

CITY OF FALCON HEIGHTS
Parks & Recreation Commission
City Hall
2077 West Larpenteur Avenue

AGENDA

April 6, 2026 at 6:30 P.M.

A. CALL TO ORDER:

B. ROLL CALL:

Eric Brenton (Chair) _____ Tom Faust (Vice-Chair) _____ Joe Morseth (Secretary) _____
Robert Haight _____ Jerry Buckridge _____ Naomi Loud Heinsch _____ Chuck Long _____

COUNCIL LIAISON:

Randy Gustafson _____

STAFF PRESENT:

Kelly Nelson _____

C. PRESENTATION:

D. APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

1. March 2, 2026 – Parks and Recreation Commission Meeting Minutes

E. AGENDA:

1. 2025/2026 Ice Rink Discussion
2. 2026 City Events Discussion

F. INFORMATION/ANNOUNCEMENT

G. ADJOURNMENT:

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CITY OF FALCON HEIGHTS
Regular Meeting of the Parks & Recreation Commission
City Hall
2077 West Larpenteur Avenue

MINUTES
March 2, 2026

A. CALL TO ORDER: 6:32 PM

B. ROLL CALL:

Eric Brenton (Chair) Tom Faust (Vice-Chair) Joe Morseth (Secretary) _____
Robert Haight Jerry Buckridge Naomi Loud-Heensch Chuck Long

COUNCIL LIAISON:

Randy Gustafson

STAFF PRESENT:

Kelly Nelson

C. PRESENTATION: N/A

D. APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

1. February 2, 2026 – Parks and Recreation Commission and Environment Commission Joint Meeting Minutes

Buckridge motions to approve the Park minutes; approved 6-0

E. AGENDA:

1. 2026 City Events

Nelson says that establishing dates for upcoming events will allow them to be published in the biannual newsletter mailed to every resident in late March.

Commissioners set the date and time of Ice Cream Social for 5:00 to 7:00 PM on Thursday, July 16. The location is TBD and may have to move from Community Park to City Hall, depending on construction in the park.

Next, commissioners set the date for Fall Fest, which will be held on Saturday, October 10, from 1:00 to 3:00 PM at Falcon Heights Elementary, if the school is available for use.

Lastly, commissioners discuss whether to hold an event from The Grove and what that event might look like.

Faust suggests holding a music event mid-week.

Buckridge mentions a neighbor that leads a sing along at Coffman that might be able to provide assistance with the event.

Haight wonders if we could have a bonfire.

Brenton suggests looking at the Silverwood Park Series for music suggestions.

The commission sets the date of Thursday, June 11th, from 6:30 to 8:00 PM, and will begin working towards hosting a new event at The Grove.

2. Programming Discussion

Nelson provides a recap on enrollment numbers over the years and how they began to drastically decline and not recover after approximately 2018. She provides a summary of programming that has been offered since then, but nothing has gained much traction, including recreation scholarships offered in 2025; only three families requested reimbursement, which totaled just \$75.

Gustafson suggests increasing the scholarship reimbursement amount from \$25 to \$50 per family.

Long says that it's a challenge to compete with facilities and other resources and that we don't want to duplicate what Roseville and St. Paul are offering.

Loud-Heinsch says that offering free programming may actually be holding people back because maybe they don't see value in it then. She suggests looking into hiring staff onsite for the splash pad.

Faust says that we've done programming as an obligation, but wonders if there is an actual need.

Long suggests taking this year to finish construction of the new amenities and then make future determinations.

Brenton echoes Gustafson's proposal of increasing the reimbursement amount to \$50.

Gustafson suggests soliciting feedback for various age groups in the newsletter each week.

Commissioners suggest posing a question each week or every so often to seek public feedback.

Haight looks at the US Census data and says that 10% of Falcon Heights residents are aged zero to ten years. Another 10% are ten to seventeen years.

Gustafson recommends family-based activities to appeal to a wider range of ages than youth soccer ages 4 to 6, for example, because our pool of interested participants may be small in a very specific and narrow age range.

3. Community Garden – 2nd Plot Requests

Nelson updates the commission about the recent garden plot lottery that closed on February 28th. For this gardening season, the supply matched the demand for those wanting their first garden plot. But, no determination has been made yet for existing gardeners who have expressed interest in gardening a second plot, and it would be helpful to have direction from the commission for those requests.

Haight suggests having a lottery for second plot requests now, but you only get to garden the plot for this season. After that, the plot returns to the lottery.

Gustafson and the commissioners support opening the lottery up for any remaining plots to all existing gardeners, not specific to Falcon Heights residents, but this plot is only valid for one year.

4. Community Advisory Committee

Gustafson explains that the City will form a Les Bolstad Golf Course Redevelopment Community Advisory Committee (CAC), which will act in an advisory role and represent the community, providing recommendations to the City Council regarding the redevelopment process. There will be nine members, one of which would be a representative from this commission. Gustafson says that the committee will meet on the third Wednesday of every month, with the first anticipated meeting to start on April 15. There is a stipend available to serve on the committee. If any commissioner(s) would like to apply, applications are available now and due by March 16 for consideration.

Information/Announcement

G. ADJOURNMENT: 9:01 P.M.

Loud-Heinsch motions to adjourn the meeting;
Approved 6-0

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ITEM FOR DISCUSSION

Meeting Date	April 6, 2026
Agenda Item	E1
Attachment	N/A
Submitted By	Kelly Nelson, Administrative Services Director/Deputy Clerk

Item	2025-2026 Ice Rink End-of-Season Discussion
Description	<p>The PARC previously had usage data for the Curtiss Field ice rink obtained from Warming House Attendants staffed onsite to help shape decisions for the ice rink for the upcoming season. Since the 2024-2025 ice skating season, the City has not had a warming house or attendants onsite at Curtiss Field. So, we don't have daily observations of usage from staff to take into consideration.</p> <p>For the 2024-2025 and 2025-2026 seasons, the City purchased a liner to be placed under the ice in an effort to extend the season and improve the ice quality.</p> <p>24-25: Rinks opened on January 5 and closed just 7 days later. 25-26: Rinks opened on December 19, just in time for winter break, but the weather immediately warmed up. Usage was spotty until mid-January, and rinks had closed for good on/by February 19. These dates were almost identical to outdoor rinks in Minneapolis and St. Paul.</p> <p>Public Works Director, Colin Callahan, provided the following input (see attachment on next page) from a maintenance perspective so that the Parks Commission can determine a plan for the upcoming 2026/2027 season.</p>
Budget Impact	TBD
Attachment(s)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Memo from Public Works Director Colin Callahan
Action(s) Requested	Commissioners should discuss their observations of rink usage, expenses, weather, PW input, etc., to help identify any future changes that they may want to make prior to the 2026-2027 skating season.

In theory, using a rink liner sounds like a great way to establish an ice rink. In practice, using a rink liner reveals some difficulties and requires a lot of cooperation from mother nature. First things first, installing the liner...it needs to be filled with water immediately after installation, so wind doesn't displace it potentially creating tears. To cover the entire rink area, a significant portion of the rink is 8 inches+ deep with water which takes a surprising amount of time to freeze completely. During the 2024-2025 season it was 0 to 20 degrees below zero for over a week and below freezing for weeks after that and it did not freeze solid before we had significant snow fall. One might suggest filling it up in stages rather than all at once. That is not a good idea because it doesn't take much wind to turn that liner into a giant uncontrollable sail, which we experience while installing and securing the liner. Snow is another factor to consider. If we receive significant snow during the freezing process, that snow acts as an insulator slowing the freezing process. That is what happened during the 2024-2025 season. We let the rink sit for two weeks with snow covering it and when we surmised the rink had to be frozen solid by now, it wasn't. So, when we got on the rink with our snow blower it broke through in many places puncturing the liner and draining the rink creating a hollow cavity under the sheet of ice which caused our snow blower to break through in more places. If we flood the rink in stages, risking wind damage, and we receive significant snowfall on a liner that is not covered with ice we now have no feasible way to remove the snow without damaging the liner.

PW reasoning on why the rink, after weeks of well below freezing temps 2024-2025 season didn't freeze solid is because buried under the rink is 300 feet of 10-foot diameter water storage containers. By placing the plastic liner over that area, it trapped heat underground. Then filling it with 8 inches of water and shortly thereafter covered/insulated with ~6-8 inches of snow, and that is why, in 2 ½ weeks the rink never completely froze.

My thoughts are that PW can establish a rink almost, if not just as quickly without the liner in place, and without the added stress from situational variables described above. For the argument that the liner extends the rink season...we had to close the same day as Minneapolis/St. Paul as well as surrounding cities this season.

A few other things to consider is the cost of the liner @ \$680, and it cannot be recycled so the 120'X60' liner gets buried in a landfill.

-Colin Callahan, Public Works Director

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REQUEST FOR ACTION

Meeting Date	April 6, 2026
Agenda Item	E2
Attachment	
Submitted By	Kelly Nelson, Administrative Services Director / Deputy Clerk

Item	2026 City Events Update
Description	<p>The City has established dates and times for its 2026 events.</p> <p>The Community Engagement is coordinating a Spring Together event to be held from 3:00 to 5:00 PM on Saturday, May 16, at Curtiss Field.</p> <p>The Parks and Recreation Commission will hold the following events:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ice Cream Social will be held from 5:00 to 7:00 PM on Thursday, July 16, at Community Park (unless park renovations require the event to move to City Hall). The Finn Band is confirmed to perform, and staff emailed a “Save the Date” to community organizations that have previously participated in the Resource Fair. • The Parks Commission recommended holding a picnic and music event from The Grove on Thursday, June 11th, from 6:30 to 8:00 p.m. Commission Chair, Brenton, suggested that staff look at prior performers at Silverwood on Stage for bands that may be within budget. Staff is currently looking at music options. • The date and time for Fall Fest were set by the Parks Commission during its March meeting, and will be held on Saturday, October 10, from 1:00 to 3:00 PM at Falcon Heights Elementary. Staff received support from the school and will now send the facility request to the district to officially reserve the venue. <p>Commissioners may take this opportunity to suggest additional activities offered onsite and provide feedback, if they would like to.</p>
Budget Impact	TBD
Attachment(s)	N/A
Action(s) Requested	Staff encourages commission members to discuss and make further suggestions for the City’s 2026 events.