

**CITY OF FALCON HEIGHTS**  
Regular Meeting of the City Council  
City Hall  
2077 West Larpenteur Avenue

**MINUTES**  
May 22, 2024 at 7:00 P.M.

- A. CALL TO ORDER: 7:02 PM
- B. ROLL CALL: GUSTAFSON\_X\_ LEEHY\_X\_ MEYER\_X\_

WASSENBERG\_X\_ MIELKE\_X\_

STAFF PRESENT: NELSON\_X\_

- C. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Councilmember Leehy motions to approve the agenda;  
Approved 4-0  
(Meyer was not yet present)

- D. PRESENTATION

- E. APPROVAL OF MINUTES:
  - 1. April 17, 2024 City Council Joint Town Hall Meeting Minutes
  - 2. April 18, 2024 City Council Joint Town Hall Meeting Minutes
  - 3. April 24, 2024 City Council Regular Meeting Minutes
  - 4. May 8, 2024 City Council Regular Meeting Minutes

Councilmember Wassenberg motions to approve the meeting minutes; approved 4-0

- F. PUBLIC HEARINGS:

- G. CONSENT AGENDA:
  - 1. General Disbursements through 05/17/24: \$430,642.39  
Payroll through 5/15/24: \$24,273.99  
Wire Payments through 05/15/24: \$15,787.59
  - 2. Colin Callahan 12-Month Step Adjustment
  - 3. Summer Hours

Mayor Gustafson says that it was twelve months ago that Colin Callahan was changed over from Interim Public Works Director to Public Works Director and that reviews will be done on an annual basis. He's done a good job and has run a great department because his crew is also great. He adds that it's fitting that it's National Public Works week.

Mayor Gustafson then shares that City Hall will be closed in observance of Memorial Day on Monday, May 27<sup>th</sup>. It will reopen on Tuesday under summer hours, which means it will open one hour earlier and stay open one hour later Monday through Thursday from 7:30 AM to 5:00 PM and 8:00 AM to noon on Fridays. That will allow staff to have really nice 2.5-day weekends.

Wassenberg comments on the disbursements since that is a little larger figure than usual. One is that there are some expenses related to Community Park and another is for the wonderful new street lights along Larpenteur and Snelling. He says that's where some of the extra expense is coming from and then comments that the new lights look nice.

Mayor Gustafson says the lights were turned on for the first time on May 16<sup>th</sup>.

Wassenberg adds that they cast a nice light and are taller than he thought they might be; they are plenty tall.

Mayor Gustafson says that they will look very nice once the new banners are on them and they will dress up the corridor.

Leehy adds that staff sent word out to owners of different apartments and housing that if any residents had any concerns, they could reach out for adjustments.

Mayor Gustafson asks if the City heard from anybody.

Nelson says they did not.

Councilmember Mielke motions to approve the consent agenda;  
Approved 5-0

#### H. POLICY ITEMS:

#### I. INFORMATION/ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Councilmember Mielke says that the Environment Commission met last week (on May 13) and discussed the Partners in Energy. The Energy Action Team program is underway. They talked about boulevard trees. The State Fair Task Force held its first meeting last week (on May 15) and Mielke attended to thank the old members and greet the new members. The Task Force will be picking up where Task Force 1.0 left off and are eager to meet with the State Fair CEO Renee Alexander. Mielke adds that one of the first things on the agenda is the pedicab ordinance that's been drafted. On Friday, Mielke was at the Capitol to support Representative Leigh Finke and the ERA bill, which didn't make it through the senate. Mielke spoke with Representative Hornstein ---he co-authored the bill asking the State Fair to submit a plan by August 1 to increase the use of transit for fairgoers -- and that passed. No bonding bills went forward so we did not get any bonding money for the Community Park. Yesterday, Mielke attended the grand opening of the Vail Place. Mielke says it's a pretty great program for adults with mental health needs and former Representative Mindy Greiling worked on this to get one opened in Ramsey County. It's on Dale and Iglehart in St. Paul. Mielke will turn the news release into an article for the newsletter.

Councilmember Meyer has no announcements.

Councilmember Leehy attended the Spring Together event, making it to the last half. Leehy is glad the weather cooperated and the turnout was good. Leehy heard good things from residents and adds that the Ramsey County Sheriff did a demo as well. Leehy shares that the Community Engagement Commission met on Monday (May 20) but was unable to attend but appreciates their work and that of the Parks Commission for bringing things to a conclusion with the Spring Together event and all of the work that went into it.

Councilmember Wassenberg seconds Leehy's remarks about Spring Together and thanks staff. He recognizes Eric Brenton from the Parks and Rec Commission who facilitated the open mic portion of the event.

Mayor Gustafson says that Spring Together was really fun and the attendance was great - - - maybe even the best attendance yet. He adds that the fire department was out there and kids were crawling all through the fire truck.

Councilmember Mielke adds that Xcel had a good boost for the Partners in Energy program. They will have lightbulbs at other events too.

Mayor Gustafson adds that Ice Cream Social will be coming up on Thursday, July 18<sup>th</sup> and we don't know where we are going to have it yet. But, mark the date and stay tuned for the location. He then adds that there was going to be a safe space at Luther Seminary but the Seminary backed out of the deal on Tuesday morning. The county is trying to find a new location for Safe Space.

Councilmember Mielke says that a resident mentioned the condition of the stoplights at Snelling and Larpenteur and the answer is that the county is responsible for lights on Larpenteur and the state is responsible for lights at Snelling and Larpenteur. Administrator Linehan said there's a rotation schedule and he will have our Public Works ask the county if they can bump up the lights on Larpenteur.

Mayor Gustafson says that the lights at Snelling and Larpenteur were redone within the last three to five years.

Councilmember Mielke says that the streetlights at Snelling and Arona look tough.

Mayor Gustafson says it is similar to the monuments. Until you looked closely at them, you didn't realize they were rusted. Public Works is going to sandblast them and get them ready.

Councilmember Leehy says the monument lighting will be improved as well.

Mayor Gustafson says that every thirty years, whether you need to or not, I guess you've got to put a coat of paint on something.

Councilmember Mielke adds that Gibbs Farm opens this weekend too for its summer season.

Mayor Gustafson cautions drivers to watch for kids at Cleveland and Larpenteur who may be excited to be there and not thinking about traffic safety. Speaking of safety, the Mayor urges residents to be mindful of crimes of convenience. Keep car doors locked and keep

your garage door down if you are out mowing in the backyard. An ounce of prevention prevents a lot of problems.

Staff person Nelson adds that Public Works is currently fabricating 32 steel frames for monument signs and mowing and weed-whipping, as needed.

Nelson thanks the Council, residents and commissioners for attending Spring Together and says that the location of the Ice Cream Social (either at City Hall or Community Park) will likely be known within the next couple of weeks. Save the date of Thursday, July 18. Nelson updates the Council on various grant applications that were submitted.

The City learned they were not selected to receive grant funds as part of the AARP Community Challenge Grant. The funds would have provided a wheeled pickleball net at The Grove. The AARP Community Challenge Grant had over 3,300 applicants.

The next grant to hear back from would be the University of Minnesota Good Neighbor Fund. The City applied for approximately \$7,300, which would be used to purchase various sports equipment with to use for summer programming at Curtiss Field. The City will likely know by the end of this month whether or not they were selected to receive those grant funds.

Lastly, Nelson shares an update on the MN Outdoor Recreation Grant through the DNR. The City requested \$350,000 with a 100% match to be used for a new playground at Community Park. The grant funds would allow the City to take the playground from accessible to inclusive. It would an expansion of the square footage, to select play structures to be more inclusive and then the largest component, which would be to add poured in place surfacing throughout, which alone accounts for an additional \$200K-\$300K. The City applied for the grant last year but didn't have estimates and was not as far along in the process. They were notified last year at the end of June that they were not selected so Nelson anticipates hearing around the end of June if we are grant fund recipients this year. Nelson reminds residents that City Hall will be closed on Monday for Memorial Day. When City Hall reopens on Tuesday, it will be under summer hours, opening for business at 7:30 AM.

Councilmember Leehy asks Nelson to share with residents what the City is thinking of for an inclusive playground.

Nelson says that they heard from residents that finding a fully enclosed playground is really difficult to find. One resident, in particular, drives to Stillwater to a park like this. Elopement issues can arise whether you have multiple children wanting to play on different play structures. So, enclosing the play area would benefit a lot of the population for different reasons. The City also wants the various play components together, not separated by abilities. These grant funds would also allow for a larger play structure / play space and to go from wood chips, which pass ADA Standards but Nelson isn't sure that's really our best option and that the City would love to do a poured-in-place option.

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.*

Rice' Davis- 1407 California Ave. W.

Davis thanks the City, the Council, the Community Engagement Commission and the Parks and Rec Commission for their time and effort with Spring Together. Davis' grandchild liked the fire truck and the many treats. Davis appreciated the lights.

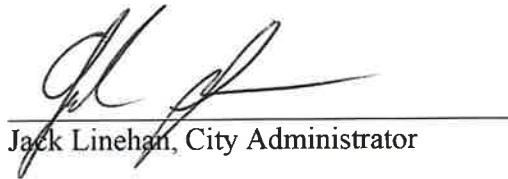
K. ADJOURNMENT: 7:27 PM

Councilmembers Leehy and Mielke motion to adjourn;  
Approved 5-0



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Randall C. Gustafson, Mayor

Dated this 12<sup>th</sup> day of June, 2024



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Jack Linehan, City Administrator