

CITY OF FALCON HEIGHTS
Regular Meeting of the City Council
City Hall
2077 West Larpenteur Avenue
MINUTES
February 22, 2023 at 7:00 P.M.

NOTE: THIS MEETING WAS HELD BY WEB CONFERENCE*

- A. CALL TO ORDER: 7:05 p.m.
- B. ROLL CALL: GUSTAFSON_X__ LEEHY_X__ MEYER_X__

WASSENBERG_X__ WEHYEE_X_(Zoom)

STAFF PRESENT: LINEHAN__

- C. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Councilmember Leehy motions to
approve the amended agenda;

ROLL CALL TO APPROVE:
GUSTAFSON_X__ LEEHY_X__ MEYER_X__
WASSENBERG_X__ WEHYEE_X_(Zoom)
approved 5-0

- D. PRESENTATION

- E. APPROVAL OF MINUTES:
1. February 1, 2023 City Council Workshop Meeting Minutes
 2. February 8, 2023 City Council Regular Meeting Minutes

Councilmember Meyer motions to
approve the minutes;

ROLL CALL TO APPROVE:
GUSTAFSON_X__ LEEHY_X__ MEYER_X__
WASSENBERG_X__ WEHYEE_X_(Zoom)
approved 5-0

- F. PUBLIC HEARINGS:

- G. CONSENT AGENDA:
1. General Disbursements through: 2/15/23 \$314,899.99
Payroll through: 2/15/23 \$22,859.54
Wire Payments through: 2/15/23 \$15,577.74
 2. City License(s)
 3. Falcon Heights City Hall - Ramsey County Polling Place Agreement

4. Accept the Resignation of Scott Phillips from the Planning Commission
5. Accept the Resignation of Martin McCleery from the Environment Commission
6. Accept the Resignation of Laure Campbell from the Community Engagement Commission
7. Accept the Resignation of Matthew Chernugal as Public Works Maintenance Worker
8. Order Proposed Ruggles Pathway Easement Vacation Public Hearing
9. Pay Request: Center for Values-Based Initiatives Deliverable #2
10. Appointment of Jake Anderson to the Planning Commission
11. Appointment of Jared Mehlhaff to the Environment Commission

Councilmember Wassenberg motions to approve the consent agenda;

ROLL CALL TO APPROVE:

GUSTAFSON_X__ LEEHY_X_ MEYER_X__
 WASSENBERG_X__ WEHYEE_X_(Zoom)
 approved 5-0

Councilmember Wassenberg worked with Scott Phillips on the Planning Commission and Martin McCleery on the Environment Commission. He enjoyed working with both and thanks them for their service.

Councilmember Leehy asks for clarification as to why City Hall is listed as a polling place on our agreement but we have not included Falcon Heights United Church.

Administrator Linehan says that the Council reaffirmed our two polling places back in January. City Hall is location #1, for those west of Snelling. And, location #2 is Falcon Heights church, for those east of Snelling. The church is required to approve this same agreement. It's basically our responsibility as a host site to open the doors at 5:00 AM and provide all the necessary services for the election workers; it's essentially reaffirming that we will take care of our responsibilities. This agreement does not preclude or remove the church as a voting location. Each location must approve the agreement. But, because we are a public body, we have to formally approve the agreement, where other locations may be able to just sign it.

Councilmember Leehy thanks Administrator Linehan for the clarification.

Mayor Gustafson thanks Laure Campbell and Matt Chernugal. The Mayor served with Laure Campbell on the Community Engagement Commission and appreciates her good ideas. Matt Chernugal has been with the City for a short time but the Mayor says he understands when places like St. Paul Water Works grab a good employee when they see one. We will look forward to new people joining us on the Planning, Environment and Community Engagement Commissions.

H: POLICY ITEMS:

1. Approval of Acquisition of Real Property from the University of Minnesota for Community Park - 2050 Roselawn Avenue

Administrator Linehan says this is one of the last steps in the purchase of the Community Park property. This has been a long process as the City has worked through and expressed their interest in purchasing the park. The City has leased the property from the University of Minnesota for \$1 per year since 1973. Our current lease started in 2008 and runs through 2024. As the lease is expiring and the City has expressed a desire to improve the building, both parties have expressed

interest in the property being purchased by the City. The final question was the price and how to go about it. Over the past two years, two appraisals were completed to determine the price. The University hired an appraiser and the City hired an appraiser in the summer of '22. The valuation range for the property was between \$1.25 and \$2.00 per square foot between the two appraisals. The City initially made an offer on the property that was rejected by the University of Minnesota. Both parties, through negotiations, came up with a mutually beneficial price that split the difference of the two appraisals and is right between the two at \$1.62 ½ per square foot. During the negotiation process, it was determined that the 14 ½ acre parcel was actually larger than that. Because of this, the estimated sale price is around \$1.1 million dollars. The final price will be determined by the plat of survey, which we just received today, which will determine the total square footage. The \$1.625 per square foot remains the price. The Board of Regents approved and authorized this sale on February 10, 2023. It now goes to the City for approval. This has been drafted by our attorney; this resolution comes from the attorneys directly, who have vast knowledge in this area of property acquisition and land negotiations. The resolution essentially allows Staff and attorneys, if Council agrees in principal, that overall these principals are good and agrees to the terms, it allows us to work with our attorney to finalize the document. There will be a lot of paperwork coming up and this allows total authority to Staff, Mayor and City Attorney to execute all necessary documents. This is all is contingent upon the successful subdivision of the property, the title of the property and the plat of survey. If all of those are agreeable and the subdivision goes through, then the next step would be to put the subdivision on a public hearing at the Planning Commission on Tuesday, February 28th. If the Planning Commission recommends a favorable approach to the subdivision, it will then go to the City Council for final approval on March 8th. If all of those steps go through, we're working towards a closing date of end of March or early April for the property. Administrator Linehan says he'll answer questions, if there are any.

Councilmember Wehyee asks about the final closing costs, as that amount has not been included in the figure. Does Administrator Linehan know the approximate closing costs?

Administrator Linehan says they're expecting about 3%, on average. Because they elected not to use a broker, we'll save on brokerage fees, but we'd likely cover the 3% of closing costs. We have already paid for some of that: ALTA survey and the title for the property. He says to expect approximately another \$30,000 added on to the total as an estimate.

Councilmember Leehy asks if we're hoping to close by the end of March so that the City would qualify for certain funds.

Administrator Linehan says both parties are working towards that. The City would like to apply for a grant, which closes at the end of March, and we have been in discussion with them. If we show that we are substantially in ownership of the property, if the sale is pending, then that would be good enough for them; that would show we are working towards it. But, we must understand that there's the realistic timeframe that we've been in, that would push that back a little further. Council Member Leehy thanks Administrator Linehan for his research into that.

Councilmember Wassenberg says he finds that the purchase price seems quite reasonable when looking at the comparable properties in a more urban area such as Roseville or St. Louis Park.

Mayor Gustafson says that he felt it was a fair deal for both. Even though this is a minor piece of land for such a large land grant institution, their bureaucracy and people worked well for us. Once things were in motion, Mayor states that Administrator Linehan and team did a good job and he thanks him for negotiating on behalf of the City and pulling this deal together with the University.

Councilmember Wehyee also wants to recognize and thank Administrator Linehan and team for leading the City in this process. He says that this is maybe the Administrator's largest negotiation, but he did a stellar job. This is an opportunity for us to own the land and says he's personally very

excited about this; that this is something to be proud of. This is probably one of those achievements that he and others will look back on and be proud of.

Administrator Linehan thanks the Council for their leadership. Since he started, it was clear this was a top priority to purchase and renovate the park. This gave clear guidance on how to work towards it. This took about nine months to get through the process; that's two agencies/ bureaucracies working in action.

All told, we moved quick and it was a pleasure working with the University on this. They worked in good faith and have a whole department, GIS staff and many attorneys on staff, which would have been difficult without their expertise. The goal of the two parties was never to win one over on the other party. It wasn't their goal to get as much money as possible; they know that this land, if it wasn't a park, would be worth over ten million dollars. They understand this is them giving the land back to the community. By them selling it to the City, it benefits their students and benefits their mission of being a good neighbor. He think it's a big accomplishment for the City and a good win for both parties; it's an exciting day!

Councilmember Meyer states he's looking forward to the next steps and all of the conversations we're going to have with consultants and the community about what our park is going to look like, what its current role serves and what it might serve in the future. It's going to be fun to dream up what can be done and to go out and accomplish that.

Councilmember Wassenberg adds that there's a very excited Parks and Rec Commission!

Mayor Gustafson says it's a very exciting time and an additional step on a long journey, when they purposefully began saving for this day to have the cash on hand to buy it, which has been a several year-long project.

Councilmembers Leehy and Wehyee motion to approve resolution 23-18, the Approval of Acquisition of Real Property from the University of Minnesota for Community Park;

ROLL CALL TO APPROVE:

GUSTAFSON X LEEHY X MEYER X
WASSENBERG X WEHYEE X (Zoom)
approved 5-0

I. INFORMATION/ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Councilmember Wehyee says there was an opportunity to meet with Mayor Hassan from Somalia. The plan to meet was derailed a bit due to weather but Administrator Linehan is working with him to reschedule that. Wehyee states it is a good opportunity to meet with someone that represents a significant portion of our community. He also says that the Planning Commission is meeting on Tuesday, 2/28, when there will be a public meeting at that hearing.

Councilmember Wassenberg says he has no announcements.

Councilmember Meyer says that the Environment Commission had a meeting on 2/13 and the chair of the commission, Beth Mercer-Taylor, brought in a guest from Germany to discuss their

community's push towards clean energy. The Environment Commission is still looking for one more commissioner and you can apply online.

Councilmember Leehy says she has no announcements.

Mayor Gustafson says that the Community Engagement met on 2/15 and they are looking forward to their Spring Together event on Saturday, May 20th at Curtiss Field. We will have ice cream and games. We will have a joint meeting with the Parks and Recreation Commission soon to further coordinate that event, as well as the Ice Cream Social event, which is tentatively slated for Thursday, July 20, 2023; location TBD, depending on ground conditions at Community Park.

The Mayor reminds the community to get their cars off the streets as the City will be under a tough twenty-four hours for snow removal.

Administrator Linehan gives further details on the meeting with the Mayor of Galkayo, Somalia that Councilmember Wehyee mentioned earlier. Galkayo is the capital of the northern region and the population ranges between 80,000 and 350,000. This is due to it being a transient area that's constantly getting new people. He wanted to introduce that topic. Administrator Linehan reminds the Council that we have the Sister City in the budget and thought this might be a good first step of those discussions. City Hall will be closed on February 23 and Staff will be working remotely; residents can complete most City business online, including permits now, so he recommends they try that avenue, if possible. Public Works will be still be out and we'll be answering phones. As mentioned early, the Planning Commission will meet on 2/28 for a public hearing on the subdivision of Community Park. If that gets approved, that would come to the City Council meeting on March 8th for a vote. The City Council Workshop on March 1st will be cancelled. Instead, we'll do a City Council Retreat on a tentative date of March 18th from 9:00 AM - 3:00 PM. That date works for Matt Bostrom and The Center for Values-Based Initiatives, who would walk us through initial findings then. He could then share those with the public at the March 22nd City Council meeting.

If the date is a conflict for the Council, he asks that they let him know so that another date could be chosen.

J. COMMUNITY FORUM:

Please limit comments to 3 minutes per person. Items brought before the Council will be referred for consideration. Council may ask questions for clarification, but no council action or discussion will be held on these items.

K. ADJOURNMENT: 7:33 p.m.

Councilmember Wassenberg motions to adjourn the meeting;

ROLL CALL TO APPROVE:

GUSTAFSON_X__ LEEHY_X__ MEYER_X__
WASSENBERG_X__ WEHYEE_X (Zoom)
approved 5-0

Dated this 8th day of March, 2023



Jack Linehan, City Administrator



Randall C. Gustafson, Mayor