

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

MINUTES
April 27, 2024
9:00 A.M. - 4:00 P.M.

A. CALL TO ORDER: 9:00 AM

B. ROLL CALL: GUSTAFSON_X_ LEEHY____
MEYER_X_ WASSENBERG_X_ MIELKE_X_

STAFF PRESENT: LINEHAN_X_ NELSON_X_ CALLAHAN_X_ OLSON_X_
LANDBERG_X_ LYNCH_X_ VAN DER WERFF_X_
TRETSVEN_X_ SIMONS_X_ POPE_X_

C. AGENDA:

I. Introduction/Overview of Meeting - Mayor and City Administrator Linehan

II. ThirdSphere DEI&B Training for Council and Staff

Jonathan Stuart and Ramon Pastrano from ThirdSphere provide a workshop focused on continuing the DEI&B training. The workshop builds off prior topics discussed at previous trainings.

III. Break

IV. Updates from City Staff

- a. Administration - Administrative Services Director Kelly Nelson
- b. Finance - Finance Director Roland Olson / Accountant Alyssa Landberg
- c. Public Works - Public Works Director Colin Callahan
- d. Parks & Recreation - Administrative Services Director Kelly Nelson
 - i. Parks and Recreation Commission
- e. Communications - Administrative & Communications Coordinator Elke van der Werff
 - i. Community Engagement Commission
- f. Planning & Zoning - Community Development Coordinator Hannah Lynch
 - i. Environment Commission
 - ii. Planning Commission

V. Lunch break

VI. City Administrator and Council Topics/Priorities

- a. **Discuss Priorities and Consider for Future Workshops:**

- i. Assessment Policy
- ii. Rental Protections / Multi-family Outreach Efforts
- iii. Plowing / Alleyway Consideration
- iv. Larpenteur / Snelling Corridor Study
- v. Police Services
- vi. 75th Anniversary Planning
- vii. Garbage & Recycling Services
- viii. Code / Ordinance Updates
- ix. Parkway Trees

VII. Adjournment

Deputy Clerk Nelson shares the administrative accomplishments for 2023, they include:

- Officially closed on the purchase of Community Park in May
- Hired WSB and HCM Architects to help the City navigate the Community Park renovation
- Formed a State Fair Task Force and assisted in implementing recommendations.
- Awarded the contract and completed the 2023 Pavement Management Program (PMP) and the additional Ruggles Pathway project.
- Brought in ThirdSphere as consultants to support the City's Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Belonging (DEI+B) efforts with both staff and residents
- Awarded contract for Larpenteur Avenue lighting (work to be completed this year)
- Updated the Personnel Policy and Administrative Manual
- Finalized ARPA Fund Utilization Plan
- Made improvements in communications to increase awareness of important city updates.
- Grant Success
- Successfully transitioned PW Director's retirement and hired three new full-time employees (33% of staff)
- Issued a total of 542 permits

She then shares the administrative goals for 2024, which are:

- Finalize long-term solutions for police services
- 2024 Capital Program
- Community Park
- 2024 PMP
- Larpenteur Street Lights installation
- Continue work on DEI Initiatives & Cultivating a Caring Community
- Break ground and frame up the new Community Park building before winter
- Secure grant funding for Community Park Playground
- Develop a staff retention plan and begin work on a 2025 compensation & benefits study
- Launch an e-license renewal process to streamline license renewals

Finance Director Olson provides an overview of the 2023 accomplishments in finance:

- 2022 Annual Financial Audit and ACFR
 - 2 minor comments from GFOA ACFR reviewers
- 2022 Worker's Compensation Audit
- City Budget for 2024 Workshop Budget Worksheets
- Assisted in Setting Tax Levy for 2024
- State Auditor's Office Required Reports Annually
 - Budget Summary
 - Financial Statement Summary
 - Tax Increment Reporting
 - Lobbying Report
- Other Required Reports
 - Department of Commerce Unclaimed Assets
 - MN Department of Labor and Industry
 - Quarterly Payroll Reports to IRS, State of MN, PERA, and ICMA

- MN Sales Tax Report

He continues with an overview of the 2024 goals in the Finance Department:

- Maintain Financial Sustainability for Future of City
- Maintain AAA Bond Rating
 - How do we do this?
- Maintain Compliance Requirements of State of MN
- Consistently Obtain Favorable Audit Results
- Maintain Positive Pay Security

- Accountant Landberg explains more about the investments.
- The City received \$338,078 in actual interest income in 2023.
- We also had a \$94,081 increase in the fair market value of our investments.
- With interest receivable included, this will be reflected as unrestricted investment earnings of \$523,123 for 2023.
- This differs from 2022 because that year we had an interest income of \$125,287, but a \$146,728 decrease in fair market value. With interest receivable included it was reflected as a loss of \$24,331 on the financial statements.
- This will change yearly depending on the fair market value calculations and interest income amounts.

- She also explains more about the debts.
- G.O. Improvement Bond 2017 (\$845,000) – Principal and interest payments will be complete in February 2025. \$130,000 principal and \$3,900 interest remaining. (Noncallable)
- G.O. Improvement Bond 2021 (\$665,000)– Principal and interest payments will be complete in February 2027. \$405,000 principal and \$16,200 interest remaining. (Noncallable)
- G.O. Improvement Bond 2023 (\$520,000)– Interest payments will begin in 2024, principal payments will begin in 2025, and principal and interest payments will be completed in February 2029. \$520,000 principal and \$81,007 interest remaining. (Callable)

The agenda gets slightly amended and Deputy Clerk Nelson will provide updates on the 2023 accomplishments and 2024 goals for staff and the Parks and Recreation Department and Commission, of which she is the liaison.

The 2023 Staff accomplishments are:

- Created an MN State Fair Resource Guide for residents, published online and in the weekly newsletter prior to the fair's start, which reduced the volume of calls drastically from the previous year.
- AARP Tax-Aide appointments returned to Falcon Heights City Hall in 2023, with Staff taking tax appointments over the phone.
- Created a spreadsheet to help all staff communicate more effectively regarding City boulevard trees due to many resident inquiries about the boulevard trees.

The 2024 Staff goals are:

- Continue to apply for grants in 2024

- Community Park Building – submitted a 2024 Outdoor Recreation Grant application to the MN DNR on April 1, 2024.
- Applied for grant funds through the University of Minnesota Good Neighbor Fund on April 22, 2024.
- Applied for grant funds through AARP Community Challenge Grant in March 2024.
- Work with Adrian Neis, Fire Marshal, to develop a plan to stagger fire inspections of rental properties and businesses.

Nelson explains the 2023 accomplishments of the Parks and Recreation Department are:

- Parks Programming
 - Hired three seasonal staff and held soccer programming in the summer.
 - Surveyed parents at the end in order to make improvements to future programming.
 - Added two new classes: Breathwork and Neighborhood Workouts at Curtiss Field; Neighborhood Workouts was such a popular class in the summer that the instructor added fall classes.
- Parks and Rec Grants
 - Applied for and received park benches for Community Park and Curtiss Field through Active Living Ramsey Communities Be Active! Be Green! Bench Initiative.
 - Received a grant from the St. Paul Garden Club with the Monarch Joint Venture. Funds were used for plants to restore the pollinator habitat around the Community Park pond and to replace the educational signage around the pond.

The 2024 goals of the Parks and Recreation Department are:

- Parks Programming
 - Maintain enrollment numbers in existing City Hall classes and explore adding new classes once the Community Park building is constructed
 - Freshen summer programming to reach new households and generate excitement for future City programming in hopes of growing enrollment numbers.
 - Hire staffing that allows the City to expand the recreation opportunities this summer.

The Parks and Recreation Commission had the following accomplishments in 2023:

- Audited the parks to make a list of suggested improvements to be made and to budget for any needs (repairs or equipment) in 2024. This also led to equipment replacements in 2023 of soccer nets, basketball nets, tetherball, and basketballs.
- Had pickleball game lines painted on the court at The Grove and basketball game lines painted at Curtiss Field.
- Grew attendance at Spring Together and Ice Cream Social events over the previous year.
- Solicited public feedback regarding the Community Park renovation. This was done at a Parks and Recreation Commission Meeting and through a survey.

The Parks and Recreation Commission has the following goals for 2024:

- Develop a small-scale (fall) event

- Maintain attendance and momentum for City Events, by promoting and improving signage
- To have regular meetings of the PARC, having a quorum at least every quarter.
- Make an ice-skating decision for 2025 for all locations
- Analyze changes to the programming implemented
- Study and recommend amenities and improvements for Curtiss Field and Grove Parl.

City Administrator Linehan provides an overview of the 2023 accomplishments in the Public Works Department:

- Sanitary sewer cleaning was completed (West of Snelling)
- Spring, fall, and touch-up street sweeping during the summer season was completed
- The sewer lining project for 2023 was completed
- Worked with city Engineer and Northwest Asphalt on the 2023 PMP project.
- Updated lift station located at Larpenteur and Coffman
- Snow plowing and salting are done in-house.
- Inspect all outfall catch basins as part of MS-4 requirements
- Updated sanitary sewer maps
 - Attach addresses to factory taps into the city's main
- Sidewalk panel replacement in Northome
 - Approx. 354 feet

He continues by noting the 2024 goals for Public Works:

- Continue sanitary sewer lining project (1.3 miles of CIPP proposed)
- Cleaning of sanitary sewer system (East side of Snelling)
- Continue patching roads until they are scheduled for PMP
- Work with city Engineer and contractor on upcoming PMP project (Roselawn)
- Rehab storm water catch basins. 144 have been identified as needing repairs.
- Keep up with MS-4 requirements--inspecting in and outfall basins/storage ponds
- Street sweeping Spring and Fall and as needed
- Repair Falcon Heights city monuments
 - Sandblast/repaint/replace broken glass panels
- Continue sidewalk panel replacement throughout city
 - New in-house - Grinding offsets where appropriate
- Install 8 park benches received as part of the BeActive! BeGreen! Grant

Community Development Coordinator Lynch explains the 2023 accomplishments in planning and zoning:

- Grants
 - Ramsey County Critical Corridors Grant
 - \$50,000 toward the Larpenteur & Snelling Corridor Development Study
 - MPCA Brownfield Grant
 - Get Pressed - 1407 Larpenteur
 - No Cost Environmental Study
 - Work performed by MPCA contractors
 - Will be creating a Response Action Plan based on results
 - Amber Union DEED Grant closed out officially

- Code Enforcement
 - Junk cars finally removed from 1938 Roselawn after years
 - TV removed from yard of 1854 Howell
 - Ongoing clean up at 1407 Larpenteur

She continues to explain the 2024 goals in the department:

- Assist with moving 1407 Larpenteur forward – either toward clean up/demo or development
- Continue to assist with Amber Flats development
- Code Enforcement
 - Working on clean up of 1892 Albert
 - Clean up of 1407 Larpenteur / Broken window
 - Continue to monitor trash around City

Lynch is the liaison for both the Planning Commission and Environment Commission. The 2023 accomplishments and 2024 goals for the Environment Commission are:

2023 Accomplishments:

- Achieved Steps 4 & 5 in GreenStep Cities again
- Minnesota Cities Charging Smart Program (EV Smart) – Achieved bronze certification
- Partners in Energy program
- EV language in City Code

2024 Goals:

- Continue to work toward achieving Steps 4 & 5 – work on bringing up some numbers
- Partners in Energy program – draft Energy Action Plan and work toward implementation
- Climate Action Plan – Grant application submitted

The 2023 accomplishments and 2024 goals for the Planning Commission are:

2023 Accomplishments:

- Community Park Subdivision
- Conversations with neighbors about 1407 Larpenteur development
- Gibbs Farm PUD
- Amber Flats Development – 96 affordable housing units next to Amber Union
- Hollywood Court – Nightly permit parking

2024 Goals:

- Updates to City Code
- Complete the Larpenteur & Snelling Corridor Development Study
- Cannabis Licensing
- Gibbs Farm PUD – Get in front of City Council

Administrative and Communications Coordinator van der Werff ends the staff portion of the retreat with the 2023 accomplishments and 2024 goals for Communications.

2023 Accomplishments:

- Issued RFP for newsletter/printing services
- Increased social media engagement
- Published two printed newsletters

- Published two postcards
- Redesigned e-newsletter and increased subscriptions
- Created State Fair Resource webpage
- Started adding to the City Photo Archive

2024 Goals:

- Issue RFP for city website management
- Create a Communication Policy
- Publish a printed State Fair Guide and redesign the fall newsletter
- Create Short videos of City Staff and Elected Officials
- Continue to build the City Photo Archive
- Continue to increase social media accounts and identify other communication efforts
- Integrate local businesses into communications

She is the liaison for the Community Engagement Commission, and their accomplishments for 2023 and goals for 2024 are:

2023 Accomplishments:

- Gained 3 commissioners
- Collaborated with the International Institute on Winter Coat Drive
- Held joint meetings with the Parks and Rec Commission and focused on community outreach for city events and increased attendance for both Spring Together and Ice Cream Social
- Organized a Community Engagement Night in partnership with Third Sphere

2024 Goals:

- Retain commissioners
- Create an apartment outreach and engagement Plan
- Revitalize the Neighborhood Liaison Program
- Collaborate with a community organization on a Human Rights Day event

At this time, all Staff had presented accomplishments and goals with councilmembers. A short break was taken and then Administrator Linehan presented the following topics to City Council to further discuss at Council Workshops.

- Assessment Policy
- Rental Protections / Multi-family Outreach Efforts
- Plowing / Alleyway Consideration
- Larpenteur / Snelling Corridor Study
- Police Services
- 75th Anniversary Planning
- Garbage & Recycling Services
- Code / Ordinance Updates
- Parkway Trees

D. ADJOURNMENT: 4:05 p.m.

Councilmember motions to adjourn the retreat; approved 4-0.

DISCLAIMER: City Council Retreats are held annually as an opportunity for Staff to present prior year achievements in their departments as well as outline their current goals to Council Members. And, it allows 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 should send them to mail@falconheights.org prior to the retreat. Alternatively, time is regularly allotted for public comment during Regular City Council Meetings (typically 2nd and 4th Wednesdays) during the Community Forum.



Randall C. Gustafson, Mayor

Dated this 12th day of June, 2024



Jack Linehan, City Administrator