

**CITY OF FALCON HEIGHTS**  
City Council Special Workshop  
Capitol Region Watershed District Community Rooms  
595 Aldine Street, St. Paul, MN 55104

**MINUTES**

Wednesday, January 7, 2026  
8:30 A.M.

A. CALL TO ORDER: 8:31 A.M.

B. ROLL CALL: GUSTAFSON\_\_X\_\_ MAY\_\_X\_\_  
MIELKE\_\_X\_\_ MOGEN\_\_X\_\_ WASSENBERG\_\_X\_\_

STAFF PRESENT: LINEHAN\_\_X\_\_ NELSON\_\_X\_\_

C. POLICY ITEMS:

1. Review Questionnaire Activity

Members of the City Council discussed their answers to a variety of questions about their backgrounds and personal interests, how they would work together, goals they would like to see accomplished, how they preferred to receive information, and what they saw as the top challenges the city faces.

2. 2025 Goal Setting Document - Status Update & Review

This item was tabled for an upcoming workshop.

3. Commission Goals Review

a. Determine Commission Liaison Assignments

Wassenberg says he knows the least about the Community Engagement Commission. May says the Environment Commission has an interest in the Community Garden, which the Parks and Recreation Commission seem to oversee. Wassenberg suggests the name change of the Environment Commission to the Sustainability Commission. May says that it may be a good time to adjust the goals and activities of the CEC so that our rental properties are a priority. Mielke says the CEC is weak at attracting and retaining commissioners. She recommends being consistent in how we advertise openings on commissions in our newsletter.

Mogen heard a couple of months ago that there is a bit of a loss between the CEC and Parks Commission regarding community events. Wassenberg says other commissions may have had an easier time of it because of having more defined activities. He suggests commissions have or write a mission statement. To that, Mogen asks whether the Council defines the mission statement or if the Commission does it.

Gustafson shares that the CEC began as a neighborhood commission with CERT training. It was Falcon Heights' version of Neighborhood Watch. Mielke expounds on it to add that the Block Captain program began first. After 9/11, Neighborhood Liaisons began and CERTS training was an aspect of it. Mielke says she'd be willing to take the Community Engagement Commission if she could revamp and reshape it. May suggests inviting former commissioners to provide input on reshaping the CEC into what it should be.

Mogen sees the Parks Commission as being given a directive from Council. Wassenberg says that they act in an advisory capacity, but there could certainly be more requests from Council and reports to Council. He likes the idea of a workshop with staff and maybe a few members of the commission to add value to the commission.

Linehan asks if the Council would like to see a workshop of this sort from all commissions.

Mogen would like to serve as the Council Liaison to the Planning Commission. May's preference is the Environment Commission. Gustafson adds that the role of the Council Liaison is not to direct the activities of the commission, but to be a conduit. Wassenberg has seen his role as offering ideas during discussion but generally stays out of the debate and tries not to interfere with the decision.

Gustafson asks if anyone would like to be the liaison to the Ramsey County League of Local Governments (RCLLG). Wassenberg and Mogen are both willing and will begin attending meetings.

Mielke would like to be Council Liaison to the Community Engagement Commission.

Gustafson will be Council Liaison to the Parks and Recreation Commission.

Wassenberg will serve as an alternate.

#### 4. Council Standing Rules & Roles Review

Linehan says that the Council formally adopts the Standing Rules at the start of the year, but this is an opportunity to review and to offer any suggestions for edits before then. Wassenberg says that Sikkink's Seven Motion System feels a bit overly formal to what they follow/do. For example, the Council rarely seconds a motion.

Mogen says that even though they may not follow it all of the time, it is nice to have it to fall back on.

Gustafson says that it would be helpful to make Sikkink's Seven Motion System Table available at the dais. May says that raising hands and being more formal is not a bad idea. Mogen would be in favor of eliminating "Needs Second" from the table or revising the "yes" to a "no" in that column. Linehan says we do not seek or record a second motion. Council is in favor of removing the "Needs Second" column from the table. Gustafson says we should make it clear that the Council has modified the table. Linehan asks if, beyond the rules, there is anything in the processes or procedures to look at?

May would like to see a more structured agenda so that the amount of time spent on a subject is stated, and so that all come prepared and are able to be heard. Wassenberg feels that the only time a meeting goes long is during policy items, as the Consent Agenda goes relatively quickly. Mogen says that it may be difficult for staff to estimate how much conversation will be needed for each item. Instead, Mogen says that maybe the meeting is naturally set to adjourn at 8:30 unless the majority would like to continue.

Mielke says that all can agree that they would like to see a more efficient meeting. Linehan says that where we can find consensus is that we want to hear each other, but to also keep meetings efficient. He asks if this is for all meetings, or specific to public hearings or workshops, for example. Linehan adds that how we do workshops is a little different than some.

Linehan asks if the Council would like to consider doing workshops before the meetings. Pros: It gives you a hard stop because you have to end it, you get one Wednesday back per month, but you also gain one workshop meeting by making it two short meetings rather than one long. Cons: Not everyone can make it earlier in the evening to begin at 6:00, and it guarantees your meetings are likely three hours long.

Mogen says that if the discussion had just occurred (during a workshop just before the regular meeting), it might be more rubber-stamped that we agree with something and discuss less during the actual meeting.

Gustafson says the value of the workshop is that you can ask all of the questions and determine your standpoint before the meeting. Wassenberg supports trying the combined workshop and meeting nights and then calling for special workshops if additional time is needed.

Workshops will begin at 6:00 and be limited to one or two topics so that they only go 45 or 50 minutes. The regular Council meeting will begin at 7:00. This format will begin on January 28. The first Wednesday of the month will be held in case the Council needs to add a Special Workshop.

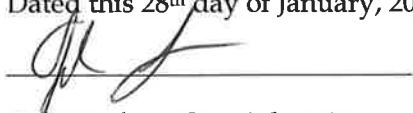
D. ADJOURNMENT: 11:40 A.M.

*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](mailto: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.*

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "R. Gustafson", written over a horizontal line.

Randall C. Gustafson, Mayor

Dated this 28<sup>th</sup> day of January, 2026

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "J. Linehan", written over a horizontal line.

Jack Linehan, City Administrator