

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

MINUTES

Wednesday, April 2, 2025
6:30 P.M.

A. CALL TO ORDER: 6:33 PM

B. ROLL CALL: GUSTAFSON__X__ LEEHY__X__
 MEYER__X__ MIELKE__X__ WASSENBERG__X__

STAFF PRESENT: LINEHAN__X__ JOHNSON__X__

C. POLICY ITEMS:

1. Continuation of Discussion on E-Meter Parking: Incorporating Public Comment and Next Steps

Linehan summarized that following the public hearing, the council adopted the ordinance permitting the use of parking e-meters and authorized the city administrator to begin contract negotiations with ParkMobile. A key discussion point with the city attorneys is the contract length. The finalized contract will be brought back to the council for approval.

City Staff are seeking guidance on the following next steps:

1. Amend the Administrative Manual (State Fair Guidelines)

Clarify:

- o How many resident parking passes each household is eligible for and who qualifies.
 - o How passes will be distributed and in what format (e.g., e-passes, hang tags, or other).
 - o Whether passes will be tied to license plates or issued in a different form.
2. Adopt an Annual Resolution - Define where e-meter parking will be implemented and when it will be active.
 3. Amend the Fee Schedule - Establish the visitor parking rate.
 4. Adjust the Annual Budget - Reflect projected revenues and expenses from the program.

Councilmembers and the State Fair Task Force provided the following comments

- Gustafson emphasized prioritizing the program's goals: improving public safety, managing increased traffic and parking during the State Fair, and addressing related city expenses (e.g., trash cans, porta-potties). He supported covering the cost of an ambassador program through e-meter parking revenue and allowing residents street access through passes. He was comfortable with lower revenue if more resident passes were provided.

- Wassenberg noted the State Fair Task Force (SFTF) was formed to improve the resident experience. The issue has a financial component, but the SFTF has a good track record in balancing needs.
- Leehy highlighted the importance of clear communication and ensuring the program benefits the whole city without overly burdening residents or staff. Public safety, reducing traffic, encouraging carpooling, and promoting park-and-ride use were key priorities. She supported additional perks like temporary intersection artwork to slow traffic and an ambassador program. Leehy suggested offering one resident pass per household with the option to request more, potentially at a discounted rate, and accommodating home health care or service vehicles with one-day passes.
- Mielke emphasized ease of communication, implementation, and enforcement, noting environmental benefits like reduced emissions.
- Meyer reflected on resident feedback, noting the fair is both a point of pride and a challenge. He opposed subsidizing fair costs through property taxes and summarized public input:
 - Benefits: revenue generation, tax relief, reduced congestion, funded amenities.
 - Concerns: perceived as unwelcoming or a “cash grab,” limiting resident access, high pricing (especially in Northeast Quadrant areas), and uncertain financial projections.
- Wassenberg cautioned that issuing too many passes could reduce visitor parking availability and outlined parking data and revenue models.
- Linehan and Meyer discussed the mechanics of hang tags versus license plate-based systems, noting that hang tags offer visual enforcement benefits, while ParkMobile’s system has limitations in searching license plates across zones.
- Gustafson underscored the need for secure, traceable passes to prevent counterfeiting and proposed accounting for existing permit parking.
- Mielke suggested a system demonstration to clarify backend processes. She also expressed a desire to ensure the SFTF gets an opportunity to discuss the ideas brought up tonight.
- Meyer supported the automatic issuance of one pass per household, with additional passes available upon request through City Hall or online, including potential processing fees. Apartments would receive one pass per unit.
- May emphasized the importance of collaboration and refining the parking model with the SFTF.
- McGrathwaite asked for clear direction from the council on what the SFTF should address next.
- Survey Proposal: Wassenberg suggested a short resident survey (e.g., via SurveyMonkey) to estimate how often residents park on the street during the fair. Mielke expressed some hesitation.
- Security Features: The council agreed that investing in secure hang tags was worthwhile, with violations subject to fines.
- Data and Communication: Linehan mentioned staff could provide parking data from the past two years. Meyer and Gustafson emphasized working with the SFTF and city staff on clear communication, possibly under a “State Fair Guide 2.0,” and bringing in communications support to address misinformation.
- Next Steps: Linehan and Gustafson proposed finalizing most details at the May workshop. Mielke suggested exploring an opt-out option, and Wassenberg emphasized gathering better data on actual parking demand.

2. 2025 Goal Setting – Review of Draft Plan

Linehan explained that following the goal-setting meeting, DDA prepared a preliminary draft based on the discussion. The draft serves as a set of detailed notes or minutes from the meeting and outlines key priority areas. It is intended to help the council identify which issues and goals to focus on, determine who should be responsible for each, and assign ownership to carry them forward. Linehan invited the council to provide feedback on the draft.

Mielke asked about the timeline for carrying out these goals. Linehan adds that target dates will need to be worked in more, taking workloads into consideration.

Meyer points out that CIP should be spelled out, to ensure it's readable by the public. Or he suggests creating a glossary.

Linehan noted that the draft aligns with the themes identified during the consultants' pre-session phone calls with council members and incorporates the notes taken during the session.

Wassenberg suggested involving someone from NYFS (Northeast Youth & Family Services) to provide support for multi-family and senior housing communities.

Linehan: Recommended reviewing the draft by category, ensuring the themes reflect the council's shared goals. Emphasized the importance of setting SMART goals (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Time-bound) to track progress and ensure these goals are sustainable for future councils.

The council requested rephrasing the language related to the city's relationship with area schools.

Linehan explained that the consultants will further develop the draft, bring it to the upcoming workshop for council discussion, and then incorporate any changes before presenting it to the public at the following meeting. Mielke asked whether new goals or items—such as improving walkability and bike-ability along Snelling Avenue or enhancing connections with neighboring communities—could be added later. Linehan confirmed that goals can be added over time. The draft is meant to help prioritize council discussions, assign responsibilities, and guide the creation of a work plan. Mielke suggested integrating the goals with the city's Climate Action Plan.

3. City Commissioners Code Update & Administrative Manual

Linehan shared that the city is reviewing the commissioner appointment process, noting that the current code lacks clear language. With the introduction of stipends for serving on a commission, the goal is to encourage more interest and competition, making it important to have a more formal process in place. The updates draw on council direction, best practices, prior code, and input from staff liaisons. The Administrative Manual, which outlines the city's operational practices and is formally adopted by the council, also contains long-standing rules related to commissions that need review.

Meyer believes that if commissions become competitive, having a youth commissioner serve on the commission should be mandatory. Linehan explained that leaving the youth commissioner designation optional provides flexibility, especially if there are

concerns about filling the position. Wassenberg agreed to keep it optional but emphasized the importance of strongly encouraging youth participation. Gustafson suggests making the youth commissioner the 8th full-voting member. Linehan confirmed that the youth commissioner could serve as a full voting member if designated as such. Gustafson suggested that if no youth commissioner is available, an adult commissioner could serve a one-year term instead, giving youth applicants preference similar to veterans' preference. The council discussed outreach strategies, such as contacting youth groups to recruit members who may need volunteer hours and encouraging them to serve on commissions.

Mielke raised the issue that no clear language currently exists around the structure or logistics of task forces and ad hoc commissions, such as the State Fair Task Force, police groups, or inclusion task forces. Gustafson noted that these groups typically focus on a specific issue or topic. Meyer asked whether members of these groups would also be eligible for compensation. Linehan clarified that task forces have generally operated outside the commission-related compensation and guidelines. Mielke recommended maintaining flexibility in the rules so the council can address emerging issues as needed. Wassenberg suggested that when the council creates an ad hoc commission or task force, it should also define its operations and guiding principles at the outset. Linehan agreed and added that language could be incorporated while keeping flexibility. Updates have already been made to reflect that commission terms are tied to the date of appointment. Additional changes include clearer language around filling vacancies, a 30-day notice period, the formation of an interview committee, and provisions for youth commissioners within the general policy. Updates also cover a ranking system for applicants, as well as refinements to the resignation and removal process. New sections have been added on stipends, compensation, orientation and onboarding, and attendance and participation expectations. The final backend work is underway before the updates are brought to the council for approval. Linehan also clarified that payroll frequency will be specified and that attending events will not be a formal attendance requirement.

4. Website Redesign RFP

Mielke suggests hiring a final editor to ensure the website has similar language and looks across the board. Linehan answers this was not budgeted for initially but could be taken into account. The council thinks the RFP is comprehensive.

5. Future Agenda Items

Gustafson suggests adding a section for new business. Linehan replies eventually staff wants to modernize the agenda and RCA formats.

Council discusses attending the NYFS Leadership Luncheon. Invite Lauderdale.

D. ADJOURNMENT: 9:29 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, as there are no opportunities for public comment during a workshop 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 14th day of May, 2025


Jack Linehan, City Administrator