

CITY OF FALCON HEIGHTS

Joint Meeting

Parks & Recreation Commission

Environment Commission

City Hall

2077 West Larpenteur Avenue

MINUTES

February 2, 2026 at 6:30 P.M.

A. CALL TO ORDER: 6:34 PM

B. ROLL CALL:

Eric Brenton (Chair) X Tom Faust (Vice-Chair) _____ Joe Morseth (Secretary) X

Robert Haight X Jerry Buckridge X Naomi Loud Heinsch X

Adam Keester (Chair) X John Pellegrini (Vice-Chair) X Nuz Sanidad (Secretary) X

Beth Mercer-Taylor X David Smith X Monika Chandler X Erica Bjelland X

Mercer-Taylor arrived just after
roll call

COUNCIL LIAISON:

Randy Gustafson X

Georgiana May X

STAFF PRESENT:

Kelly Nelson X

Hannah Lynch X

C. PRESENTATION:

D. APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

1. January 5, 2026 - Parks and Recreation Commission Regular Meeting

Morseth motions to approve the
minutes; approved 5-0

E. AGENDA:

1. In Common Commission Goals

a. Community Garden Expansion

Parks and Rec Staff Liaison Nelson explains that the goal of this joint meeting is to foster partnership and discuss common goals between the two commissions, namely the potential for expanding community garden plots. She explains that currently there are 38 garden plots; 20 plots are gardened by Falcon Heights residents, 16 are gardened by non-residents, and two are currently unassigned. Previously, a wait list was used for open plots, but this year, the City will be moving to a lottery system that will open on February 4.

Keester believes there is a demand to support additional plots.

Commissioners discussed the cost to support the current plots, the cost of adding a water line to Curtiss Field (currently budgeted at \$10,000, specifically for a water fountain), the potential of adding plots at City Hall, and ensuring those without yard space have access to plots.

Staff Liaison Lynch adds that Curtiss Field does make some sense for future expansion due to its proximity to apartments.

Gustafson gives an overview of how the Community Garden plots first began.

Issues were brought up around Curtiss Field flooding and the potential of taking away from the existing recreational area.

May wonders how much green space is actually available at Curtiss Field.

Haight adds that there are pluses and minuses at each possible location.

Mercer-Taylor is hesitant to add garden plots at Curtiss Field due to previous flooding issues.

Haight says that the commissions should address whether they are trying to support their neighboring communities with garden plots or determine what the goal is by adding more.

Staff Liaison Lynch explains that the Environment Commission completed a Climate Action Plan last year. One goal of the Climate Action Plan is to “Increase production of local food, particularly serving low-income and food-insecure individuals.” Two action items for this goal include, “Identify and map potential sites for community gardens or farms, prioritizing underserved populations and food-insecure areas. Include parks and public lands, and collaborate with partners to implement garden locations,” and “Establish a ‘Grow Falcon Heights’ program to expand community garden plots and create a market garden that offers youth training and internships.”

The Commissions discussed forming a subcommittee to focus on the location, need, and goals for additional plots, pending the results of how many lottery submissions are received.

Gustafson adds that it may take a period of time to look at the need/demands in order to make a future recommendation and to implement.

Loud-Heinsch wonders if the earliness of the plot lottery may not garner the same interest it would if it were closer to the planting season; it may not reflect true interest.

May suggests informing residents that garden plots are available through a lottery.

Staff Liaison Nelson says that they will include the garden plot lottery in the weekly newsletter(s) and will update both commissions after the lottery submission period has closed at the end of February to then inform them of current demand.

The Parks and Recreation Commission and the Environment Commission break apart at 7:41 PM to continue discussing their commission’s additional agenda item(s) separately.

2. Community Park Phase 2 Discussion

Staff Liaison Nelson says that no decisions are needed tonight, but it would be helpful for the commission to begin discussing their vision for Phase 2 of renovations at Community Park. This will allow Staff to research and budget in the future.

Buckridge feels like the basketball court will eventually become a liability if the cracked pavement is not addressed.

Haight mentions that the Falcon Heights / Lauderdale Lions Club may need storage.

Loud-Heinsch wonders if it makes sense to leave the existing playground, at least for now. Or, to not spend the money on having it removed so that money can be used elsewhere. She adds that she rarely sees people playing baseball.

Brenton says that resurfacing the basketball court and/or replacing the exercise equipment around the perimeter of the park might both be worthwhile upgrades.

Morseth points out that the current, cracked basketball court will only look worse right next to our other new amenities being installed in Phase One.

The commission will continue to discuss and eventually form a wish list as both the budget and timeline for Phase 2 are firmed up. In addition, they discuss the idea of a tree museum at Community Park as a low-cost activity for park users to self-explore.

F. INFORMATION/ANNOUNCEMENT

G. ADJOURNMENT: 8:38 PM

Buckridge motions to adjourn the meeting;
Approved 5-0