

**CITY OF FALCON HEIGHTS**  
Community Engagement Commission  
City Hall  
2077 West Larpenteur Avenue

**MINUTES**

January 26, 2026 at 6:30 P.M.

- A. CALL TO ORDER: 6:31 PM
- B. ROLL CALL:  
Julie Ebbesen\_\_X\_\_ Denise King\_X\_\_ Sarah Caflisch\_\_X\_\_ Emily Schmall\_X\_\_ Emmett Fischer\_X\_\_
- STAFF PRESENT:  
Elke Johnson\_\_X\_
- COUNCIL LIAISON:  
Paula Mielke\_X\_\_
- OTHERS PRESENT:  
Jim Wassenberg\_\_ Jack Linehan\_X\_\_ Ainsley Brown\_X\_
- C. APPROVAL OF AGENDA
- D. INTRODUCTION
- E. COUNCIL DIRECTION For COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT COMMISSION
1. Mielke – Council recently reviewed the purpose and role of commission. Council would like to hold some community conversations. What are options to bring residents together? Food Drives, connect with Falcon Heights Equity & Justice Group, look at other cities to see what they are doing to connect with residents. Sue Garetz was mayor and organized intergenerational discussions and that started the neighborhood commission and started the CERTS program.
  2. King thanks Mielke for participation and history. Are there things we are doing that we can move the ball forward, things we have done that we don't need or shouldn't do anymore, things that we need to focus on more that would attract more participation.
  3. Caflisch- inquires about reasons for looking at commission activities
  4. Mielke – There has been low participation in CEC events, the commission has not had a full commission roster
  5. Caflisch – naming a lot of tactics and activities but asking about goal that the council has wanted to see.

6. Mielke - Env commission has brought a lot of people together so looking for ways that the CEC could
7. Caflisch - looking for more guidance
8. King refers to last meeting's discussion about a workshop and creating other events, One of the main things is that we do not have engagement with our apartment residents, we do not have a comprehensive plan around neighborhood liaisons. We have a calendar of events but are working to find additional opportunities.
9. Caflisch - loves the idea of a listening session. Have a list of goals we want to reach and how we can take action to achieve those goals.
10. King wants to get the commission to connect with neighbors so they can feel like they are part of the community
11. Linehan - one challenge is that the commissions are based on large portfolio city activities CEC has always struggled to get people but the branding/general definition of the commission needs to be clarified. How does the State Fair Task Force work roll into other commissions as it winds down. Taking into account city resources we need to understand how the city can support the commission and vice versa.
12. King- we should have a full commission (or close to)
13. Mielke - asks why the community engagement commission only has 6 openings listed on the website as all other commissions have 7.
14. King - would like clarification of what the city is looking for the commission to do. King tells people that to objective is neighbors engages with neighbors and have city support that.
15. Caflisch - What is success in the eyes of residents, city and staff
16. Schmall - refresh/rebrand, what does the council want, what does the community want out of the commission. Creates the words "evolvment"
17. Ebbesen - references a previous document that laid out the commission goals and structure from 2018 or 2019
18. Schmall - acknowledges that was a long time ago. Perhaps there is a community survey that we attempt to find out how residents want to be engaged with the city/community.
19. King - agrees with Schmall but also thinks we need direction from the council. Part of our responsibility is to foster communication between residents and city/council. Asks that the commission puts out Mielke fosters conversation in council to what the intent of the commission should be. Hold listening sessions in some sort of asynchronous manor (2 open sessions)
20. Caflisch - does commission create goals, identify metrics, identify what success looks like from council and residents or is that determined by the council? Request clarification of responsibilities of the relationship between the commission and council.

21. King proposes that we schedule a workshop to identify questions for a survey and also identify dates for listening sessions. Would like to have working session on 2/2 or 2/9.
22. Tentatively schedule a meeting on February 2<sup>nd</sup>, Caflisch, Schmall, Miley, King, Fischer have committed to a 6:30 PM meeting time. Ebbesen will confirm later. Caflisch and King will bring information and
23. Caflisch – when we are researching is there a comparable city that we usually reference – Shoreview, Little Canada, Prior Lake, etc.
24. Linehan – we have a list of 17 comparable cities that are standard comparisons. King would suggest that we focus our efforts looking at MN and then look out of MN due to possible cultural differences. Will also provide previous survey questions that have been done before.

F. APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

- December 15, 2025, Community Engagement Commission Meeting Minutes
  1. King requests to distribute the minutes & agenda the Monday prior to our meetings to allow for more time for commissioners to review and respond with any updates or additions.
  2. Johnson agrees to the timeline as time and resources allow.
  3. Motion to approve – Schmall – unanimously approved

G. AGENDA

- New Business
  1. Officer Elections
    - a. Chair – King, Vice Chair – Ebbesen, Secretary – Caflisch
    - b. Unanimously approved
  2. Standing Rules
    - a. Johnson points out that the rules do not show any goals, mission or objectives for the commission itself.
    - b. Caflisch – mentions that we can add that once they have been defined.
    - c. King suggests that those goals not be added to the document
    - d. Mielke – points out that we will not be required to have a second on motions according to the standing rules
    - e. Unanimous consent
    - f. King reviews Sikkink’s rules. No questions.
    - g. King reviews City of Falcon Heights Administrative Manual. King will welcome new commissioners with a review of the standing rules, Sikkink’s rules and City of Falcon Heights Administrative Manual.
    - h. King reviews communications in the Administrative manual. Johnson clarifies that the majority of the commission cannot discuss city

business outside of open meetings. If topics come up for the group outside of the commission meetings they can connect Johnson and she can communicate information to the group.

3. Spring Together

- a. Spring Together has been held since 2013.
- b. Mielke highlights that the commission needs to be considerate that there are currently a number of people in our community that may not feel comfortable to be out at a large public gathering.
- c. King believes that we should continue to plan as usual while keeping in mind the current happenings. Note that we should add a question about attending this or other city events in the upcoming survey.
- d. King feels that we need to find activities that would be more compelling to get residents to participate.
- e. Caflisch - would like guidance from the council about what the goal for this event is.
- f. Mielke feels that the original event was intended to connect the residents in the neighborhood and the tenants of the apartment buildings near Curtiss Field.
- g. Fischer - not many apartment neighbors are at these events but the kids in neighborhood do come to the events and sees value in connecting the kids to the city and ultimately engaging with the adults in the family.
- h. King suggests rolling the detailed discussion to our next meeting after the commission has more information about what the residents are looking for.

• Unfinished business

4. Every Meal Volunteering

- a. Johnson reached out to Every Meal to schedule events to support Every Meal. Every Meal has open events that can host a team of up to 30 people. Events are booked for April & May but Johnson will watch for the dates when they become available.
- b. Ebbesen - suggests that the commissioners do an event March to create some media content to promote an April city wide date.
- c. Johnson will connect with Every Meal to find dates commissioners

H. INFORMATION/ANNOUNCEMENT

• Report from Council Liaison

1. Mielke - there will be an affordable senior housing development built west of Amber Union. 110 units - completion date TBD. Mielke wants to support the residents there have been new ordinances passed to support renters.

Struggles with neighborhood liaisons in apartment buildings. Looking for ways to support them.

2. Caflich - do we connect to bring mid-Minnesota in to help these tenants understand their rights.
3. Mielke - Wednesday council will be discussing what the city can and can't do in regards to the ICE situation. The situation is quickly changing they are trying to stay up to date.

I. ADJOURNMENT: 8:08 PM

1. Ebbesen motions to adjourn - unanimously approved

*Next Regular Meeting is on Monday, February 23 at 6:30 PM*