

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

MINUTES

Wednesday, May 7, 2025
6:30 P.M.

A. CALL TO ORDER: 6:37 PM

B. ROLL CALL: GUSTAFSON_X__ LEEHY_X__
MEYER_Arrived 6:44PM__ MIELKE_X_ WASSENBERG_X_

STAFF PRESENT: LINEHAN_X__ LYNCH_X_ JOHNSON_X__

C. POLICY ITEMS:

Council moved agenda items around. Item 3 became item 1, item 1 became item 2, item 2, became item 3, and so forth.

1. City Hall Summer Hours

Linehan explains that summer hours have historically been done at City Hall. Business hours would change from 7:30 AM – 5:00 PM Monday-Thursday, and from 8:00 AM – Noon on Fridays. This creates some flexibility for staff during the summer. This year, it is requested to change the date summer hours go into effect. Instead of Memorial Day to Labor Day, summer hours would begin 2 weeks earlier and end 2 weeks earlier; this way, summer hours would end the week before the fair. Linehan provides the council with 2 options:

1. Start summer hours next week, and end 2 weeks earlier.
2. Start summer hours the week following the next council meeting, and end 2 weeks earlier.

The council agrees with option 1. They also discuss making it permanent, instead of requesting approval each year. Linehan notes these will be City Hall's business hours, but staffing hours can be flexible to meet their own needs.

2. Falcon Heights Climate Action Plan – Final Draft

Lynch introduces Ted Redmond from paleBLUEDot. The climate action team met several times and created an initial draft. After taking in feedback from the council and residents, a final draft was created.

Redmond notes residents provided feedback during the Sustainability Fair on April 26. The final draft plan is available for review on the climate action plan's website. It also went through a review process with the climate action team, as well as with city staff. Redmond goes over some of the larger edits made to the document. An action was

added surrounding the creation of a dark sky resolution. Redmond also further researched bees but is not seeing it as an action item right now. The action items are linked to each other and have negative or positive effects on each other.

The council discusses the success of the sustainability fair. They hope to continue the leadership in being green with the climate action plan. The Climate Action Plan helps provide guidance similar to a comprehensive plan. Lynch adds this will align well with future Met Council goals and their comprehensive plan.

Redmond thanks Falcon Heights for their participation.

3. Pay-by-Mobile Parking Program / ParkMobile Program Recommendations

Linehan provides a recap of the process thus far. The State Fair Task Force met in April and made three recommendations to the City Council:

- For resident passes:
 - Use hang tag passes with one pass mailed to all eligible residential properties abutting designated Pay-by-Mobile parking streets; a second pass can be mailed to residents who request one via an online form, and third and fourth passes may be provided upon completion of a hardship waiver form and staff approval.
- Price the program to be \$25 for all parking zones – Hoyt to Roselawn, Snelling to Hamline.
- Making Albert, Pascal, and Arona in the Northome neighborhood Parking by State Fair Resident Permit Only.

Last year, Public Works put in markings around alleys in the Northome neighborhood. While it helped alleviate some of the concerns, it was still hard for people to see left and right around vehicles parked close to the alleys.

Linehan recommends to the council to make a final recommendation on May 14, in order to approve a contract with ParkMobile and to allow enough lead time for staff to implement the program. Residents will be allowed to provide additional feedback at the May 14 meeting before a final decision is made.

Meyer wants to ensure residents have the most information available prior to the meeting, to make an informed comment. Wassenberg suggests providing an FAQ beforehand. Mielke points out that the State Fair Task Force put in a lot of time researching the program and providing recommendations that align with neighbors' input. The council continues to discuss the format of discussing the item at the next council meeting, to ensure residents feel heard. They note the changes to the initial concept that have been made as part of the feedback provided, and it has made the proposal better. Meyer adds that the perception remains that residents are not being fully heard.

Gustafson notes adaptations to improve the program as it rolls out can still be made. It

can also be changed the following year, based on feedback from the first pilot year. Meyer believes changes in pricing further from the fair might get more approval from residents. Wassenberg notes uniform pricing is the best for a number of reasons, especially in the first year. Leehy agrees that a lot of adjustments have been made based on residents' opinions for this year. Wassenberg cautioned that variable pricing could lead to confusion. However, Meyer opposed a flat rate pricing model, arguing that a \$25 fee is too high for parking in the northern parts of the city, which are far from the fairgrounds. He suggests a tiered pricing system based on zones, noting that fairgoers are more motivated to find a parking spot than to compare prices. Wassenberg states that data collected during the first year will help inform adjustments in subsequent years. The overall goal is to encourage fairgoers to use park-and-ride options, a sentiment shared and supported by the Council.

The Council expresses support for the hang pass system. Meyer requests clarification, noting that the hardship application process appears overly burdensome for residents seeking additional passes. Linehan explains that the process mirrors the existing system for State Fair residential permit passes, where pass distribution is determined on a street-by-street basis due to the limited availability of parking spots. He emphasizes the importance of understanding applicants' reasoning, as it helps build useful data. Very few requests for additional passes have been denied. Granting passes for the third or fourth vehicle is likely but serves as an added safeguard.

Wassenberg proposes that alleyways be marked at 10 feet rather than 5 feet. Linehan agrees and notes that previous marking efforts were effective. He adds that similar to State Fair resident-only parking areas, hang passes would be valid in all designated resident parking zones during the fair. Wassenberg expresses appreciation for the added measures to support residents living near the affected streets.

Linehan states that the ParkMobile contract will begin with a one-year term, followed by a two-year extension unless canceled. He assures the Council that the contract will protect the city from liability. He also outlines the necessary steps and approvals that will be required at the upcoming Council meeting to move forward with implementation. Hiring parking ambassadors should begin as soon as possible.

The Council thanks the State Fair Task Force for their time and contributions.

4. Goal-Setting Final Draft Plan

Linehan shows the final draft based on feedback received from the council during the first workshop. The council points out some final items that should be updated. They appreciate the work that went into it. Linehan explains it's a more cost-effective way to set goals compared to doing a full strategic plan and is also helpful for staff.

5. Early Retirement Incentive Program

Linehan explains there are some concerns about the financial future of the state and federal government and how that can potentially impact the city in the future. Currently, Falcon Heights is in a financially stable position and has looked at offering an Early Retirement Incentive Program. A sample program and policy are provided by the League of Minnesota Cities.

Linehan provides additional details about the program. Eligible employees may volunteer to retire and have a three-month window to accept the offer. The program includes three years of coverage for a single-person health insurance premium. Currently, employees receive a 50% payout of their unused sick time upon separation or retirement; the proposal aims to increase this to 100%, which may serve as an added incentive.

The program will end on August 15 and is not expected to be offered again. Linehan emphasizes that the program should be viewed as a financial strategy, noting that it represents a significant payout for participating employees. Those with family health insurance plans would need to cover the additional cost themselves. Support will be provided to help employees find the most favorable tax solutions.

6. Councilmember Out-of-State Travel Request

Linehan explains councilmember Mielke requested to attend an out-of-state conference instead of the annual conference by League of Minnesota Cities in Duluth. He provides background on why out-of-state travel for council business will need to be approved by the city council. Mielke is keeping costs similar to the LMC conference in Duluth.

The council is in favor of Mielke attending the Strong Towns Conference.

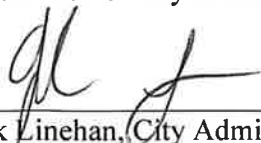
D. ADJOURNMENT: 8:36 PM

Mayor Gustafson motions to adjourn the meeting;
Approved 5-0

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 28th day of May, 2025


Jack Linehan, City Administrator