

CITY OF FALCON HEIGHTS
City Council Special Joint Workshop
City Council and State Fair Task Force
City Hall
2077 West Larpenteur Avenue

MINUTES
Wednesday, March 12, 2025
7:30 P.M.

A. CALL TO ORDER: 7:33 PM

B. ROLL CALL: COUNCIL:
GUSTAFSON__X__ LEEHY__X__
MEYER__X__ MIELKE__X__ WASSENBERG__

STATE FAIR TASK FORCE
Allard__X__ May__X__ Brace____
Davis__X__ Hausman____ McGarthwaite__X__
Johnson____ Paulus__X__ Prather__X__ Porter____

STAFF PRESENT: LINEHAN__X__ JOHNSON__X__

C. POLICY ITEMS:

1. Continuation of Discussion on E-Meter Parking

Gustafson explains that the Council discussed this item at their latest Council Workshop and that they went through several questions. Both groups differed on how the free parking codes/passes will be disbursed to residents, and how many. Wassenberg advocated for a non-complicated method with the least amount of impact on residents and staff time, and the Council agreed. This item needs to be revisited, as the State Fair Task Force (SFTF) did not fully agree with this method.

McGarthwaite explains mailing a pass/code to every resident will not work, because not every resident always receives mail. Providing a free code to everyone can also lead to abuse, decreased value, and the codes still need to be registered and activated with ParkMobile.

Gustafson and Leehy wonder what the SFTF's goal of the e-meter parking program is. Mielke comments that the idea is to create a new revenue stream for Falcon Heights, to help cover expenses generated by the State Fair. If it is not generating revenue, it's not a worthwhile project to further explore.

McGarthwaite adds it's also a quality-of-life issue and she believes people who need to pay will take better care. It can also push parkers to Park & Rides and says all of the traffic also already impacts the quality of life of residents. Residents will need to pay for a second "residential permit;" worries about depleting the process. Leehy appreciates the process that has been thought out.

Allard believes the quality of life will always be questionable around fair time, but at least there will be a revenue stream.

Leehy wonders if the SFTF looked at other vendors as well. McGarthwaite notes this is the only vendor that was approached. ParkMobile has the largest number of users in Minnesota, and people are familiar with it.

May emphasizes the importance of finding a balance between maximizing revenue and not creating a hassle for residents. Limiting the number of permits issued to residents avoids taking up all the spots.

Davis wants to ensure the council is accepting of the offer made by SFTF to have e-meter parking during the State Fair and other major events. She wants the SFTF to work through the details. May adds this will benefit all residents of Falcon Heights. Northome and NE Quadrant have the highest density of parkers during the fair and so it makes sense to test the program there first. Following the pilot year, they can discuss the experience and potentially expand to other areas or add entities. Davis is fearful that giving too much parking away would take away the revenue.

Leehy notes there is no opposition, but she wants to ensure all the details are worked through before presenting it to residents. Gustafson agrees. The council wants to think of concepts and ideas further downstream, so they are trying to gather as much information as they can and to consider all impacts before presenting it to residents. Gustafson reiterates that the council is favorable to exploring the concept. Mielke adds that the point is to ease parking stress for the neighborhoods. Gustafson sees the concept as a positive, but there are also logistical issues that need to be worked out.

Linehan points out that the city would hire staff to work as parking ambassadors, as the St. Anthony Police Department (SAPD) prefers it not be officers who use the app. They will be notified by parking ambassadors that utilize the ParkMobile app of any parking violations. SAPD does not have the capacity to utilize the app, but they will be responsible for ticket enforcement.

McGarthwaite moves on to other areas they discussed, which were communications and staffing. Yes, it will be complicated for staff and residents, but the SFTF believes it will be first-year pains. Linehan has provided communication plans.

Leehy previously resided in Northome and did not feel like it was an inconvenience to acquire a parking permit/pass. There should be a specific timeframe, so it doesn't happen last minute.

Meyer believes people who are in need of parking passes will come into City Hall. He supports a mailing to make residents aware and offering an online application as well. He believes the price point for a second permit needs to be determined and agrees there should not be a third permit for residents.

Council and SFTF agree that there should be a State Fair guide again.

Gustafson asks ParkMobile about the enforcement of visitors who did not pay for parking.

Rob Stephens is the Regional Sales Manager for ParkMobile. He is familiar with smaller city parking regulations. There can be one 12-day code for residents that only needs to be entered once. Whereas visitors have to pay every single time they park. Regarding enforcement, there is a ParkMobile tool to check parking payments. It allows someone to check a plate against payment. Various integrations are possible. There is no extra cost for the enforcement. ParkMobile is the largest e-meter parking company in the US. He lists other places where ParkMobile is active. Because of the familiarity, it is a good e-meter parking program to use, because most people will already have the app on their phone. This makes it as easy as possible to ensure compliance. He likes the idea of having ambassadors to increase visibility on the street, which will also drive compliance.

Allard wonders how the pre-payment process works. Stephens explains the code is valid for one license plate for 12 days.

Stephens believed the one-time code would be most efficient for residents. Residents need to come to City Hall to acquire the code. Having as much inventory on the street for visitors is important.

May notes from a resident's standpoint, the parking will be the same with or without e-meter parking.

Gustafson adds that a communication method between SAPD and ambassadors needs to be determined.

Mielke suggests offering resident codes as early as possible, having a deadline the day before the fair, and making Saturdays available as well for residents to acquire a reservation. When residents come in, staff can apply the code to their license plate. They would never have to enter the code themselves.

Leehy suggests making the parking ambassador program available to teenagers and seniors of Falcon Heights and have them pair up. Prather adds teenagers are able to help users with the app.

Stephens explains there is also an account management team that can help with whatever process is decided.

Gustafson wonders how the zones should be determined. Stephens notes having different zones is easier, as for enforcement would utilize a list to cross-reference.

Linehan explains the process will be similar for staff for mailing them all out or having residents come in for a back-end perspective. Residents should be able to park in all zones, as parking will still be first come, first served.

Stephens points out it should be looked at it by zone and not by plate. The search function of the app does not allow searching by plate.

Davis wonders what is easier for the city, to purchase codes in bulk or to purchase them one at a time as residents come in. Stephens explains it's easier to acquire them all at once.

Gustafson wants to ensure that everyone is prepared to answer questions from the public for the March 26 public hearing.

All residents will be notified and will have to come into City Hall for one complimentary pass, and number two can be acquired for a certain dollar amount. But the second parking spot will need to be determined based on inventory.

McGarthwaite adds ParkMobile will provide signage for visitors to acquire day passes.

May says a lot of progress has been made and summarizes the decisions that have been made:

- Affected residents have the option to come into City Hall to get a resident pass.
- Visitors will have to purchase parking through ParkMobile.
- Training will be provided by ParkMobile.
- Ambassadors will be hired to check plates for compliance and they will inform SAPD of parking infraction; SAPD will do ticketing
- Signs will be provided by ParkMobile and additional communications will be done as well.

Meyer adds if there is a hard cap on the number of resident passes that are available, it would help determine the amount of second passes that can be offered. Allard notes it would be hard to determine how many people would need a pass. It is important to note that they are limited. Davis says to make the second pass first come, first served.

The Council and SFTF agree that this program does not rely on getting funding from the federal or state level.

McGarthwaite adds it might not feel welcoming, but people are not parking here to visit Falcon Heights, they are here to park their car to attend the State Fair. Leehy agrees that we can still be welcoming but can have perimeters.

Davis wonders how staff will keep track of residents' questions at the public hearing. Linehan thanks SFTF for their perspective, and answers staff will keep track. He highlights the importance of pushing details out to residents with communications.

Gustafson points to the list of available parking spots and states that if everyone wants a resident pass, parking may be a challenge.

Leehy raises concerns about apartment dwellers and their access to parking. Linehan seeks clarification on eligibility in the two designated neighborhoods – specifically, whether residents must live directly on the street or if living on an adjacent street within the zone also qualifies. Removing eligibility for those who live within the area but not directly on the street could reduce the number of available spaces. It's important to consider both who is impacted and who should be eligible. May notes the affected street. Leehy adds that apartment dwellers park on city streets in these neighborhoods.

Prather wonders about the timeline. Will the contract be multi-year? Linehan explains the proposal is a 3-year agreement as ParkMobile does have capital investments. If, after the first year, too many free passes were given out, the program could be rolled back. There are no significant contract costs other than user fees. ParkMobile takes a portion

from each day pass. If revenue goals are not reached after the first year, the city can determine not to proceed. Prather suggests pre-calculating the number of residents.

Stephens notes that they are confident in the success of their program, and the city will not incur contractual costs if it does not work out after one year. The more inventory that is available for visitors, the more revenue it will generate. Residents are aware of the fair and will support the program.

Prather points out that parking spots can be double or triple-booked.

Paulus believes it is not welcoming and isn't sure how e-meter parking would address the quality-of-life issues. While the revenue is a perk, she believes having the ambassador presence is helpful; fund a positive presence and help alleviate other issues. Charging for parking perpetuates the parking lot image of Falcon Heights.

Mielke suggests doing some audits of current parking on the streets.

D. ADJOURNMENT: 9:11 PM

Councilmember Meyer motions to adjourn;
Approved 4-0

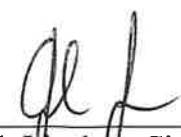
McGarthwaite motions to adjourn;
6-0

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 23rd day of April, 2025



Jack Linehan, City Administrator