

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

MINUTES
Wednesday, February 5, 2025
6:30 P.M.

A. CALL TO ORDER: 6:37 PM

B. ROLL CALL: GUSTAFSON_X__ LEEHY_X__
MEYER_X__ MIELKE_X__ WASSENBERG_X__

STAFF PRESENT: LINEHAN_X__ JOHNSON_X__

C. POLICY ITEMS:

1. Community Park Project Update

Linehan explains staff continues to work with WSB on the Community Park renovation plans. After pivoting from a park building to a shelter and restroom, WSB reached out to several vendors for proposals. Two vendors stood out, with products best aligning with products and visual preferences desired by staff. Linehan describes the two proposals submitted and the estimated timeline for construction. Staff is proposing to select Cedar Forest proposals as they are a Minnesota-based company, and their proposal included a restroom building with an attached shelter. Linehan shows the Council a new site plan including the combined bathroom and shelter, new playground, and splash pad.

Bob Slipka from WSB explains how the new site plan compares to the current site plan with the building outline, he also explains the entrances to the building and the server that opens into the shelter. He highlights the maintenance of saving matured trees. The goal has been to save as many trees as possible. Linehan moves to a more detailed site plan of the playground and shows the shaded areas added.

Wassenberg wonders about berms, and if those will be flattened. Slipka notes the large shade trees and hardwood trees, as well as the berms, will remain to the north of the shelter. The larger berm northeast of the current building will remain as well. He continues to explain which trees and berms remain. The key is to preserve as much space as much as possible.

Mielke wonders about water for the community garden. Slipka says there will be a hydrant that runs from the bathroom to the garden.

Linehan moves back to the overall site plan of the general concept. The parking lot footprint will remain, but it will be resurfaced, and new storm drains will be added. A new stormwater pond will be added as well. Linehan explains this will be the lowest cost option. Slipka says that by more strategically striping the parking lot, it allows for

a few more parking spots and easier flow of the parking lot.

Meyer points to the bike racks, there are currently three and he wonders if more will be added. Slipka points out it will currently stay this way. In an upcoming sit-down meeting with staff, they will go through the entire plan and look at details such as bike racks, trash can quantities, and location configurations. Meyer suggests adding more bike racks.

Linehan continues with visuals of the shelter. Cedar Forest recently installed a shelter and bathroom combination in St. Louis Park, and he shows it as an example. He explains what will be included inside the building. Slipka adds everything will be ADA accessible as well as low maintenance.

Linehan points out he requested Slipka to provide a price estimate of the project. The total cost would be 2.2 to 2.5 million dollars with contingencies built in. He points out that all grant items are included as bid alternates, such as the rubberized surfacing for the playground. Slipka explains the renovations are provided in packages to allow for more savings. For example, staff can pick out and order their own picnic tables directly, rather than having a contractor facilitate that process.

Wassenberg wonders about stormwater improvements. Slipka explains most cost for stormwater is the parking lot improvements, but there is some need for the splash pad. Linehan notes there is also an estimate included for sanitary infrastructure. As proposals and quotes become available, this helps bring contingencies down and get actual pricing.

Linehan is seeking direction from the Council and wonders if the staff is on the right path. There will be the need for a formal approval of the proposals. The Council discusses what other items to get the Parks and Recreation Commission involved in, for example, the splash pad designs. Linehan explains what kinds of styles were selected for the splash pad. Slipka explains that the thought behind it is to keep it a multi-use area, by having the ability to remove the water features.

Linehan discusses the timeline for the construction. Meyer wonders about Ice Cream Social. Linehan explains they have not fully looked at new configurations of how the city events will be planned. But the site plan is very flexible and multi-use. The tables will be movable, and the splash pad water features are removable. Linehan points out there is also open space to allow for a future building or bandshell.

Leehy wonders about the soccer fields. Linehan explains that the fields are remaining as-is. There will more paths added as well. Meyer wonders about options to replace/refurbish or remove the exercise stations along the path in the park. Linehan notes one of them needs to be removed and the cost to replace would not be high but it's not in the scope of the current project and could be budgeted for in future years.

Wassenberg wonders about green space east of the community garden. Slipka comments this will remain and at the end of the project, the current playground will be removed and will add green space to allow for future needs when trends change. The two existing shelters will remain as well and will be refurbished. Gustafson comments that this site plan seems to fit all the wishes. Linehan explains next steps and the

Council thanks Slipka.

2. ParkMobile Proposal / E-Meters on City Streets Ordinance

Linehan explains that the State Fair Task Force is exploring a temporary e-meter parking system for during the State Fair. Members of the Task Force identified that the City of Falcon Heights provides approximately 800-1,000 free parking spots at any given time to visitors of the Minnesota State Fair.

Linehan explains the process of ParkMobile, how to pay for parking, and what the revenue estimates are. The city could utilize the revenue to allow for the hiring of parking enforcement, which would free up the police from traffic enforcement. ParkMobile will take a portion to pay for their processing costs. Implementing this would require ordinance changes.

Leehy wonders if this requires striping for parking spots. Linehan answers no, it will be divided into zones and there will be signs with zone numbers and QR codes to scan and pay for parking. Linehan explains it's different from traditional metered parking; it's a per-day fee. If someone leaves after 2 hours, it will still charge for the full day. Linehan explains there are various ways to look at enforcement. For example, the city could consider utilizing administrative citations. Gustafson notes the enforcers could also be ambassadors for Falcon Heights to the visitors.

Mielke adds the revenue could also be used for items such as road projects or park amenities.

Meyer expresses concern about signage, to ensure people know what zone they are parking in. Mielke shows signs that are provided by ParkMobile in the proposals. Linehan agrees that signage and communication are important aspects of it. Leehy agrees that there needs to be obvious signage to show that visitors are in Falcon Heights, and ambassadors can help with that.

Wassenberg adds that e-meter parking can help alleviate the constant circling of cars looking for free parking spots. Leehy points out to re-evaluate the need for no-parking and permit parking.

The Council discusses how far to take the paid parking. Wassenberg is concerned about how it will impact residents and ease of life.

Linehan recommends holding a public hearing for the ordinance change. Leehy believes it will encourage parking at the fair and park and rides. Linehan explains staff has been proactive and reached out to the State Fair about the proposal. This helps balance the supply and demand of free parking and makes spots at businesses more valuable.

Leehy wonders about ways to pay, and Linehan explains the various ways.

3. City Commissioner Ordinance Update

Linehan is providing an update on the amendments suggested for the city code regarding commissioners, such as compensations, eligibility, term start, and the resignation process. Staff feels like there is a need for more of a formalized appointment process that should be added to the administrative manual, similar to an

HR process for a job posting. Wassenberg wonders about employment regulations. Linehan notes that they will be similarly treated as council and are not held accountable to the personal policy. However, staff will continue to work with the League of Minnesota Cities and the city attorney.

Meyer wonders if a youth commissioner is a full voting member and part of the seven members. Linehan notes, yes, the age restrictions help avoid having to deal with labor laws for minors if meetings go beyond curfew. Planning is excluded for youth commissioners as they have a quasi-legal function. Gustafson wonders if a youth commissioner term follows the school year or calendar year. Linehan notes it would be a full 1-year term from their appointment date, no matter when that is during the year. Gustafson wonders if a youth commissioner spot should be kept open. Linehan answers that there is not a designated spot; it just allows having a youth commissioner and helps with promotion.

Wassenberg feels there is a lot of opportunity for a youth commissioner to fill a vacancy as there generally is a good flow of commissioners leaving and filling vacancies.

Linehan suggests we can add to the policy that youth commissioners get a priority to allow them to fill as often as possible. There is always the possibility to create a youth commission. The council appreciates defining it.

4. 2025 Legislative Priorities

Linehan and staff are seeking direction for current legislative priorities when advocating for Falcon Heights. He explains LMC and Metro Cities have their own priorities that benefit all cities in Minnesota. One important aspect for Falcon Heights, he points out, is local government aid and municipal funding as the city benefits greatly from these funds. One priority from the State Fair Task Force is requesting assistance for traffic management and community public safety during the State Fair for Falcon Heights. The idea is to have the State take on a little bit more of the responsibility. Wassenberg appreciates the idea of having personnel to help with traffic management. The state patrol does not help with the State Fair as the fair has its own police force. Gustafson points out they have some role in the fair. Linehan notes policing outside of the fairgrounds is up to the local jurisdictions and it is becoming a bigger ask, as attendance numbers grow, and more events get added throughout the year.

Gustafson agrees with the priorities outlined by staff, LMC, and Metro Cities. He expresses his discontent with legislators not showing up to session.

Linehan notes that support for local control is not the cities' top priority, but he feels the municipality has a better idea of what the community's needs are versus having a one-size-fits-all approach from the state.

5. Immigration Enforcement Update

Linehan provides background on what the city has done in the past. Immigration status is not part of the cities' operations, the only time this is asked is for employment.

Mielke adds she drafted a response to the University's recent statement. She is suggesting releasing a statement to show support to the Falcon Heights community.

Gustafson feels it is unnecessary and, when previously addressed, created more fear. Immigration enforcement is not under the city's jurisdiction; neither is it the jurisdiction of a police department. He explains that services are provided to everyone at the emergency center and immigration status is not asked. That is also the role of the city to provide services to the residents of Falcon Heights, regardless of immigration status, religion, etc.

Leehy notes she feels comfortable releasing a statement stating that the city and their contract partners do not ask or do not engage in immigration status, apart from for employment reasons. Wassenberg feels a statement of support is warranted. Meyer agrees a simple summary of the cities' policy should be sufficient. Wassenberg and Mielke agree to work on a statement.

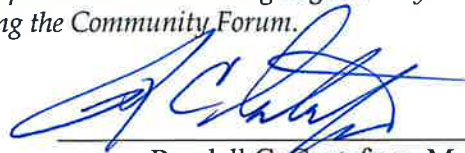
6. Summer Programming

Linehan notes the Parks and Rec Commission discussed programming at their recent meeting and programming is struggling with enrollment being down. Residents are attending programs at other organizations in Falcon Heights and surrounding municipalities. The commission discussed helping subsidize summer camps and programming from surrounding community partners. A suggestion is to subsidize 25 dollars. For example, a child is attending a tennis camp in Roseville, and Falcon Heights would offer a voucher for \$25. Linehan notes the perimeters of eligibility will need to be further defined. Wassenberg points out Roseville residents get discounted costs for their programming, and Falcon Heights residents are disadvantaged because they don't reside in Roseville but still attend their programming. Gustafson points out it would essentially cover the non-resident fee.

Linehan notes staff has discussed creating reciprocity with surrounding communities for their programming, but that requires time. The council continues to discuss the perimeters. The council suggests using the fact that the park is being renovated this summer as well and will not allow for programming as another reason to subsidize other summer programming offered. Gustafson suggests calling it an activities/athletic scholarship. The council discusses budget and quantities and provides direction to stay within the allocated budget.

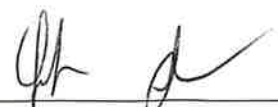
D. ADJOURNMENT: 9:10 PM

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.



Randall C. Gustafson, Mayor

Dated this 26th day of February, 2025



Jack Linehan, City Administrator