

CITY OF FALCON HEIGHTS
Community Engagement Commission
City Hall
2077 West Larpenteur Avenue

MINUTES
April, 15 2024 at 6:30 P.M.

A. CALL TO ORDER: 6:31 PM

B. WELCOME:

C. ROLL CALL:

Karen Cooley-Kistler_X_ Julie Ebbesen_X_ Zach Lindstrom_X_ Curt Stockford_X_
Mishy Wang_X_ Rebecca Leighton_X_ Denise King_X_

STAFF PRESENT:

Elke Van der Werff_X__

COUNCIL LIAISON:

Melanie Leehy__X__

D. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Agenda approved motioned Cooley-Kistler, 2nd King. Agenda approved unanimously.

E. PRESENTATION:

1. GET TO KNOW EACH OTHER

Commissioner introductions – introducing new commissioner Denise King

F. APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

1. March 18, 2024 Community Engagement Commission & Parks and Rec Commission Joint Meeting Minutes

Approval of minutes – Addition of Parks attendees prior to posting Motion Leighton, 2nd Wang, Minutes approved unanimously.

G. AGENDA

- Unfinished business
- Neighborhood Liaison Handbook
 - Leehy confirming the goal of the document to update information and consolidate information.

- Stockford verified and that is correct. Some information was outdated and the defined volunteer “roles” were more complicated and could have been a barrier to participation.
- Leehy inquired about training opportunities similar to what the program had earlier in the commission lifetime.
- Van der Werff discussed options for training/programming possibilities in the future – including C.E.R.T training, first aid, car set checks, etc.
- Stockford recommends we continue discussing programs/activities now that the commission is fully seated.
- Ebbesen stated that the existing list of liaisons was not up to date and there was difficulty getting individuals on the existing list to respond to requests to update information. The goal is to reduce the barrier to people to identify themselves as liaisons and get involved.
- Leehy acknowledges that there are concerns with continued CERT training but sees value in it. Stockford recommends the Lions program for training opportunities as a place to start.
- Leehy CERT history – CERT develops a network of residents to activate in response to an emergency. Came in handy for the North Minneapolis tornado in 2011. Minneapolis CERT had then disbanded but other trained citizens were able to assist. Currently tabled for Falcon Heights and would take effort to review and dig into reigniting the program.
- King- sees value in CERT program and believes it would be a benefit to community members and the community itself. Consider grants and highlighting opportunities for training “Early Bird” bonuses (priority training) for those who would like to volunteer as neighborhood liaisons.
- King suggests revising and offering more reasons why the program and the participants are important. Consider creating 3 documents including:
 - Informational 1 pager
 - Handbook
 - Detailed privacy standard
- Stockford – agrees the document is brief and uncomplicated.
- Leighton – start with a recruitment flyer to sell people on the program and then send them this document
- Leehy – Liaison program built to create a network of neighborhood leaders and strengthen the sense of community. It would include a representative from Police and Fire to attend meetings.
- Stockford – consider explaining the liaison concept vs the block captain concept to generate visibility for the program.
- Stockford – take what we have today and edit so it does grab the attention of the reader in the first couple of sentences.
- King proposes a working session to finalize the document. It could be valuable to discuss with the other citizens. Leighton agrees.
- Leehy recommends that we come back next time with our suggestions and adjustments.

- Lindstrom - agrees - feels that there is value in collecting perspectives from other citizens.
- Van der Werff- at Spring Together have a CEC table focused on the Liaison program.
- Stockford - suggests “gimmick” to encourage participation - King suggests neighborhood location map to show where people live - poster board with info about the program. Leehy - give ice cream ticket and pin to place on the map
- Possible questions to encourage participation and increase the visibility of the neighborhood liaison program
 - A leader in my community
 - Our neighborhood communicates by...
 - How do you keep in touch with your neighbors?
 - How do you care for your neighbors?
- MOTION - King proposes we meet in a separate working session for 2-3 hours to revise and finalize Neighborhood liaison program. The motion would be after the Spring Together event. 2nd Wang (May 20 6:30 PM)
 - Stockford suggests that the commissioners take time between now and the workshop to generate ideas
 - Stockford suggests that commission members communicate availability issues if 3 events in May (Park commission joint meeting, Spring Together and CEC meeting) is too much for anyone.
- New Business
 1. Apartment Outreach
 - Stockford - we are being asked to develop a schedule - he requests councilmembers share availability.
 - Ebbesen clarifies that these events are intended to include commission members and councilmembers gathering at the apartment complexes to connect with the renters and create a sense of community and find out what renters are looking for and what community services are available and how the city can support and welcome renters in the community.
 - Leehy - when she was on the CEC she would independently plan “block parties” for the apartments and connect with neighbors and apartment management. For senior complexes, they would set up during other planned social gatherings. Find out with apartment facilities to see if there are community rooms or spaces we might be able to host something.
 - Leehy - suggests waiting for at least 1 quarter due to current activity with the police task force. Can only have two council members attend each event.
 - Stockford - Would need to identify resources. Leehy - look at grants. Stockford - the commission will be tasked with planning and identifying

dates and times, then go to the council with the plan and start scheduling visits. Leehy – include City Administrator.

- King – suggest splitting the list of managers and commissioners each take a group of contacts from the list and reaching out to plan/schedule events.
- Leehy – suggests everyone uses the same script –King suggested scripts, “Hi I’m {name} we are trying to connect with our apartment dwelling residents to:
 - Share information about city resources
 - Hear what questions you have for the city
 - Would like to include residents in city discussions and activities
 - Want to make apartment dwellers feel welcome here in Falcon Heights to create long-term relationships
 - Leighton – the ask - Do you have space or existing meeting times that we can coordinate with the city commissioner and councilmember, can we discuss a date/time we can schedule a time to meet?
 - Goal meeting times September
- King will draft a script and share it with Van der Werff and commissioners can respond to Van der Werff individually.
- Stockford requests that Leehy communicate to the council that we will move forward.

2. Spring Together

- Stockford – Discuss reaching out to the apartment buildings to communicate the event to rental properties. We can send a pdf to a current list of managers and they will send the pdf to residents – King – suggests adding ics file attachment for recipients to easily add to calendars
- Van der Werff- will have fliers, a banner (at Curtiss Field), and a Lion’s sign (City Hall)
- King will post on the Nextdoor app
- Leighton will post on Falcon Heights Neighbor Facebook page
- Cooley-Kistler suggests CTC (U of M student housing)
- Stockford – Schools will publish if we can promote volunteer opportunities to fulfill community involvement
- Van der Werff will send a flier and calendar file to apartment managers
- Cooley-Kistler will include a digital flier in the Grove newsletter
- King will deliver fliers to Falcon Heights businesses
- Stockford will look for the contact for the major apartment manager

H. INFORMATION/ANNOUNCEMENT

J. ADJOURNMENT: 8:21 PM

Motion to Adjourn Ebbesen, 2nd King

Next Regular Meeting is on Monday, May 6 at 6:30 PM