

CITY OF FALCON HEIGHTS
Regular Meeting of the City Council
City Hall
2077 West Larpenteur Avenue
AGENDA
February 12, 2020 at 7:00 P.M.

A. CALL TO ORDER:

B. ROLL CALL: ANDREWS X GUSTAFSON X LEEHY X
MIAZGA X WEHYEE X

STAFF PRESENT: THONGVANH X

C. PRESENTATION

D. APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

1. January 15, 2020 City Council Workshop Minutes
2. January 22, 2020 City Council Meeting Minutes

Approved 5-0

E. PUBLIC HEARINGS:

1. Ordinance Amendment to Chapter 14 of the City Code

City Administrator Thongvanh

A state license is only required if the contractor specializes in more than one skill set such as mechanical, plumbing, building (remodel, roof, windows). However, if the contractor only specializes in one skill set such as fence, signs, and cement work then they do not need a state license. City Staff researched multiple cities and found that they have created a licensing program to ensure that contractors and residents are safe during the projects. Falcon Heights does license contractors, but the City Code language is thin and needs updating. The current Code simply states that contractors who do not have a state license must be licensed by the city. No definition of a contractor is provided.

At the January 15, 2020, City Council workshop, council members, and city staff discussed the proposed changes, which include specific examples of contractors who would be required to obtain a city license, and the process of obtaining a license. The current City Code states that all contractor licenses must be approved by the city council.

City staff is proposing to change the process and allow City Administrator to review the license applications, which is a similar process for solicitor/peddler licenses. The reason for changing the process is that current practice can delay the contractor's project and start date. With this change, it will speed the pace and the project can start on time.

Eric McPheeters (1480 California Ave. W.)

Showed concerns for the reasoning behind the General Contractor license and the fees that are associated with it. Is it to increase the fees going to the city? We already have permit costs associated with it. The state licensing requires all general contractors to be licensed unless you only have one skillset.

Mayor Gustafson stated the purpose of the code amendment is for contractors who are operating in the city are insured and able to apply for permits, and residents are protected by the licensures and insurance. If the contractor holds a state license then we consider them a licensed, bonded, and insured contractor by the State of Minnesota and qualify here in the locality, which is similar to other cities. We are trying to be consistent with cities who have similar code in terms of making certain that when a resident gets a building permit, the contractor is licensed or bonded and insured by the state. It protects the residents, city, and contractor.

City Administrator Thongvanh added that if the contractor has multiple skill sets such as renovations then you are required to be licensed by the state, which makes them bonded for insurance. However, if you only have one skill set such as cement work, the state does not require you to be bonded or go through the process.

Therefore, you will have to apply for a city license to apply for a building permit. Multiple cities have determined that if the contractor is not bonded by the state for a single skill set then the city is going to require a bonding application in terms of safety. If the homeowner is the general contractor and doing the project, they do not have to complete the city license but must complete a building permit to work on your homes such as replacing a window, entry door, and porch.

Council Member Leehy, Approved 5-0

F. CONSENT AGENDA:

1. General Disbursements through: 2/07/20 \$119,610.95
Payroll through: 1/31/20 \$18,852.92
2. Approval of City License(s)
3. Resignation of Ben Smith from the Falcon Heights Fire Department

Approved 5-0

G: POLICY ITEMS:

1. Consider changes to the City Code concerning vegetation, forestry, and landscaping

City Administrator Thongvanh

The Planning Commission held a public hearing to consider changes to Chapters 54 and 113 of the City Code at their January 28, 2020 meeting. In addition, the city council also discussed changes at the January 15 and February 5, 2020 workshops. We are excited to bring forward the Ordinance for adoption so that residents will have the ability to plant and maintain native landscaping on their properties.

Resources will be provided from the watershed districts, state agencies, and other groups. There will also be grant monies for residents who are looking to plant natives. The information and visuals will be available after the adoption of the Ordinance.

Councilmember Miazga is excited to see it happening. The Environment Commission began drafting the ordinance a year ago after research surrounding cities on their landscaping ordinances. The commission also did a survey online and received positive feedback. They did a terrific job.

Councilmember Leehy requested the pink border to be thicker to help residents see it and distinguish the difference but otherwise the visual looks amazing. Mayor Gustafson reminded that residents must maintain the plants/grass and well-kept for safety, there are a right-of-way and yard setback (2 feet) and cannot plant on the boulevard.

Council Member Andrews, Approved 5-0

2. Consider approval of agreement with Center for Energy and Environment to perform Home Energy Squad visits

City Administrator Thongvanh

Councilmember Miazga and the Environment Commission requested that \$2,500 be added to the 2020 city budget for facilitating a Home Energy Squad partnership with the Center for Energy and Environment. The program provides great benefits to the residents by having an energy consultant who will evaluate energy saving opportunities and install energy-efficient materials such as door weather stripping, LED light bulbs, and high-efficiency water fixtures.

In the agreement, the city will use the \$2,500 to subsidize the costs to residents, and each household will have to pay only \$50.00 for the visit and consultation. The program is currently budgeted for one year but may be continue depending on interest and available funds.

Councilmember Wehyee asked about the income threshold for the potential free visits that are available for income-based families and processes. City Administrator Thongvanh stated that the family would have to apply through Center Point or Xcel Energy. They will have their criteria of requirements that are income-based.

Council Member Wehyee, Approved 5-0

H. INFORMATION/ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Council Member Andrews

- The Environment Commission did not meet because of a lack of quorum.
- A couple of weeks ago, Councilmember Wehyee and I attended a two-day training session with the League of Minnesota Cities. The training was well done and very helpful.
- CTV is doing a new series of podcasts and will be available online and on local cable. I will be featured in one of the podcasts. The goal is to introduce newly elected officials to the community.

Council Member Miazga

- NYFS met and continues to look at sustainability and the replacement of Jerry Hromatka.
- The Falcon Heights Elementary School is making progress with the levy money to expand its welcome center for the after school program and other locations in the building.
- The Hamline Dental is open and is located at Larpenteur Avenue and Hamline Avenue. It is nice to see it occupied.

Council Member Leehy

- The Parks and Recreation meeting is on Monday, March 2, at 6:30pm. The meeting will be at the city council chambers. We also have openings and if you are interested in serving the commission, please apply online or in the city hall.
- On Saturday, February 8, our state representative held their town meeting. The city will be having the first town hall event called Breakfast with City Council on Saturday, March 21 from 10am-12pm at city hall. The city will provide food and beverages.

Council Member Wehyee

- On Monday, February 3, the Community Engagement Commission (CEC) hosted the Human Rights Day "Food Security and Child Hunger" event and it was a successful. We also had CTV interview the guest speakers, a census representative, Mayor Gustafson, and Shirley Reider who was the previous chair to CEC. Representative Alice Hausman was present and included the event in her newsletter. The CEC is hoping to collaborate with the Sheridan Story for volunteer opportunities and events.
- My first CEC meeting was on January 27, and we reviewed the strategic planning report. We have a lot of work to do such as developing the CEC plan, updating the liaison and new resident packets, create liaison events (spring and fall), a potential collaboration with the Air National Guard on September 26, and lastly, create a statement outlining Falcon Heights values and bring it to the city council workshop. Adding on, we have two vacancies on the CEC. Pastor Rick King resigned on Monday, February 10, and will be reaching out to the community if they are interested in serving the commission. Our next meeting will be on Monday, February 24.

Mayor Gustafson

- The Planning Commission will not meet on February 25, due to caucuses and lack of urgent business.
- The Community Response Training has five or more openings for Ramsey County, meets on Wednesdays, and has nine sessions. It is free to attend and all are welcome.
- We had a Block Captain meeting and some neighborhood liaisons were present. In Falcon Heights, we refer our block captains as neighborhood liaison, while other cities do not. The topic was about tax fraud ID and tax, and coronavirus products such as miracle cures, and romance.
- On Wednesday, March 4, is Coffee/Eggroll with a Cop at Eggroll Queen Cafe from 11:30am - 1pm.
- I spoke with the City of St. Paul, City Council President Amy Brendmoen who stated today that they pulled out of their Consent Agenda on the approval of St. Paul Fire

Department withdrawing from the nearest unit response agreement that Falcon Heights entered in 2015. This is separate from the Mutual Aid Agreement.

- I want to thank Ben Smith for his service and dedication. We are sad to see him leave. Residents who are interested in joining the Fire Department please apply online. We are a paid-on-call staff.
- I would like to thank the Public Works Department for plowing the snow on Sunday. They did an amazing job.

City Administrator Thongvanh

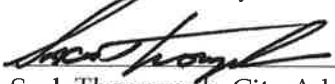
- We have been applying for different grants this year.
- It is not public yet but we will be having a Baseball Clinic with the Twins in the summer. Staff will be researching different venues in case of rainy weather since they do not allow reschedules and if the Community Building is not available. We are also looking to collaborate with different cities so that we can have the event in their community spaces.
- The city is working towards the strategic planning report on increasing communications, creating new events such as Breakfast with City Council, and a new website.
- Summer seasonal positions are now available. Applications are online and at city hall.

I. COMMUNITY FORUM:

J. ADJOURNMENT:


Randy Gustafson, Mayor

Dated this 12th day of February, 2020


Sack Thongvanh, City Administrator