

**CITY OF FALCON HEIGHTS**  
City Council Retreat  
City Hall  
2077 West Larpenteur Avenue

**MINUTES**  
March 18, 2023  
9:00 A.M. - 3:00 P.M.

- A. CALL TO ORDER: 9:00 a.m.
- B. ROLL CALL:           GUSTAFSON\_\_X\_\_ LEEHY\_\_(arrived later)  
                          MEYER\_\_X\_\_ WASSENBERG\_\_X\_\_ WEHYEE\_\_X\_\_
- STAFF PRESENT:   LINEHAN\_\_X\_\_ NELSON\_\_X\_\_ PITTMAN\_\_X\_\_ OLSON\_\_X\_\_  
  LANDBERG\_\_X\_\_ LYNCH\_\_X\_\_
- C. AGENDA:
- I. Introduction/Overview of Meeting – Mayor and City Administrator Linehan - 9:05 a.m.
- II. Administration – City Administrator Jack Linehan - 9:15 a.m.
- III. Planning and Zoning – Com. Dev. Coordinator/Planner Hannah Lynch – 9:30 a.m.
- a. Environment Commission – Staff Liaison Hannah Lynch
- b. Planning Commission – Staff Liaison Hannah Lynch
- IV. Public Works – Public Works Director Tim Pittman - 10:00 a.m.
- V. Finance –Finance Director Roland Olson / Accountant Alyssa Landberg - 10:15 a.m.
- VI. Park and Recreation – Assist. to the City Administrator Kelly Nelson - 10:30 a.m.
- a. Park Commission – Staff Liaison Kelly Nelson
- VII. Communications – City Administrator Jack Linehan - 10:45 a.m.
- a. Community Engagement Commission – Staff Liaison Kelly Nelson
- VIII. BREAK (15 Minutes)
- IX. CITY ADMINISTRATOR AND COUNCIL TOPICS - 11:15 a.m.
- a. Recap of active plans / guiding documents
- i. 2019 Strategic Plan
- b. Community Park
- i. Property Acquisition Update
- ii. Funding

1. Grants
2. Financing Options
- iii. Construction Next Steps / Timeline
- iv. Construction Process
- c. Staffing & Retention

**X. LUNCH (30 Minutes) - 12:00 P.M.**

**XI. Council Topics/Priorities - 12:30 P.M.**

- i. Police Contract Consultant Study – Matt Bostrom
  1. Deliverables 1-4 Recap
  2. Strategic Discussions
  3. Next Steps
- ii. Cost of Living/Taxes
- iii. Environment
- iv. Engagement/Inclusiveness/Two-Way Communication
  1. Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Continuation
- v. ARPA Funds
- vi. Capital Priorities
- vii. Program Priorities / Strategic Thinking

Administrator Linehan listed off 2022 Administrative Accomplishments, which included:

- Negotiated an offer for the purchase of Community Park
- Onboarded a new team
- Police Contract Consultant Hired
- Approved the 2023 Budget that included the largest capital program in City history, while having the lowest levy increase in Ramsey County.
- State Fair Town Hall
- Launched the iWorQ public portal to allow residents/contractors fully online permitting
- Negotiated a contract for plowing with Lauderdale

Administrator Linehan then shared 2023 Administrative Goals, which are:

- Close on Community Park Property
- Begin Phase 1 of construction design for Community Park
  - RFP for project management services
  - RFP for construction manager
- Explore long-term solutions for Police contract
- 2023 Capital Program
  - 2023 PMP
  - Larpenteur Street Lights
  - Bobcat Replacement
- Revitalize work on DEI Initiatives & Cultivating a Caring Community
- Organize State Fair Task Force and Implement Recommendations
- Update Personnel Policy and Administrative Manual
- Compensation Analysis to develop a staff retention plan
- Finalize ARPA Fund Utilization Plan
- Continue to improve communications for important city updates
- Launch an e-license renewal process to streamline license renewals

Community Development Coordinator, Lynch, shared 2022 Planning and Zoning Accomplishments, which included:

- Grants
  - Ramsey County Recycling Grant
  - Completed all administrative paperwork for Amber Union grants
- Continued implementing 2040 Comprehensive Plan
- Amber Union Affordable Housing ribbon cutting
- Attained GreenStep Cities Step 5 for fifth year
- Vacant Home Registration Ordinance
- Code Enforcement

Next, Lynch shared Goals for Planning and Zoning in 2023, which include:

- Continue to identify “issues” in the City Code
  - General enhancements to the code
  - Quick response times to code enforcement issues
  - Sign Ordinance updates

- Work to implement the requirements of the 2040 Comprehensive Plan
  - Subcommittee to study where we are, where we need to be for 2040 Comprehensive Plan & develop action items
  - Snelling / Larpenteur Corridor Study
- THC Licensing Ordinance
- GreenStep Cities Step 5 for sixth year

Lynch next shared 2022 Accomplishments on behalf of the Environment Commission, which included:

- Attained GreenStep 5 status for fifth year
- Climate Crisis Resolution

Lynch stated 2023 Goals of the Environment Commission as:

- Increase involvement with community
- EV Readiness
- Include provision for “No Mow May” in City Code
- GreenStep 5 status for sixth year
- Climate Action Planning

Lynch also shared 2022 Accomplishments on behalf of the Planning Commission, which included:

- Reviewed Requirements of 2040 Comprehensive Plan
- Vacant Building Ordinance
- Resolution Regarding the Acquisition of Community Park

Lynch said the 2023 Goals of the Planning Commission are:

- Review City Code for updates and corrections
- Work on developing 2040 Comprehensive Plan Studies
- THC Licensing Ordinance
- Hearings: Variances, PUDs, and Conditional Use Permits
- New Potential Development Projects

Next, the Councilmembers heard from the Finance Department, with both Olson and Landberg presenting their 2022 accomplishments, which included:

- 2021 Annual Financial Audit and ACFR
- 2021 Worker’s Compensation Audit
- City Budget for 2023 Workshop Budget Worksheets
- Assisted in Setting Tax Levy for 2023
- ARPA Funding
- State Auditor’s Office Required Reports Annually
  - Budget Summary
  - Financial Statement Summary
  - Tax Increment Reporting
  - Lobbying Report
- Other Required Reports

- Department of Commerce Unclaimed Assets
- MN Department of Labor and Industry
- Quarterly Payroll Reports to IRS, State of MN, PERA, and ICMA
- MN Sales Tax Report

Olson and Landberg shared the 2023 Goals of the Finance Department:

- Maintain Financial Sustainability for Future of City
- Maintain AAA Bond Rating
  - How do we do this?
- Maintain Compliance Requirements of State of MN
- Consistently Obtain Favorable Audit Results
- Maintain Positive Pay Security
- Fair Market Value (GASB 72) Our investments are valued at year end for our financial statements. Fair value is described as an exit price (in other words, what would we get if an investment was sold before it matured). Fair value assumes a transaction has taken place before the maturity of the investment. Our investments are valued at year end for our financial statements.

Olson then stated that the City made \$125,475 in interest income in 2022. However, our financial statements will reflect a LOSS of an estimated \$145,250. The Fair Market Valuation of our investments gets reflected in our financial statements at year end.

EXAMPLE: We buy a 1-year certificate of deposit on Feb 1 2022 with a coupon interest rate of 2% and a maturity of Jan 31, 2023. If the interest rates increased during 2022 to say 5%, then the value of the investment if we sold it at year end would be less than what we paid for it. No one would likely buy our CD for face value knowing he would only get 2% return on investment instead of the going rate of return at a 5% interest rate.

Olson then reassured councilmembers that we don't have any investments of CDs at any banks that are currently in trouble at this time. None of our investments are over the FDIC limit of \$250,000.

Next, Public Works Director, Tim Pittman, shared his department's 2022 Accomplishments, which were:

- Sanitary sewer cleaning and televising of the complete city was completed
- Spring, fall, and touch up street sweeping during the summer season was completed.
- Saved on winter plowing and salting by doing in house.
- Checking of all outfall catch basins as part of the MS-4 requirements.
- Worked with County and State on projects within the city limits.
- Sidewalk panel replacement in Northome area
- Sewer lining project for 2022 completed

Pittman said the 2023 Goals for his department are:

- Work with State and County on projects when needed.
- Work with City Engineer on 2023 and future 2025 PMP project.
- Street sweep at least three times this year.
- Keep up with MS-4 requirements, in and outfall basins, storage ponds, etc.
- Keep patching roads until they are scheduled for PMP.

- Continue Sanitary Sewer Lining Program
- Continue with sidewalk panel replacement as needed / Iowa / Hoyt (main concerns)

Staff person Nelson, shared 2022 Accomplishments in Parks Programming:

- Maintained enrollment in yoga and TKD classes at City Hall
- Had a great turnout at both the Spring Together and Ice Cream Social events in 2022.
- Had summer programming staff and minimum attendance levels in most programs offered.
- Staff applied for a grant on November 20, 2022 on behalf of the Monarch Joint Venture to help restore the pollinator habitat in Community Park. We should be notified this month if we will receive grant funds.

Nelson shared that Programming Goals for 2023 include:

- Study 2023 Summer Programming enrollment/staffing to make determinations for 2024 with more time for planning.
- Use data and input from ice skating in 2022 and 2023 to make informed decisions for 2024 (a shared goal with the PARC)
- Continue looking for classes to add to City Hall

Nelson, liaison to the Parks and Rec Commission, next shared the commission's 2022 Accomplishments:

- The commission began meeting regularly, with quorum in November!
- Staff compiled data to show the usage at Curtiss Field ice rink in 2022 and presented the data at the December 5, 2022 commission meeting. This will now be done annually so that improvements can be suggested and concerns and comments can be voiced prior to the next skating season.

Nelson provided a list of ten goals established by the Parks and Recreation Commission for 2023:

- Community Park Building - submit 2023 Outdoor Recreation Grant application and gather community input at City events.
- Paint basketball court at Curtiss Field
- Develop a fall event
- Draft and implement a weather and discipline policy for summer/fall programming.
- Develop marketing strategies to expand the areas and people we currently reach to promote City events and programming to.
- To have regular meetings of the Parks and Recreation Commission, having quorum at least every quarter.
- To create an event calendar
- To visit/revisit area park buildings to gain knowledge in order to suggest improvements for our own building at Community Park.
- To establish and complete an annual park audit assessment, looking at the amenities we currently have and to determine areas to improve upon; provide list of recommendations.
- To do an annual assessment of programming and to study the ice rink's use at Curtiss Field, looking for ways to improve next year.
- Develop a commission agenda calendar

Administrator Linehan shared 2022 Accomplishments in Communications:

- Launched a City NextDoor Agency Account
- Increased Facebook Reach
- 18,614 page reach (up 189% over 2021)
- 102 new “likes”
- Published two printed newsletters

Linehan said his goals in 2023 for Communications are:

- Issue RFP for newsletter/printing services
- Grow social media accounts
- Launch an Instagram page to promote projects, including 2023 PMP and park renovation

Nelson then shared 2022 Accomplishments from the Community Engagement Commission (CEC), which were:

- Added coat and non-perishable food drive components to Human Rights Day event on December 8, 2022.
- Ice Cream Social had a great turnout in 2022 and the date is set for 2023.
- Updated the new resident packet and postcards are once again being mailed out.

Nelson said the CEC’s 2023 Goals are:

- Re-establish “Cultivating Our Caring Community”
- Expand reach to residents and advertise City events earlier
- Assist with planning and promotion of City events

At this time, all Staff had presented accomplishments and goals with councilmembers. A short break was taken and then Administrator Linehan presented the following:

- Recap of active plans / guiding documents
  - 2019 Strategic Plan

#### **Plan Components**

- **Strategic Direction One: Leveraging Community Involvement**
- INTEGRATE BUSINESS WITHIN OUR COMMUNITY
- REASSESS AND REDIRECT OUR COMMISSION ACTIVITIES
- EMPOWER RESIDENTS
- IMPLEMENT CEC STRATEGIC PLAN AND INTEGRATE WITH LARGER PLAN
- **Strategic Direction Two: Showcasing Our City**
- BEAUTIFY STREET SCAPES
- CREATE “UNIQUE TO FALCON HEIGHTS” FESTIVAL/EVENT
- IMPROVE FACILITIES
- **Strategic Direction Three: Creating Common Spaces**
- IDENTIFY SPACES FOR COMMUNITY USE
- FIX COMMUNITY PARK
- **Strategic Direction Four: Enhancing Public Safety**
- ENHANCE PUBLIC SAFETY THROUGH INTERACTIVE AND PRO-ACTIVE POLICING
- **Strategic Direction Five: Improving Communication**

## **Community Park**

### Property Acquisition Update

- Final step: approve subdivision on March 22nd
- Closing within 30 days
- Funds wired to U of M

### Funding

- Grants
  - DNR Outdoor Recreation Grant
- State Bonding Request
  - Fall Session Request – plans need to be more finalized
- Financing
  - 2024 General Improvement Bond
  - Dedicates entire city as improvement area
  - Estimate of \$2M required for bond

### Construction

- Next Steps
- Construction Process / Timeline

## **Staffing & Retention**

- Staff retention continues to be an issue
  - Certain positions, such as Administrative & Communications Coordinator, experiencing nearly annual turnover
  - Makes continuity difficult, particularly on commissions
  - Candidates cite main reason for leaving as compensation– they are able to get more funds elsewhere
  - We are limited as a small community with 2/3rds untaxable
  - Need to be creative in staff retention
- Ideas such as
  - Looking at other benefits / perks
  - 36-hour work week– a move private sector companies are considering and is done in small rural communities.
    - M-Th 8AM-4:30PM, Fri 8AM-Noon
    - Same pay for less hours – an effective raise of 10% with no impact to tax levy
    - Similar to “Summer Hours,” but instead of 7:30-5:00. We rarely have visitors this half hour stretch.
    - Online permits have reduced walk-in traffic substantially
    - Appeals to Millennial / Gen Z employees who prioritize time over money
    - Would require PERA / legal guidance

Administrator Linehan and the City Council then delved in to the priorities of the Council:

- Police Contract Consultant Study – Matt Bostrom
  - Deliverables 1-4 Recap
  - Strategic Discussions

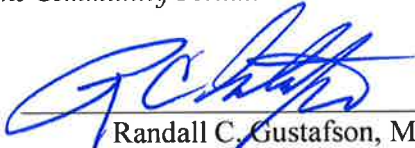


- Next Steps
- Cost of Living/Taxes
- Environment
- Engagement/Inclusiveness/Two-Way Communication
  - Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Continuation
- ARPA Funds
- Capital Priorities
- Program Priorities / Strategic Thinking


D. ADJOURNMENT: 4:35 p.m.

Council Member Meyer motions to adjourn the retreat; approved 4-0.

*DISCLAIMER: City Council Retreats are held annually as an opportunity for Staff to present prior year achievements in their departments as well as outline their current goals to Council Members. And, it allows 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 should send them to [mail@falconheights.org](mailto:mail@falconheights.org) prior to the retreat. Alternatively, time is regularly allotted for public comment during Regular City Council Meetings (typically 2nd and 4th Wednesdays) during the Community Forum.*

  
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Randall C. Gustafson, Mayor

Dated this 18<sup>th</sup> day of March, 2023

  
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Jack Linehan, City Administrator