

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

MINUTES
Wednesday, May 27, 2026
6:00 P.M.

- A. CALL TO ORDER: 6:12 P.M.
- B. ROLL CALL: GUSTAFSON__X__ MAY__X__
 MIELKE__X__ MOGEN__X__ WASSENBERG__
- STAFF PRESENT: LINEHAN__X__ CALLAHAN__X__
- C. POLICY ITEMS:
 1. City Alley Plowing Discussion / Proposal (6:00 P.M.)

Linehan summarized the preceding special, informal workshop, held with alley plowing organizers from the city's residential alleyways. Of the 13 relevant alleyways (one being commercial), 9-10 organizers attended in-person, and 2 submitted written comments, showing strong community representation. He explained that the proposal to have the city take over alley plowing would be formalized through an administrative manual policy – distinct from city code – and that if the Council provided direction to proceed, formal policy language would be brought forward for adoption.

Mogen raised a broader concern about mobility and accessibility, noting the city's recent progress in plowing Larpenteur and clearing bus stops. He expressed concern that adding alley plowing to public works' responsibilities could push sidewalk maintenance lower in the operational priority order. He emphasized that any new program must not result in worse sidewalk conditions for pedestrians, wheelchair users, and others with mobility needs.

Public Works Director Callahan responded that streets and alleys would be addressed concurrently, not sequentially, and that the city's part-time contractor handles sidewalks as a separate assignment. He noted the county continually wings snow back, which deposits along Larpenteur, and that it remains a persistent challenge outside the city's control.

Mogen asked if it makes sense for the city to include maintenance of the sidewalk in front of Falcon Crossing rather than relying on the business owner(s).

May expressed strong support for city-led alley plowing. She described problems with the current private contractor model – irregular timing, large snow berms at alley entrances that force residents to "gun it" over accumulated snow or risk getting stuck – and stated that the city would do a significantly better job.

Callahan committed to upholding the same standard applied to city streets.

Discussion turned to operational logistics.

Callahan noted that while plowing the length of an alley takes approximately five minutes, clearing the entrances on both ends is the more time-consuming element due to backing up and feathering out snow. He estimated the city could expect approximately one to two additional hours of plowing time per snowfall event, and indicated that route assignments among the crew would be adjusted so that all operators finish at roughly the same time.

Regarding Lauderdale, Callahan clarified that one operator typically handles University Grove and then moves to Lauderdale – where Lauderdale's own public works crew manages all alley plowing – and that the Falcon Heights portion is handled internally and concurrently.

Mielke noted that tracking hours and fuel costs for alley operations would be useful.

Linehan acknowledged this would be difficult to break out precisely, but that a general estimate could be obtained.

Callahan mentioned that vehicle-installed software could potentially assist with more detailed tracking in the future.

The Council discussed how to handle private property encroachments into city easements within alleyways, including gardens and landscaping.

Callahan suggested that residents be expected to mark their own property in the easement rather than the city bearing that full burden.

Linehan proposed a complementary approach: public works staff would flag problematic obstructions in the fall, and code enforcement letters would be sent to affected property owners.

The Council agreed that providing stakes for residents for pickup, combined with proactive outreach, would be a reasonable approach.

Linehan also noted that the current administrative manual language places sidewalks below alleys and the City Hall parking lot in the priority order, and flagged this for the Council's awareness, even though operations are largely concurrent in practice.

Mogen indicated he was comfortable proceeding with the current structure but would revisit priority ordering after the first operational winter if access issues emerged.

The Council reached consensus to advance the formal policy language to the June 22 regular meeting for action.

2. Parkland Dedication Ordinance (6:25 P.M.)

Linehan presented a revised version of the Parkland Dedication Ordinance, noting that the primary change since the last Council meeting was the addition of clarifying language in section C to specify that any privately owned open space referenced in the ordinance must be "for

public park and recreation purposes." This addition addressed concerns raised at the prior meeting. He also confirmed that any parkland dedicated under this ordinance would be for the city's benefit only – not transferred to Ramsey County or any other entity – and that all decisions remain at Council's discretion.

Mielke and Gustafson indicated the revised language was clearer and more satisfactory.

May acknowledged that the clarification addressed her previous concern, but raised a new question about the relationship between HOAs and subdivisions within the ordinance's framework.

Mogen reasoned that there wouldn't be another entity to take on a park without an HOA.

May noted that HOA-maintained open space, while legally public via easement, could still present equity and accessibility challenges – particularly if higher-income HOA members are effectively funding the maintenance of spaces used by lower-income residents of the same development. She emphasized that as the city moves forward with development, it should be vigilant about not building in structures that reduce equity or limit accessibility.

Linehan explained that a public easement provides legal protection against discriminatory exclusion, and that the Council would retain discretion to require full city ownership and maintenance of any trails or open space rather than accepting a public-private arrangement. He acknowledged that many of those finer decisions would fall to future councils as development specifics materialize.

The Council reached consensus to place the Parkland Dedication Ordinance on the June 10 regular meeting agenda for formal action.

3. Goff Public Proposal (6:35 P.M.)

Linehan introduced a proposal to engage Goff Public, a communications firm with which the city has an established relationship, to assist with a proactive media and communications strategy in anticipation of the expected public and press attention surrounding the potential sale of the golf course. The proposed engagement would be billed at an hourly rate of \$235, not to exceed \$10,000, with any expenditure beyond that amount requiring Council approval.

Linehan made a distinction between this engagement and the public engagement work being performed by Bolton & Menk. Whereas Bolton & Menk handles public-facing engagement tools such as open houses, mapping, and community feedback collection, Goff Public's role would focus on crafting written messaging and coordinating with media – areas that city staff do not perform as a core function.

Linehan then cited lessons from the pay-by-mobile parking rollout, where a reactive communications posture led to a less favorable media experience, and contrasted it with the police-related communications effort, which benefited from a more proactive approach in partnership with Goff Public.

Mielke expressed some reservations about the quality of Goff Public's prior work, particularly with respect to earlier press releases on the parking program, and suggested that a competitive quote process might be appropriate.

Mogen shared that they do have experience with developments, and Ramsey County utilizes them quite a bit.

Linehan indicated he was open to obtaining additional quotes for comparison before bringing a final recommendation to Council. The Council agreed that the item should return to the June 10 meeting, at which point Linehan would present quotes and qualifications as appropriate.

4. Commercial Lot License

Due to time constraints, the Commercial Lot License item was deferred to the June 10 workshop meeting for discussion, with a potential vote to follow during the regular meeting. Linehan noted that this item applies to a limited number of businesses and that staff would work proactively with those businesses to communicate the upcoming change in advance of any formal action.

D. ADJOURNMENT: 6:59 p.m.

Mogen motions to adjourn the workshop meeting; Approved 4-0

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.

Dated this 10th day of June, 2026



Jack Linehan, City Administrator



Randall C. Gustafson, Mayor