

**Falcon Heights City Council Workshop
City Hall
2077 W. Larpenteur Ave
Falcon Heights MN 55113**

**Workshop Agenda
February 6, 2008
6:30 p.m.**

- 1) Cable Franchising Update by Cor Wilson
- 2) Fire Department Officers - Transition from Election to Selection
- 3) Review of 2008 City Council Goals

WKSP 1
2/6/08

TO: Mayor Lindstrom, Council members Harris, Kuettel, Long, and Mercer-Taylor

FROM: Justin Miller, City Administrator

Re: Cable Franchise Update

Explanation:

Cor Wilson, executive director of the North Suburban Cable Commission, has asked that she have some time to speak to the city council regarding state and federal legislation that threatens franchising abilities of local governments. She will be present to provide a brief update and to answer any questions the council may have.

TO: Mayor Lindstrom, Council members Harris, Kuettel, Long, and Mercer-Taylor

FROM: Justin Miller, City Administrator

Re: Fire Department Officers - Transition from Election to Selection

Explanation:

The Falcon Heights Fire Department, much like other departments across the state, use an election system to determine officer positions such as chief and assistant chiefs. While we have been fortunate to have talented and experienced people elected to these positions, the election process increases the possibility of officers being chosen on a personality or popularity basis rather than a skills and qualifications basis, and therefore leaves the city open for potential discrimination claims.

For several years, the League of Minnesota Cities Insurance Trust (who is our general liability insurance carrier), has been encouraging cities to transition from an election process to a more formal selection process. Their main reason for promoting this process is to reduce litigation risk due to perceived discrimination in the election process. State and federal law prohibits cities from making employment decisions based on an individual's protected status. The most commonly asserted protected classes are gender, disability, age, race, national origin, sexual orientation, and marital status. According to the LMCIT, Minnesota fire departments have been subject to discrimination claims in all of these areas.

In a selection process, the following steps would be taken (similar to other city positions):

- Job description created (including duties and minimal qualifications)
- Applications received
- Interview panel (representatives from the city council, staff, fire department, outside agencies) interviews candidates
- Panel makes recommendations to city council for approval

I have already spoken to Chief Kurhajetz about this potential change, and he is supportive of moving in this direction. Furthermore, I am scheduled to speak with the entire fire department in March about why I am recommending we move towards this process. ***It should be noted that this process is not due to any issues with the current department, the leadership, or their performance.*** In fact, I have heard nothing but positive comments regarding our fire department and it is one that the city should be very proud of.

The current fire department bylaws call for elections to be held in May of this year. In order for any changes in the officer selection process to take effect, a change in bylaws will need to be brought before the city council for formal approval. It may be that a temporary fix will need to be made to get us through the end of 2008, with the new process taking effect in 2009. More information, as well as any required bylaw changes, will be brought before the council at a future date.

Requested Action:

No formal action is needed at this time; however, staff is seeking comments on the proposed process and will be available to answer any questions.

WKSP 3
2/6/08

TO: Mayor Lindstrom, Council members Harris, Kuettel, Long, and Mercer-Taylor

FROM: Justin Miller, City Administrator

Re: Review of 2008 City Council Goals

Explanation:

In June of each year, the city council establishes goals for the next twelve months. The goals are established at this time so that any new initiatives can be included in the following year's budget, which is prepared during the summer and fall months.

Since we have a new mayor and two new councilmembers, staff thought it would be a good idea to review the 2008 goals that were set by the previous council to see if there are any items that need to be re-emphasized, eliminated, or added. A copy of the 2008 goals is attached to this report.

Requested Action:

Staff recommends that the city council review the attached goals and discuss any changes that need to be made.

**City of Falcon Heights
2008 Goals**

Purpose: To sustain this community as a good place to live, work and visit.

Goal 1: To protect the public health and safety.

Strategy 1: Provide public safety services to citizens.

Action Items:

- Provide a responsive, visible, police service utilizing community oriented policing model
- Provide a responsive, well-trained fire service
- Practice the emergency management plan
- Participate in Metro-wide emergency management planning, activities and exercises
- Continue to offer training to prepare volunteers to assist with disaster response
- Maintain Community Emergency Response Teams (CERT) throughout the city
- Work with other cities, agencies and institutions in Ramsey County to develop a county-wide emergency management inventory and plan
- Continue to use St. Paul for ambulance service
- Participate in the North Suburban Haz Mat Team
- Explore options for a bicycle safety program and bicycle patrols
- Promote 55 Alive programs
- Conduct proactive neighborhood crime prevention meetings as needed
- Promote services provided by SAPD such as premise checks, vacation checks and carseat safety

Strategy 2: Participate in initiatives designed to prevent crime and the need for emergency responses.

Action Items:

- Promptly remove graffiti from public buildings and provide removal materials for city businesses
- Expand opportunities for using technology to improve crime watch notification
- Communicate regularly with residents about Homeland Security and the emergency management plan
- Support the work of the Neighborhood Commission and Neighborhood Liaisons
- Use traffic-calming tools including the speed monitoring trailer and warning signs
- Take steps to prevent hate crimes through the activities of the Human Rights Commission

Strategy 3: Participate in early intervention programs with juveniles.

Action Items:

- Support Northwest Youth and Family Services (NYFS)
- Continue referrals to NYFS through facilitating connections between NYFS and SAPD

Strategy 4: Protect the public health.

Action Item:

- Participate in Ramsey County public health emergency exercises
- Publicize mosquito control measures, including free tire pick-up by Metropolitan Mosquito Patrol, utilizing city council meetings, newsletters and flyers
- Continue education about preparing for pandemic flu in this community
- Explore opportunities to distribute free gun locks

Goal 2: To sustain and promote the assets of the city's unique neighborhoods and tax base including commercial, residential and open space uses for present and future generations.

Strategy 1: Maintain and enhance the neighborhood and community parks with updated facilities, recreation and community services.

Action Items:

- Maintain community landscaping and investigate additional options
- Maintain a sound maintenance program for public facilities
- Focus on the quality, appearance, and longevity of public improvements
- Research opportunities for enhancing recreational resources at Falcon Heights Elementary School
- Support and continue to promote an Adopt-A-Park program
- Implement the Parks and Recreation Master Plan

Strategy 2: Work with businesses and homeowners to maintain a functional and desirable business and residential environment.

Action Items:

- Continue to review and communicate city code requirements to business and commercial property owners
- Maintain the desirability of neighborhoods through education and code enforcement
- Use non-profit organizations such as NYFS
- Communicate community standards through photos and code information on the website
- Publicize Falcon Heights businesses including the Farmer's Market

Strategy 3: Maintain the City's infrastructure.

Action Items:

- Maintain and increase the pathways
- Complete development of a system for rating pathways throughout the City
- Maintain the sanitary sewers and storm sewers
- Continue with a boulevard tree program for replacement, maintenance and expansion
- Publicize the resources available through the Housing Resource Center
- Maintain streets and alleys in accordance with the Pavement Management Plan
- Pursue residential streetlighting study

Strategy 4: Protect and enhance the physical land use characteristics of the community.

Action Items:

- Regularly review and update zoning code as necessary
- Participate in planning discussions, and get the required planning expertise if needed to assure that University of Minnesota and State Fair land uses and future inter-government decisions do not negatively impact the City's neighborhoods
- Expand the use of the GIS system for land use planning and maintaining information on the city's land use and facilities
- Support environmental education programs and activities
- Complete and submit plan for 2008 Comprehensive Plan Update

Strategy 5: Pursue community and economic development opportunities and business retention activities.

Action Items:

- Be well informed with the necessary planning, engineering, financial and legal expertise when making land use decisions
- Offer local businesses opportunities to be included in new resident welcome packets and community activities

Strategy 6: Expand pedestrian and bicycle opportunities.

Action Items:

- Be an active partner in the *Active Living Ramsey County!* (ALRC) initiative
- Work with ALRC to conduct a GIS inventory of pathways and bicycle lanes
- Pursue collaborative funding for a bituminous pathway at FH Elementary playground

Strategy 7: Promote the unique assets of Falcon Heights.

Action Items:

- Publicize the new Bell Museum of Natural History
- Distribute the "Fun Facts About Falcon Heights Flyer"

Goal 3: To expand opportunities for the interaction and involvement of citizens of all ages in their neighborhoods and community.

Strategy 1: Promote and participate in youth development.

Action Items:

- Continue the Junior Leaders program
- Include youth as commission members
- Include youth in city meetings, trainings and courses
- Informally interact with youth when the opportunity arises
- Speak about local government at schools or youth related functions
- Recognize youth achievement at City Council meetings, in the newsletter, and through the Neil Kwong Youth Citizenship Awards, and the North Suburban Gavel Association
- Promote awareness of the Cable Commission scholarships and internships
- Encourage student participation in City Council Meetings
- Participate in the Kids Voting Program at precincts one and two through the Roseville Rotary Club
- Conduct a council meeting with students
- Contact RAMS or RAHS to solicit youth commission members

Strategy 2: Host community/neighborhood events and activities.

Action Items:

- Sponsor Annual Ice Cream Social
- Sponsor Winterfest
- Encourage neighborhood gatherings
- Support the Neighborhood Block Parties and National Night Out activities
- Support the Fire Department/Public Safety Open House
- Encourage volunteers to be involved in community planning activities
- Hold an annual food drive in conjunction with Falcon Heights Elementary School and other community partners
- Review and explore existing and additional city sponsored events

Strategy 3: Explore, create and provide an array of recreation programming.

Action Item:

- Provide recreation programming for all age groups
- Provide referrals for alternate programming
- Manage recreation programming on a seasonal basis
- Provide space for and promote the Falconeers Senior program

Strategy 4: Encourage citizens to participate in city government.

Action Items:

- Promote resident participation

- Continue to web-stream televised council and planning commission meetings
- Promote, recruit, and publicize citizen participation in city commissions and task forces

Strategy 5: Build stronger community and neighborhood connections.

Action Items:

- Distribute the “Welcome to Falcon Heights” booklet
- Support and promote the Neighborhood Liaison Program
- Use conflict resolution resources for neighbors to use in resolving neighborhood conflicts
- Send out three newsletters per year
- Distribute monthly Falcon Flyer and post to city website
- Support and expand the city’s website
- Promote and support the AARP Tax Assistance Program
- Research “Aging-In-Place” in the City

Strategy 6: Maintain and promote our commitment to human rights and diversity.

Action Items:

- Promote diversity on our commissions
- Support the work of the Falcon Heights Human Rights Commission

Goal 4: To provide a responsive and effective city government.

Strategy 1: Communicate promptly and clearly with citizens, business owners and institutional representatives by anticipating information needs and quickly responding to questions.

Action Items:

- Provide a photo of new staff members and a description of jobs in the newsletter
- Publish a summary of the goals in the City’s newsletter and on the website
- Educate residents about the property tax
- Hold a Truth in Taxation Hearing annually

Strategy 2: Maintain collaborative relationships with other entities.

Action Items:

- Participate in the U of M Campus/Community Advisory Committee and on the Stadium Area Advisory Group
- Maintain regular communication with the University of Minnesota, the Metropolitan Council, Ramsey County, the Minnesota State Fair, the Capital Region Watershed District, the cities surrounding Falcon Heights, and the State of Minnesota
- Convey city goals to the City’s representatives at the legislature, the Metropolitan Council and the County, as well as to neighboring communities

- Met Council representative presentation at future council meeting
- Participate in Northwest Youth and Family Service, North Suburban Communications Commission and CTV15, and the Ramsey County League of Local Governments
- Encourage Councilmembers and Staff to participate in service and professional organizations

Strategy 3: Effectively manage the City's consulting and personnel resources.

Action Items:

- Evaluate the performance and work assignments of City employees through annual performance reviews
- Provide employees with affordable resources they require to efficiently and effectively do their jobs, including a training plan and technology resources
- Provide adequate funds for personnel, equipment and contractors to maintain the City's infrastructure, facilities, public spaces and public improvements
- Evaluate and review consultants' performances and fees
- Retain highly skilled and high-functioning employees
- Provide salaries and benefits that are competitive with cities of a similar size, scale, and scope

Strategy 4: Effectively manage the city's financial resources.

Action Items:

- Update and provide a well-researched five year capital improvement program
- Review and adjust fees and policies as part of the annual budgeting process
- Research and pursue new revenue sources, including grants
- Pursue conduit bonding opportunities
- Review and evaluate the City's long term financial needs and the City's current and future financial resources to meet these needs
- Continue to research and pursue new opportunities for reducing expenses by using more contracts and joint powers agreements to share equipment, personnel, and technology with other levels of government
- Maintain a contingency fund to be prepared for unexpected, but necessary, expenditures
- Retain highly skilled and high functioning employees
- Continue to meet the standards for the GFOA Award for Excellence in Financial Reporting

Strategy 5: Develop and expand an e-mail capability to communicate with residents

Action Items:

- Solicit e-mail addresses through the Falcon Flyer and newsletter, at the front desk, on the City website, and at community events
- Solicit new resident e-mail addresses

- Provide critical information in a timely manner utilizing city's list serv

Strategy 6: Expand the capability to conduct any city-to-resident transaction online

Goal 5: Provide for a clean, healthy, sustainable environment.

Strategy 1: Undertake efforts to maximize recycling.

Action Items:

- Explore moving to a single-sort recycling system
- Research an incentive program to encourage recycling
- Investigate collecting recycling on a weekly basis

Strategy 2: Consider environmental benefits in city purchasing.

Action Items:

- Consider environmentally-friendly options in city vehicles and public works
- Change to energy-efficient, compact light bulbs

Strategy 3: Continue support of Community Garden.

Action Items:

- Investigate placement of dedicated water line to garden
- Continue publicity in newsletter, on website, and in the Falcon Flyer