

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

AGENDA

September 11, 2024 at 7:00 P.M.

A. CALL TO ORDER: 7:00 PM

B. ROLL CALL: GUSTAFSON_X_ LEEHY_Arrived after Roll Call_ MEYER_X_

WASSENBERG_X_ MIELKE_X_

STAFF PRESENT: LINEHAN_X_ LYNCH_X_ VAN DER WERFF_X_ OLSON_X_

C. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

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

D. PRESENTATION

1. Partners in Energy - Energy Action Plan Presentation

Community Development Coordinator Lynch explains Falcon Heights has been working on creating an Energy Action Plan. The plan is designed to identify the barriers to implementation and work to implement those goals. They are currently at the drafting stage of the plan. An Energy Action Team, consisting of residents along with the Environment Commission, Councilmember Mielke, Partners in Energy, and the Center for Energy and Environment worked on the plan for the last 6 months. Through open houses, workshops, and a citywide survey they identified the City's energy-related goals and developed strategies for implementation. The Community Energy Survey had a great response, and Lynch shows common responses. She also shows the diversity of people who responded.

The vision for the plan is: Falcon Heights prioritizes energy strategies that lead to a sustainable and equitable future. Three focus areas were identified through data-driven approaches.

- Alleviating the Energy Burden
- Enhancing Energy Efficiencies in Buildings
- Embracing Clean, Renewable Energy

The Energy action plan goal for Falcon Heights is to decrease projected greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions by 50% by 2030 while reaching out to residents and businesses with energy programs and resources. This will result in a substantial 65% increase in dollars saved by our community members and businesses.

Lynch explains this is based on a baseline participation rate of 9% for residential and 11% for commercial and industrial participants. These are already strong participation rates. Goal is to increase both to a 12% participation rate. She shows the cumulative avoided greenhouse gas emissions through participation in the plan.

Next, Lynch explains how Xcel Energy Programs tracks models towards goals. Each program has savings associated with them, and that is counted towards reaching goals.

The plan has many different strategies with action items along with partnerships and resources that can be used to work towards those actions. There is also a detailed work plan. Lynch goes over some of the strategies in the plan that will help reach the goal.

- Partner with organizations such as the University of Minnesota and Minnesota State Fair
- Engage the community through workshops and outreach
- Support the community by connecting them with resources

Lynch provides key sections of the energy action plan. For implementation support, she has biweekly meetings with Partners in Energy for work plan tracking. They also have a marketing team to help with campaign materials. Xcel Energy also checks in regularly. Lynch provides additional resources available.

Mayor Gustafson thanks Lynch and Partners in Energy for all the work put in.

Councilmember Meyer likes the plan, especially transitioning to heat pumps, electric heating, and EV charging. He believes renewable clean energy terminology creates confusion because the goal is to decrease carbon emissions and renewable energy still creates carbon emission. He provides a personal experience from when he was at the State Fair with his own organization. The largest non-carbon producer is nuclear in the state of Minnesota. Meyer suggests, taking the data-driven approach, but not obfuscating what clean energy sources are. He talks about how clean energy in Minnesota such as solar and wind is dependent on the weather. He would prefer to refer to just clean energy and provide residents with all energy sources that are available in the state.

Councilmember Wassenberg provides his thanks for the report and is pleased to see all the actions. Focuses on promotion and awareness with the hopes of increasing action amongst residents. For focus area 2, he wonders about the payback period.

Deidre from Partners in Energy explains the multifamily building outreach involves a program from Xcel Energy. It's an assessment program where the building will get a report with recommendations on investments. It talks about voluntary standards and goals.

Councilmember Leehy states that it's important to note it's all optional. Deidre answers that everything in the report is optional/educational and is encouraged through incentives.

Mielke recognizes the energy action team for all their work and assistance in creating the energy action plan. Gustafson thanks everyone from the team for participating, as well as the Partners in Energy for their support.

Lynch explains the next steps. Leehy wonders about discussing the plan further at a workshop. Gustafson agrees.

E. APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

1. August 14, 2024 City Council Meeting Minutes
2. August 14, 2024 City Council Special Workshop Meeting Minutes

Councilmember Meyer motions to approve the meeting minutes;
Approved 5-0

F. PUBLIC HEARINGS:

G. CONSENT AGENDA:

1. General Disbursements through 9/4/24: \$98,674.10
 - a. Payroll through 8/31/24: \$25,271.46

- b. Wire Payments through 8/31/24: \$16,013.07
- 2. City Licenses
- 3. Resignation of Randi Lundell from the Parks and Recreation Commission
- 4. Resignation of Zach Lindstrom from the Community Engagement Commission
- 5. Resignation of Emma Kostecki from the Environment Commission
- 6. Tax Increment Finance District 1-3 – Falcon Heights Senior Apartments Note Payoff

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

Gustafson thanks Randi, Zach, and Emma for their time on the commissions. New opportunities are now available for residents if they see interest in joining any of the commissions.

Leehy recognizes Zach Lindstrom, as he was one of the youth commissioners.

H. POLICY ITEMS:

- 1. City Code Amendments Including Authorizing Accessory Dwelling Units, Modifying Parking Minimums, and General Code Amendments

Lynch explains City Codes frequently require updates. Since February the Planning Commission has been looking deeper into Code, to update and modernize it. They held a public hearing at their regular meeting regarding the code changes. Changes of Note to City Code Include:

- a. Addition of accessory dwelling units (ADU) to City Code. Lynch provides the specific language that is suggested to be added to City Code on top of existing zoning code guidelines.
 - i. She adds a letter of support was received from the Saint Paul Area Association of Realtors
 - ii. Meyer is asking for clarification on the height requirement. Lynch explains this matches the other language in Code
- b. Changes to parking minimums for multifamily properties. Lynch explains current City Code language, is being changed to one parking space per unit, and 1.25 spaces per multifamily dwelling unit with ten or less spaces that abut no street parking. They also removed the enclosed requirements.
 - i. Gustafson wonders about parking requirements for buildings of 11 units and more. Lynch explains the requirement is one space per unit regardless of street parking. He believes adequate parking creates a livable space for residents. Meyer comments he believes developers understand the market and parking requirements better. Gustafson believes they are more focused on building the building and not the livability of residents and neighbors. Leehy also looks at the impact of parking on residents and neighbors. She wanted 1.5 as a minimum. She believes 1.25 should be required across the board. Meyer notes more parking minimums creates large parking lots and decreases walkability. He understands the other sides. Leehy notes that not enough off-street parking creates people having to walk further to their cars. Mielke notes these are mostly focused on buildings along Larpenteur, which has sidewalks and mass transit.
- c. Other City Code updates include:
 - i. Trash Cans – Currently City Code states they cannot be seen from the road. Updated to state they can be placed behind the front line of the home. This would allow them to be seen from the street. After a review of the city, roughly 80% of the city is in violation of the current requirement.

- ii. Fall-out shelters and guesthouses removed from City Code.
- iii. Updated building chapter to include ADU permitting requirements for rentals and vacant structures

Lynch explains there are three ordinances and summary ordinances that include all the city code updates. She explains the Planning Commission held a Public Hearing on August 27 to allow residents a chance to speak.

Wassenberg is requesting clarification on a couple of items. Regarding parking at single-family residences. And about classifications and definitions in zoning districts.

Councilmember Meyer motions to approve Ordinance 24-04 and Summary Ordinance 24-04 Amending Chapter 113 of the Falcon Heights City Code;
Approved 4-1

Leehy motions to amend sections 9E and 13 R2 of Chapter 113 the Falcon Heights City Code, to state the parking requirement for multifamily dwellings should be 1.25 spaces;
Approved 2-3
Motion to amend fails

Councilmember Leehy motions to Approve Ordinance 24-05 and Summary Ordinance 24-05 Amending Chapter 105 of the Falcon Heights City Code;
Approved 5-0

Councilmember Meyer motions to Approve Ordinance 24-06 and Summary Ordinance 24-06 Amending Chapter 38 of the Falcon Heights City Code;
Approved 5-0

2. Climate Action Plan Consultant Recommendation

Lynch explains in January of 2023 the City of Falcon Heights declared a climate crisis and authorized city staff to take action and develop a climate action plan to work toward a carefully planned transition to a clean energy economy. The Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) developed a grant program for projects that develop or implement plans of action that enable local jurisdictions to adapt to extreme weather events and a changing climate. The City applied and was notified they were selected for the grant. Staff contacted three different consulting firms. After the review of the proposal, staff recommends acceptance of paleBLUEdot's proposal for the Climate Action Plan. Lynch explains they have created their own tools during the development of the company, allowing access to a database full of other cities' strategies and actions.

Linehan adds that the staff consulted with the City Attorney and they recommended adding a professional services agreement.

Meyer wonders how this works with the energy action plan. Lynch explains the energy action plan falls under the umbrella of the climate action plan. The climate action plan looks at more than just energy. He also wonders if there will be an alignment of schedules for the climate action plan and energy action plan. He is afraid it would be too taxing administratively.

Lynch answers, yes, it is, but the energy action plan is very communication-focused, and the Green corps member that will be starting soon will be able to assist.

Councilmember Mielke motions to approve Resolution 24-49 Accepting paleBLUEdot Proposal and Authorizing City Administrator to Enter Into Contract With paleBLUEdot For Climate Action Plan;
Approved 5-0

3. Acceptance of Metropolitan Council Livable Communities Act (LCA) Pre-Development Grant Program Award for Amber Flats

Linehan explains this item was on the agenda for the August 14th meeting, and it was tabled per council recommendation. Staff has been working with Amber Union on code violations, that are taking a longer time to rectify.

Wassenberg believes Buhl and Amber Union have shown good progress. He wants to ensure management continues to make progress and create a livable environment for their tenants.

Meyer clarifies the number of units for Amber Flats. Buhl proposed to lower the number of units to 92 to allow for 3-bedroom units, which is within the 5% administrative variance of the PUD.

Meyer and Mielke believe the developers should meet all code violations before allowing them to pass on the grant.

Linehan is working on setting up a meeting with the investors to talk through issues that are not necessarily code violations.

Councilmember Mielke motions to table the approval of Resolutions 24-50 and 24-51 to accept the award from the Metropolitan Council's Livable Communities Act, enter into a subgrant agreement with Buhl Larpenteur West, LLC for the distribution of the grant funds, and grant authority to the City Administrator to sign all documents related to accepting the grant, to October 9, 2024;
Approved 5-0

4. Assessment Manual Amendments

Linehan explains the amendment of the assessment policy would allow the City Council discretion to determine how to assess a property, whether it be per lineal foot (current), per parcel, or on an appraisal basis. The 2025 PMP project will include the full reconstruction of the streets within Falcon Woods, as well as a mill & overlay for east-to-west streets in Northome, and potentially alleyways. As the Falcon Woods neighborhood is not a traditional grid system and has no through traffic, engineering and the City Council have recommended adopting an equalized per-parcel assessment rather than a lineal foot method. Under this model, all properties would be assessed the same amount within the project area rather than a basis of how many lineal feet each parcel has.

Meyer wonders about the benefit assessment and how it would be determined which method to use for assessment. Linehan explains the engineers complete a feasibility report and determine then which method is best.

Councilmember Meyer motions to approve Resolution 24-51 amending the City's Assessment Manual to reflect the changes as recommended;
Approved 5-0

I. INFORMATION/ ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Wassenberg notes they stenciled storm drains around the city to raise awareness on keeping the waterways clean.

Leehy shares the Community Engagement Commission is meeting on Monday, September 16. She notes there is an open spot with the commission. She acknowledges September 11th as a day to remember in our nation.

Meyer shares that he and his wife welcomed a girl into the world. He is looking forward to the citywide garage sale.

Mielke explains she attended an event at the Falcon Heights Elementary School. The Environment Commission met on Monday and discussed items that were passed today. She held the Renters Rights Workshop on Saturday, September 7. There was a good turnout, HOME line was there presenting and she thanks the staff for assisting.

Gustafson thanks staff for their work around the State Fair. The State Fair Task Force will debrief soon. A post-fair survey is made available for residents to share their experiences.


Linehan echoes Leehy comments. He thanks and appreciates staff for their work around the State Fair. He thanks the staff for their work on the front end. He appreciates Lynch for all the work around the climate and energy plans. Public Works was out today working on the city monuments and the Gazebo will also be freshened up. On October 26 from 2:00 to 5:00 PM there will be a fall event at City Hall in coordination with Gibbs Farm to celebrate fall and to tie in the 75th anniversary. As a heads-up, Friday, September 20 is the Roy Griak Invitational at Les Bolstad. A map of all garage sales is available on the City Website.

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: 8:57 PM

Councilmember Meyer motions to adjourn;
5-0



Randall C. Gustafson, Mayor

Dated this 23rd day of October, 2024



Jack Linehan, City Administrator