

CITY OF FALCON HEIGHTS

City Council Workshop

City Hall

2077 West Larpenteur Avenue

MINUTES

August 3, 2022

6:30 P.M.

A. CALL TO ORDER: 6:50 p.m.

B. ROLL CALL: ANDREWS ___ GUSTAFSON_X_ LEEHY_X_
MEYER_X_ WEHYEE_X_

STAFF PRESENT: LINEHAN_X_ SORENSEN_X_ OLSON_X_
FREHAMMER_X_ PITTMAN_X_

C. PRESENTATIONS:

D. POLICY ITEMS:

1. Lauderdale Plowing Proposal

Linehan states The City of Lauderdale has reached out to the City of Falcon Heights to see if we could provide plowing services for our neighboring community. Ramsey County, which once plowed both Lauderdale and Falcon Heights, has indicated to Lauderdale that they will not be able to offer plowing services for the 2022 season. The staff has reviewed the requirements with Lauderdale, and we believe it is well within our capacity to provide plowing services. The proposed contract accounts for labor, equipment, salt, depreciation, and overhead costs associated with providing the service. Unlike the previous fire contract, Lauderdale will not be asked to participate in capital equipment purchases as that cost is built into the contract. Lauderdale understands that the priority of plowing would be that the West Plow would finish routes in Falcon Heights (University Grove / Falcon Woods / Lindig / Tatum) before beginning in Lauderdale. The contract would bring unanticipated revenue in 2022. The proposed starting fee for services will be \$24,300, with an annual increase of 2.5% or CPI, whichever is greater. Lauderdale Public Works would be responsible for sidewalk, clean-up, or other services. Lauderdale is helping the city pay for a plow every seven years.

Mayor Gustafson states do they pay us monthly?

Linehan says yes, it would be a monthly payment starting in October. Also, Lauderdale understands falcon heights come first.

Council Member Wehyee asks, as far as Larpenteur is concerned, who plows that?

Tim Pittman, the Public Works Director, states the county plows Larpentuer.

Council Member Wehyee asks, after 2026, can the contract be renewable?

Linehan states we left it as a four agreement without a renewable clause.

Council Member Meyer asks if there is any flexibility with payments?

Mayor Gustafson states I think it is great, and I see why they were aggressively pushing for this. We learned from our fire contract is fair for both parties.

Linehan says we have had discussions to use some of these funds to hire matt as a full-time public works employee. However, hiring public works employees is difficult to do right now.

2. Snow and Ice Control Plan & Map Update

Pittman states The City of Falcon Heights has sidewalks that run parallel to Larpenteur Avenue from Hamline Avenue to Coffman Street on the south and Fulham Street on the north. These sidewalks service residential and commercial uses as well as the State Fair and the University of Minnesota. Larpenteur Avenue is a County Road. It is classified as an A-Minor Arterial road with four drive lanes servicing thousands of cars a day, approximately 17,200 in 2015 per the City of Falcon Heights Comprehensive Plan. For snow removal on Larpenteur Avenue, Ramsey County maintains a clear pavement, curb-to-curb policy. Due to the little or no, boulevard on Larpenteur Avenue, the snow storage for Larpenteur Avenue is de facto the sidewalk. Currently, the City requires and specifies that all property owners must remove all snow and ice off the sidewalks within 24 hours of the end of a snow event. Generally, there must not be snow or ice on the sidewalk per the City's nuisance ordinance. Larpenteur Avenue presents unique challenges to this requirement. The narrow boulevard places most, if not all, ice and snow from all four lanes on the sidewalk. The volume of snow and ice is a great burden for property owners who do not have professional or commercial-grade equipment. Additionally, the City has been notified of instances where the County will continue to plow Larpenteur Avenue after property owners have cleared their sidewalks. This makes sidewalks appear uncleared and subject to code violation even though the owner has already made an effort to clear their sidewalk on time. The clearing of sidewalks on Larpenteur Avenue has been an area of contention for property owners. City staff received frequent complaints from owners that removed snow multiple times and still receive letters of enforcement because the County cleared the road later in the week and deposited additional snow on the sidewalk. City staff also received frequent complaints from travelers on the sidewalks who complained that the walkways were not passable. City staff recommends revisiting the snow removal policy for Larpenteur Avenue, an A-Minor Arterial road, to alleviate the burden on property owners. The previous mayor wanted a consistent policy for the whole City, which made the residents plow the sidewalks on Larpenteur. Residents do not have the equipment to plow. This has created more problems for the City. I believe the City should be responsible for mowing Larpentuer.

Mayor Gustafson asks how well did it work last year?

Pittman states it worked well last year. We got calls from residents thanking us for plowing their sidewalks.

Mayor Gustafson asks how much longer does it take to plow Larpenteur then?

Pittman states that heavy snow only takes 45 minutes to an hour long, depending on the snowfall.

Mayor Gustafson states I think it makes sense.

Linehan states the logic behind this is that Larpentuer, Lauderdale, and Garden Ave. are all added to this if Garden Ave. is approved in the future. Linehan also says to keep in mind that there are other sidewalks in falcon heights that the City does not plow. The City staff's rationale for all these streets beside Garden Ave. is that they all require special equipment.

3. Garden Avenue Discussion

Jesse Frehammer, the City Engineer states On June 1, 2022 City staff gave council an update on the Garden Avenue project. Staff has held two public engagement meetings. Both meetings focused on Garden Avenue possible layouts and discussion on the Ruggles right of way corridor between Pascal and Holton. The first was on April 5, 2022, and showed new concepts and the existing layout that could be done between Snelling and Holton. The second meeting, held on July 20, 2022, expanded on the first meeting by showing four concepts (A, B, C, D) from Snelling and Holton and the existing option. Additionally, four concepts (E, F, G, and Existing) were shown for the segment between Holton and Hamline. A comment summary from both meetings, including phone and email comments received to date, is included as Attachment C.

Based on the feedback from residents to date, staff has simplified the concepts down to four options for Snelling to Holton and three for Holton to Hamline. Any option west of Holton could work with any option east of Holton by transitioning the roadway similar to how the road transitions today. This also applies to possible sidewalk as it could be just constructed east of Holton. Attachment A is an option summary that details the differences between each option. Attachment B is a comparison table that compares how each option meets goals of the project.

The proposed next steps related to the 2023 PMP, including when Council decisions are needed are as follows;

- August 3 - Receive Concept Presentation
- August/September - Make decision on whether sidewalks will be assessed/maintained by the City if sidewalk is included in the approved layout. This is needed so it can be included in concept analysis portion of the feasibility report.
- August/September - Make decision on whether to include Ruggles Pathway connection in the 2023 PMP prior to the feasibility report.
- September - Hold Neighborhood Meeting for Falcon Woods
- October - Make decision on if to include Falcon Woods in the 2023 PMP prior to the feasibility report.
- October - Accept Feasibility Report/Set Public Hearing Date

- November - Hold Public Hearing/ Approve Layout/Order the Improvement
- February/March 2023 - Award Project
- June -August 2023 - Construction
- September/October 2023 - Final Assessment Public Hearing

Frehammer explains the different options for the project. Option 1, 2 keep curb as is, 3 narrow the roadway, 4 had the most support there should be no effect to sidewalks.

Council Member Wehyee asks, will snow go on the sidewalk when you plow the road?

Frehammer states it will generally take the same amount of snow as it is now.

Frehammer states that all of these options will not shrink residents' driveways.

Council Member Wehyee asks has the school has been involved in these discussions?

Linehan says yes, the principal has contacted me stating that the school is in favor of having a sidewalk from Holton to Hamline and indifferent to a sidewalk west of Holton St. the school would maintain the sidewalks on their property.

Council Member Wehyee asks if we have any data on whether sidewalks enhance community safety?

Frehammer states having a sidewalk creates a clear line of separation. Therefore, it is considered that having a sidewalk is safer.

Council Member Wehyee asks if we can get concrete data if a sidewalk is safer to have?

Frehammer states every road is unique because it peaks at two different times of the day. So yes, we can pull some hard-concrete data for the safety of having sidewalks. Frehammer then explains the options for option 5, 6, and 7 and talk about whether bump-outs can be added or not.

Council Member Wehyee asks would adding bump-outs create an additional cost?

Frhammer says yes, but it would be marginal.

Mayor Gustafson asks whether bump-outs make it harder to plow?

Pittman states no; they make it easier because it makes the road wider.

Council Member Meyer states I am in favor of options 4 and 7

Council Member Wehyee says looking at option 7; it looks like the school is getting more green space.

Frehammer states drainage is the next step.

4. Garden Avenue – Potential Sidewalk Funding & Maintenance

Linehan states as noted in City Engineer Freihammer's RCA for item D3, the City will need to determine whether sidewalks will be assessed/maintained by the City if a sidewalk is included in the approved layout for Garden Avenue. This is needed so it can be included in the concept analysis portion of the feasibility report.

Funding

The City's Assessment Manual was last adopted in 2007. Item II (G) – *Sidewalks, trails and pathways* directs that the City will assess residential properties at a rate of 25% of the per foot cost multiplied by total front footage, 40% for commercial, and 100% for non-profits.

Current layouts that include sidewalk only have sidewalk on the north side of the street. There are 13 total properties on the north side of Garden from Snelling to Hamline, with the largest property being Falcon Heights Elementary and the second being the United Church's parking lot.

Estimates in the spring indicated that a sidewalk for the entire north side of Garden would cost approximately \$313,000.00 to install. Applying our assessment policy as currently adopted, this would mean approximately \$3,000 up to \$15,000 per parcel assessment for the installation.

There are three primary options that can be considered if a sidewalk were to be installed:

1. Apply the assessment policy as written.
2. Develop a Sidewalk Improvement District, as indicated in State Statute 435.44, with the district paying their share of the assessment up to five years.
3. Determine that the sidewalk is a regional pathway, similar to Cleveland and Fairview, and pay for installation of the path through a citywide levy and/or use of fund balance.

For option #2, there are approximately 450 parcels within the Northeast Quadrant. If they were to pay 25% of the costs, estimates would be that the average assessment would be approximately \$175, or \$35 per year for five years.

For option #3 and a bond, the estimate of the debt levy would be \$40 per median household per year for five years, or \$30 per year for seven years. This amount is for the total project cost. Applying an assessment would reduce this cost about \$10 per year on the levy.

Maintenance / Plowing

Residents on Garden Avenue expressed concern for maintaining a sidewalk. Currently, Public Works does not assess adjacent properties for the replacement of existing sidewalk. This would remain the case for Garden.

The City does have the capacity to remove snow Garden Avenue's sidewalk, but there are concerns from neighbors in the Northhome area and other areas that have

sidewalk that the City does not shovel. Additionally, the City could shovel snow in front of properties zoned Residential only, and leave sidewalk shoveling of non-profit or schools to their maintenance staff

Linehan also states that these are preliminary numbers from April so the numbers could change.

Council Member Meyer asks if is the school a non-profit?

Linehan states yes, so is the church.

Linehan provides another way for the City to pay for this project. Linehan explains using CIP to for Falcon Woods and Garden Avenue.

Council Member Wehyee asks how dire in condition is falcon woods in?

Frehammer states it is a drivable street in decent condition.

Mayor Gustafson asks when we bond is it for 10 years?

Linehan says no, usually 5 to 7-year bond

Linehan says the overall question is do we want to access. However, this would set a precedent and the city can cover it internally.

Mayor Gustafson states maybe it sets the precedent for later projects with sidewalks because it a apart of our comprehensive plan for redoing roads the city adds a sidewalk/bike path.

Mayor Gustafson states we are all for option 7.

Council Members Meyer and Wehyee are in favor for option 4.

Mayor Gustafson states I am okay with option 4 I think it is the best we have and believes that the City has to cover the cost.

Council Member Leehy states in the long run residents benefit from this.

Linehan asks the council if the city covers this then will the city have to plow it in the winter?

Mayor Gustafson states yes, it will be safer for students when walking to school and I think it will just be good.

5. Proposed Schedule for 2023 Budget & Levy Workshops

Linehan states the 2023 preliminary levy must be approved and certified on or before September 30th, 2022, and the City Budget must be approved and certified on or before December 28th, 2022. However, there are a few key dates prior to that that

must be met to remain on schedule. To break up the discussion and keep us on track for approval, I am proposing additional City Workshops on the following dates:

- Wednesday, August 17th - 6:30 p.m.
- Wednesday, September 21st - 6:30 p.m.

The full proposed budget schedule is as follows (**bold** indicates council meeting/ action):

- June
 - Staff prepare budget worksheets
- July
 - Departments submit budget requests to City Administrator and Finance Director
 - 2nd Quarter Financial Report performed, used to guide year-end estimates for 2022 Budget
- August
 - Year-end estimates finalized
 - Staff draft of budget finalized
 - Wednesday, August 17th
 - **Budget Workshop #1** (Special Revenue Funds, Enterprise Funds, Debt Service Funds)
- September
 - Wednesday, September 5th
 - **Budget Workshop #2** (General Fund, Proposed Levy)
 - Wednesday, September 21st
 - **Budget Workshop #3** (Proposed 2023 Levy and Budget)
 - Wednesday, September 28th
 - **Adopt and Certify the 2023 Preliminary Levy**
 - **Set date/time for Truth in Taxation Meeting**
 - Friday, September 30th
 - Certified Preliminary Levy Due to Ramsey County Auditor
- October
 - County auditor collects and reports on tax body levies
 - Staff refine 2022 year-end estimates and 2023 proposed budget
- November
 - County auditor sends out parcel specific notices for proposed levy and Truth in Taxation Date
- December
 - Wednesday, December 14, 2022
 - **Truth in Taxation Hearing and Budget Presentation**
 - **Adoption of 2023 Levy**
 - **Adoption of 2023 Budget**
 - Wednesday, December 28, 2022
 - Final 2023 Levy and Budget Due

Mayor Gustafson asks don't we have to propose our levy before August?

Linehan says yes.

6. Commercial Real Estate Broker RFP

Linehan states The City of Falcon Heights leases the Community Park land from the University of Minnesota and the current lease agreement is set to expire at the end of 2024. Both parties have expressed interest in the City purchasing the land from the University, and both have completed a commercial appraisal of the property. Due to the scale of this land acquisition, staff have determined it's within the City's best interest to obtain commercial real estate brokerage services.

With approval from Council, staff would plan to issue a Request for Proposal (RFP) on August 12, and provide Council with a recommendation mid-September. The goal is to have qualified individuals or firms help staff navigate real estate transaction services, negotiations, and proper documentation and execution of the entire process.

Staff is seeking approval to release and advertise the RFP starting on August 12th, 2022.

7. Hamline Church Dining Hall Day Proclamation

Mayor Gustafson states The Hamline Church Dining Hall is celebrating its 125th anniversary at the Minnesota State Fair. To commemorate the occasion, the Hamline Church Dining Hall will have a ceremony at the opening of the Fair on Thursday, August 25th at 9AM. The group has requested the City to consider proclaiming August 25th as Hamline Church Dining Hall Day in Falcon Heights.

The Hamline Methodist Episcopal Church Ladies Aid Society 1897 opened a small food stand at the Minnesota State Fair, serving lemonade and sandwiches. The women wished to help their congregation raise money to build their own church. The dining hall has continued through two world wars, the Great Depression, the 1940s polio epidemic, and the recent COVID-19 pandemic. The dining hall has become the oldest continuously operated food service establishment at the fair and is a traditional stop for many fairgoers. The proceeds have supported St. Paul area nonprofits, including Keystone Community Services Food Shelf and Emma Norton Services. The dining hall crew is proud to be part of the fair and the City of Falcon Heights.

Council Member Leehy states this is fabulous.

E. INFORMATION/ANNOUNCEMENTS:

F. ADJOURNMENT: 9:51 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 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 14th day of September, 2022



Jack Linehan, City Administrator



Randall C. Gustafson, Mayor