergency. He added that the resolution establishes that the City would create a Climate Action Plan but does not specify what that looks like. It would be on the Environment Commission to assemble another resolution that would be much more detailed and come to the Council again for approval. Wehyee emphasized that would be a different step and was different that what was before the Council now.

Council Member Leehy stated that the City already has a climate action plan through the GreenStep Cities and does not want to mandate residents to do things.

Council Member Wehyee explained that the resolution would not obligate residents or businesses to take any certain action because it's not an ordinance and there are no specific criteria or bearing on the community. It was not written as a mandate.

Mayor Gustafson says the resolution should show what the City has already done for the environment. In addition, it provides opportunities for residents and businesses to address climate change on a local level.

### 3. Police Contract Consultant

Linehan stated that At the June 11th City Council Retreat, the idea of hiring a consultant to review the City's contract for police services was discussed.

Staff is seeking direction on the next steps to engage with a qualified consultant. The consultant will analyze our current services, conduct a series of community focus groups, and provide recommendations on the City's options for police services beyond 2023.

The City Council directed Linehan to move forward with releasing the RFQ.

### 4. Community Park Appraisal

Linehan says at the June 8th City Council meeting. A contract was approved with Diversified Real Estate Services, Inc. (DRESI) was approved for an amount of \$6,000. The contract was to provide a qualified appraisal of the Community Parkland. It was estimated that it would be a five-week turnaround before the City received the report.

The City received the appraisal this week. The appraisal results can be used in the City's negotiations with the University of Minnesota to purchase the park.

The City Council reviewed the appraisal results, and directed Linehan to engage in next step discussions with the University of Minnesota.

E. INFORMATION/ANNOUNCEMENTS:

F. ADJOURNMENT: 8:36 p.m.

*DISCLAIMER: City Council Workshops are held monthly as an opportunity for Council Members to discuss policy topics in greater detail prior to a formal meeting where a public hearing may be held and/or action may be taken. Members of the public that would like to make a comment or ask questions about an item on the agenda for an upcoming workshop should send them to [mail@falconheights.org](mailto:mail@falconheights.org) prior to the meeting. Alternatively, time is regularly allotted for public comment during Regular City Council Meetings (typically 2nd and 4th Wednesdays) during the Community Forum.*

Dated this 12<sup>th</sup> day of July, 2022



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Jack Linehan, City Administrator



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Randall C. Gustafson, Mayor