

**CITY OF FALCON HEIGHTS**  
Regular Meeting of the City Council  
City Hall  
2077 West Larpenteur Avenue

**MINUTES**  
November 29, 2023 at 7:00 P.M.

A. CALL TO ORDER: 7:07 PM

B. ROLL CALL: GUSTAFSON\_X\_ LEEHY\_X\_ MEYER\_X\_

WASSENBERG\_X\_ WEHYEE\_X\_

STAFF PRESENT: LINEHAN\_X\_ LYNCH\_X\_ MCDOWELL\_POEHLER\_X\_

C. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Councilmember Wehyee requests Consent Agenda Item 3. Falcon Heights Book Club – Appeal to Waive Rental Fee, to be moved to Policy Items.

Councilmember Meyer motions to approve the agenda; approved 5-0

D. PRESENTATION

E. APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

1. November 1, 2023 City Council Workshop Meeting Minutes

Councilmember Wassenberg motions to approve the minutes; approved 5-0

F. PUBLIC HEARINGS:

G. CONSENT AGENDA:

1. General Disbursements through: 11/22/23 \$212,187.69

Payroll through: 11/15/23 \$19,923.43

Wire Payments through: 11/15/23 \$13,119.02

2. Approval of City License(s)

~~3. Falcon Heights Book Club – Appeal to Waive Rental Fee~~

4. Approval of 2024 City Meeting Calendar

5. Senior Maintenance Worker Dave Simons – Six Month Employee Step Adjustment

Councilmember Wehyee requests that the Falcon Heights Book Club be moved to Policy discussion; no objections

Councilmember Leehy motions to approve the Consent Agenda; approved 5-0

H. POLICY ITEMS:

1. Amber Flats PUD Denial & Approval of Findings of Facts

Administrator Linehan provides a brief overview. Amber Flats is a proposed 100-unit affordable housing apartment building to be located directly to the west of the existing

Amber Union Apartments. The purpose of this application for a Planned Unit Development (PUD) is to allow for the construction of this apartment building along with flexibility in City Code guidelines. The Planning Commission met on October 24, 2023 and held a public hearing. After hearing comments and discussion, the Planning Commission voted 6-1 to recommend approval of the PUD. The Falcon Heights City Council met on November 15, 2023 to discuss the proposal and recommendation of approval from the Planning Commission. After hearing from the developer, public, and holding a discussion, the City Council voted 2-2 to approve the PUD. As approval required a majority vote, it did not have the necessary support for approval. Those who voted against approval directed staff to draft a denial for the project due to parking requirements being less than what is needed for the City. When a decision about land use is made, the City Council must develop and adopt written "findings of fact" that explain the decision. Based on the discussion at the November 15, 2023 City Council meeting, staff has drafted findings of facts that would deny the PUD for review and adoption. Linehan reminds council that they have 60 days to act on a decision, there is the option to extend for an additional 60 days if needed. If Council approves this finding of fact it would mean the project is denied, either way the Council votes, it requires a majority vote. Council can also decide to reconsider at a future meeting.

Council discusses their stand in regards to the proposal and if they should motion to reconsider the proposal at a future meeting. Both Mayor Gustafson and Councilmember Leehy have not changed their stance and are in favor of denying the project due to parking concerns. Councilmember Wassenberg and Wehyee are in favor of the project. Councilmember Meyer explains he was unsure about the project at first due to parking concerns, but after conducting his own research and conversing with the Planning commissioners, he believes some of the parking requirements are outdated. He continues, there is a need for housing and with a good public transit system that is existing in Falcon Heights, the benefits of the project outweigh the drawbacks.

City Attorney McDowell Poehler clarifies that the developer can request an amendment to their original application within the 60-day review period. The amended application will most likely need to be reviewed by the Planning Commission again before it is brought back to Council.

Council discusses procedures regarding next steps.

Councilmember Meyer motions to reconsider and to continue discussion of Policy Item 1. Amber Flats PUD & Findings of Facts at the City Council Meeting on December 13, 2023; approved 5-0

## 2. Falcon Heights Book Club - Appeal to Waive Rental Fee

The Falcon Heights Book Club submitted an appeal letter to waive the rental fee for use of the conference room at City Hall.

Councilmember Wehyee wonders if we should grant a fee waiver for other organizations that utilize City Hall. Would it be possible to grant a waiver for the Falcon Heights Book Club in perpetuity?

Councilmember Leehy adds that the key reason to waive the rental fee is because it was an idea initiated by a Council member back in 1996. She would be in favor of perpetuity so Council does not have to decide to waive it each year.

Councilmember Meyer wonders about costs associated.

Administrator Linehan explains that a comparable organization is the Falconeers Card Club. Both are not sponsored by the City, but they do require significant set up done by staff and are therefore responsible for paying the \$100 rental fee for the year. The Falcon Heights Book Club requires no set up by staff. Civic groups get a significant discount if they rent a space at City Hall multiple times a year. He adds that it would be beneficial to waive it for multiple years.

Council discusses waiving the fee for three years for the Falcon Heights Book Club and continues to discuss if they should waive the fee for more organizations than just the book club. If Council is waving it for three years it can be reconsidered after the three years.

Administrator Linehan adds that the conference room is also rarely used compared to the Council Chambers.

Mayor Gustafson motions to waive the Annual Rental Fee for the Falcon Heights Book Club through 2026; approved 5-0

I. INFORMATION/ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Councilmember Wassenberg has no announcements.

Councilmember Leehy has no announcements.

Councilmember Wehyee has no announcements.

Councilmember Meyer has no announcements.

Mayor Gustafson announces that the Ramsey County League of Local Government annual meeting is on Thursday, December 7 at Cedar Home Golf Club in Roseville.

Administrator Linehan reminds everyone about the Truth in Taxation Hearing on Wednesday, December 13<sup>th</sup> at 7PM at City Hall. Residents received their proposed 2024 property taxes which serves as the official notice of the meeting. Staff is working diligently on the budget to make final adjustments. The Community Park survey has received over 70 responses and it will remain open for a period of time, no end date has been decided. Next Monday, December 4<sup>th</sup> the Parks Commission will review preliminary results. There will potentially be a second public engagement session on December 20. Following the review, the Parks Commission will provide recommendations to the Council hopefully by the end of the year per direction of the project manager, in order for the project to stay on track. A number of preliminary testing is already being done at the park to get the site ready.

Council decided to add the item to the Council workshop, which takes place two days after the Parks Commission meets to discuss survey findings and next steps.

Linehan continues with stating that the City is in its final stages of interviewing candidates for the Senior Maintenance Worker position. There are three very well qualified individuals who are being brought in for final interviews next week. Lastly, the Community Engagement Commission has partnered with the International Institute of Minnesota for a

winter coat drive. Items can be dropped off at City Hall during office hours. They will also have a weekend drop-off on Saturday, December 9 from 8AM until 11AM.

Councilmember Leehy wonders about Human Rights Day.

Administrator Linehan does not have a definitive answer, but explains that the Community Engagement Commission is working on organizing a community session with Third Sphere in January.

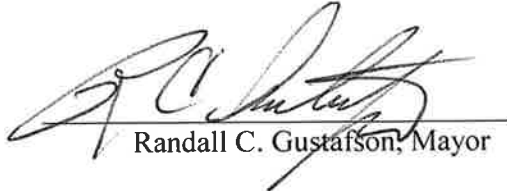
J. COMMUNITY FORUM:

*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.*

K. ADJOURNMENT: 7:58 PM

Councilmembers Leehy and Wehyee motion for adjournment; approved 5-0

Dated this 29<sup>th</sup> day of November, 2023



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Randall C. Gustafson, Mayor



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Jack Linehan, City Administrator