

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

**AGENDA**  
April 20, 2026 at 6:30 P.M.

- A. CALL TO ORDER:
  
- B. ROLL CALL:  
Julie Ebbesen\_\_\_\_ Denise King\_\_\_\_ Sarah Caflisch\_\_\_\_ Emily Schmall\_\_\_\_ Emmett Fisher\_\_\_\_ Signe Nestingen\_\_\_\_ Caitlin Klaeui\_\_\_\_  
  
STAFF PRESENT:  
Elke Johnson\_\_\_\_ Ainsley Brown\_\_\_\_  
  
COUNCIL LIAISON:  
Paula Mielke\_\_\_\_
  
- C. APPROVAL OF AGENDA
  
- D. WELCOME
  
- E. APPROVAL OF MINUTES:
  - March 16, 2026 Community Engagement Commission Meeting Minutes
  
- F. AGENDA
  - Unfinished business
    - 1. Rebranding of Community Engagement Commission
    - 2. Hosting Listening Session
    - 3. Spring Together
  
- G. INFORMATION/ANNOUNCEMENT
  - Report from Council Liaison
  
- H. ADJOURNMENT:

*Next Regular Meeting is on Monday, June 15 at 6:30 PM*

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

**MINUTES**

March 16, 2026 at 6:30 P.M.

- A. CALL TO ORDER: 6:33 PM
- B. ROLL CALL:  
Julie Ebbesen\_X\_ Denise King\_X\_ Sarah Caflisch\_\_\_\_ Emily Schmall\_X\_ Emmett Fisher\_X\_ Signe Nestingen\_X\_
- STAFF PRESENT:  
Elke Johnson\_X\_\_ Ainsley Brown\_X\_\_
- COUNCIL LIAISON:  
Paula Mielke\_X\_\_
- C. APPROVAL OF AGENDA
- King suggests moving items 1 & 2 to the bottom of the unfinished agenda.
- D. WELCOME
- Introduction of new commissioner Nestingen.
- E. APPROVAL OF MINUTES:
- February 23, 2026 Community Engagement Commission Meeting Minutes
    - Schall motions to approve - unanimously approved
- F. AGENDA
- Unfinished business
    1. Every Meal Volunteering
      - a. Johnson suggests cancelling due to availability of commissioners
      - b. Mielke is comfortable participating and reporting back
      - c. Ebbesen suggests a google poll to gather availability of commissioners moving forward
      - d. King suggests looking into May or later for next opportunity
    2. Spring Together
      - a. Johnson - would like to include event information in the upcoming Spring newsletter.

- b. Johnson notifies the commission of the existence of the Falcon Heights Orchestra
  - c. Brown says that we have 7-10 people from the orchestra that will be willing to perform. They will plan to play music for approximately 30 minutes
  - d. Johnson reviews the food/snack items that were suggested
    - i. We could pop popcorn at City Hall and bring bags over
    - ii. St. Anthony police and St Paul Fire will be there
    - iii. St. Paul Water Wagon may be available but they have another meeting earlier in the day
    - iv. King suggests Neighborhood Energy Consortium
    - v. Mielke - 4/18 is the sustainability fair so those may compete
    - vi. Johnson is concerned about competition with the Xcel Energy Home Audit contract that is currently in place
    - vii. King suggests contacting Ramsey County Library and League of Women Voters
    - viii. Nestingen suggests Ramsey County Environmental Center
    - ix. Mielke suggests Every Meal and possibly Keystone
      - 1. Schmall suggests that Keystone may be a better options as it is more accessible
    - x. Mielke suggests Sigma International Institute
    - xi. Mielke suggest Good Acre as they may still have CSA sign-ups
    - xii. Youth Engagement - Fisher suggests bags/cornhole and soccer
    - xiii. Food options
      - 1. Popcorn
      - 2. Cotton Candy
    - xiv. In the event of inclement weather the event will be canceled and not rescheduled
    - xv. Ebbesen has a 10x10 and a 10x20 tent available if needed
3. Rebranding of Community Engagement Commission
- a. Johnson gives brief review of previous discussion
  - b. Review mission statements
    - i. Nestingen - found commonalities
    - ii. Schmall - agrees there are a lot of common themes. Suggests a shorter Mission Statement and support them with a list of core values
    - iii. King agrees that simplicity is an advantage
    - iv. Fischer - agrees that a concise mission statement
    - v. Mielke - strengthen communities finding meaningful ways to for residents to connect

- c. Proposed edit: The mission of the Falcon Heights CEC is to foster collaboration between the city and it's residents to create an inclusive community that promotes respect connectedness, equity and the safety and well-being of all.

4. Hosting Listening Session

- a. Johnson provides brief recap
  - i. Caflisch suggested hosting a test session with select individuals, commissioners agreed but would like King and Ebbesen input
- b. King – comfortable with a small and intentional group to test the format and content
- c. Mielke reiterates that we would like to have an “elevator pitch” for inviting residents to participate.
- d. King suggests not having the sessions at City Hall. Concerns regarding the neutrality of the space. The pilot may be will need to be here. King and Johnson will check availability for other spaces
- e. Johnson and Caflisch will provide date availability, hopefully mid to late April or in to May.
- f. After the listening session the commission will determine if the listening sessions will move forward.

G. INFORMATION/ANNOUNCEMENT

- Report from Council Liaison Mielke
  - a. Request commission applications to golf course
  - b. 4/18 sustainability fair
  - c. 7/18 garden tour
  - d. Parks planning Grove park event and fall fest
  - e. State Fair marketing director has offered horticulture tours and historical tours
  - f. Senior living facility adjacent to Amber Union- Fairway commons 110 units
  - g. Study coming up for Larpenteur development from Highway 61 to 280. Proposed work in 2028 but planning will get started this year.
    - i. U good neighbor finds may be available next year. Mielke will review what is available and share it with the city.

H. ADJOURNMENT: 8:01 PM

- Ebbesen motions to adjourn – unanimously approved

*Next Regular Meeting is on Monday, April 20 at 6:30 PM*



## REQUEST FOR ACTION

<b>Meeting Date</b>	April 20, 2026
<b>Agenda Item</b>	Rebranding of Community Engagement Commission
<b>Attachment</b>	See Below
<b>Submitted By</b>	Elke Johnson, Administrative & Communications Coordinator

<b>Item</b>	Rebranding of Community Engagement Commission
<b>Description</b>	<p>The Community Engagement Commission received direction from the City Council to rethink its mission and goals. In response, commissioners planned a work session where they reviewed similar communities' and cities' commissions and advisory boards.</p> <p>The following Core Values were identified:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Welcoming</li> <li>• Engagement/ Engaging - Support community members/foster action to participate in the community &amp; civic affairs</li> <li>• Community-led</li> <li>• Collaborative</li> <li>• Respect</li> <li>• Connectedness</li> <li>• Safety &amp; Wellbeing for All</li> <li>• Responsive &amp; Fluent</li> </ul> <p>Based on the discussion and the identified core values, commissioners and staff were tasked with creating their own mission statement for the Community Engagement Commission.</p> <p>Commissioners should review the mission statements each submitted and identify sentences that align with the commission and the core values. Determine if they can combine them into one mission statement.</p> <p>Next steps the Commission could look at to continue its revamp process:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Finalize the mission statement             <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Review all submitted mission statements and identify common themes, phrases, and wording that reflect the Commission's core values</li> </ol> </li> <li>2. Identify goals and develop a work plan</li> </ol>

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Develop short-term and long-term goals and identify specific projects, events, or initiatives that the commission will focus on. Also, determine how to track progress.</li> <li>3. Evaluate the Commission name <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Does the current name still reflect the commission's purpose</li> </ol> </li> <li>4. Gather community input <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Hosting listening sessions</li> <li>b. Gather feedback at Spring Together</li> </ol> </li> <li>5. Prepare recommendations for the City Council</li> </ol>
<b>Budget Impact</b>	N/A
<b>Attachment(s)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mission Statements</li> </ul>
<b>Action(s) Requested</b>	Staff recommends that commissioners continue to discuss the rebranding of the Community Engagement Commission.

## **Core Values**

- Welcoming
- Engagement/ Engaging → Support community members/foster action to participate in the community & civic affairs
- Community-led
- Collaborative
- Respect
- Connectedness
- Safety & Wellbeing for All
- Responsive & Fluent

## **Community Engagement Mission Statements**

Ainsley Brown: The Falcon Heights Community Engagement Commission will work to connect and collaborate with residents to create a welcoming and strong community. The Commission will have an active relationship with both residents and the City Council to create an environment that encourages resident involvement in civic life and that supports the well-being of everyone in Falcon Heights.

Julie Ebbesen: The mission of the Falcon Heights Community Engagement Commission is to create an inclusive community to connect our neighbors and develop a diverse network of support throughout the city. Enhance the connection between residents and city officials to build trust while empowering and encouraging people to advocate for their needs and the needs of their neighbors.

Jim Wassenberg: The Falcon Heights Community Engagement Commission works to promote mutual respect, caring, and belonging within the City and throughout the larger community by organizing residents to participate in civic, cultural, and charitable activities that contribute to the well-being of all.

Elke Johnson: The mission of the Community Engagement Commission is to foster a welcoming, inclusive community, where residents are empowered to actively participate in civic life. We strive to connect, engage, and build strong connections that promote safety and well-being for all.

Emily Schmall: The mission of the Community Engagement Commission is to support a welcoming and engaged community where residents are empowered to participate in civic affairs. Through community-led, collaborative efforts the Commission promotes respect, connectedness, equity, and the safety and wellbeing of all.

The mission of the Community Engagement Commission is to support a welcoming city where community members are empowered to be engaged and participate in civic affairs.

## **Updated Mission Statement**

The mission of the Falcon Heights Community Engagement Commission is to foster collaboration between the city and its residents to create an inclusive community that promotes respect connectedness, equity and the safety and well-being of all.

The mission of the Community Engagement Commission is to create an inclusive community in which Falcon Heights residents are empowered to advocate for themselves, their neighbors and the city. The CEC will provide opportunities for residents to engage in civic activities that connect residents with city staff and council, and it will identify actionable goals intended to improve the well-being of all residents.



## REQUEST FOR ACTION

<b>Meeting Date</b>	April 20, 2026
<b>Agenda Item</b>	Hosting Listening Session
<b>Attachment</b>	See Below
<b>Submitted By</b>	Elke Johnson, Administrative & Communications Coordinator

<b>Item</b>	Hosting Listening Session
<b>Description</b>	<p>The Commission identified wanting to host listening sessions to learn more from residents about their take on community engagement. This memo outlines a proposal for the Community Engagement Commission to host a pilot community listening session to better understand how residents currently engage with the City of Falcon Heights, how they would like to engage in the future, and what barriers may prevent participation.</p> <p>The pilot will allow the Commission to test a small-group format (6-10 participants) before hosting broader community sessions.</p> <p>This is an opportunity for the commissioners to continue to discuss having a pilot listening session, review the proposal, determine how to invite participants, select a date and time.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cox Insurance offered up their meeting space in May</li> <li>• Coffman Condominiums has meeting space that could be a potential venue, but would require board approval</li> </ul> <p>Additionally, results of the first listening session could be reported back to the community at Spring Together and have another sticky note activity around some of the core questions outlined in the proposal.</p>
<b>Budget Impact</b>	N/A
<b>Attachment(s)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pilot Listening Session Proposal</li> </ul>
<b>Action(s) Requested</b>	Staff recommend that commissioners continue to discuss hosting listening sessions

## **Pilot Format & Recruitment**

**Group Size:** 6–10 participants (ideal for open dialogue)

### **Recruitment Approach:**

- Each commissioner invites **1–2 individuals** from their neighborhood or from a target audience group.
- Participants should present a range of perspectives, such as:
  - Homeowners
  - Renters
  - Students
  - Local business owners / nonprofit representatives
  - Youth
  - Seniors
  - Residents from different neighborhoods
  - New resident (lived in Falcon Heights less than 5 years)

The goal is to intentionally include voices we may not typically hear from.

## **Goals of the Listening Session**

- Learn how residents are currently engaged in the community.
- Understand how residents want to engage with the city.
- Identify barriers to participation.
- Clarify what “community engagement” means to residents.
- Gather story-based, qualitative feedback to inform future engagement strategies.

## **Logistics**

**Length:** 60–90 minutes

### **Possible Venues:**

- Cox Insurance
- Falcon Heights Elementary School
- University of Minnesota
- Falcon Heights City Hall
- Good Acre
- Ramsey County Library

## **Inclusion & Accessibility Considerations**

- Provide translation services, if needed.
- Offer opportunities to write or draw responses (not just verbal participation).
- Have a designated facilitator/moderator (proposed: Sarah Caflisch).
- Consider offering childcare if feasible.
- Ensure the space feels welcoming and neutral.

## Sample Facilitator Guide

### I. Introduction & Setting the Stage (10 Minutes)

#### Welcome & Purpose

- Thank participants for their time.
- Emphasize that the goal is to listen and learn—not to debate or offer immediate solutions.

#### Introductions

- Brief introductions of facilitator(s) and participants.

#### Ground Rules

- Listen to understand.
- Share airtime (3–5 minutes per speaker as needed).
- Focus on personal stories and experiences.
- Maintain confidentiality (themes will be documented, not names).
- Facilitator may intervene to manage time or ensure balanced participation.

### II. Listening Conversation & Activities (40–60 Minutes)

#### Warm-Up Question

- *“What is one thing you value most about this community?”*

#### Core Questions

1. **What does “community engagement” mean to you?**
2. **Have you ever attended a City event?**
  - Sticky note activity listing past City events.
3. **How do you learn about City events or news?**
  - Create a list of events, and have a dot activity, where people put dots with events they have attended or are familiar with.
4. **How do you already connect with your neighbors?**
  - What are the barriers that prevent participation?
5. **Looking ahead five years:**
  - *What do you want your community to look like?*
  - *How can engagement help make that vision a priority?*

#### Facilitation Techniques

- Use probes such as:
  - “Can you tell me more about that?”
  - “How did that make you feel?”
- Maintain neutrality.
- Manage dominant voices by inviting others in.
- Allow space for written responses for those less comfortable speaking.

### III. Closing & Next Steps (10 Minutes)

- Summarize 2–3 key themes heard.
- Thank participants, and explain how the feedback will be used (e.g., Commission work plan, policy recommendations, engagement strategy updates).
- Provide a brief written exit survey for additional feedback (optional).



## REQUEST FOR ACTION

<b>Meeting Date</b>	April 20, 2026
<b>Agenda Item</b>	Spring Together
<b>Attachment</b>	See Below
<b>Submitted By</b>	Elke Johnson, Administrative & Communications Coordinator

<b>Item</b>	Spring Together
<b>Description</b>	<p>Spring Together has been hosted for many years and has had many kinds of activities. The event is aimed at bringing the residents of the City together.</p> <p>Spring Together is scheduled for Saturday, May 16, at Curtiss Field with a tentative time of 3:00 – 5:00 PM. Staff has published the event on the City’s website calendar and Facebook and will promote it in the Spring Newsletter as well as the weekly e-newsletter closer to the date of the event. The Spring Newsletter has been mailed out.</p> <p>The Falcon Heights Orchestra will play during the event (weather permitting), and will have about 12 players, including four violins, four cellos, two violas, a keyboard, and one drum player. The set will be about 2 x 15 minutes long and will include popular songs like “Yesterday” by The Beatles and “My Favorite Things” from The Sound of Music.</p> <p>Lastly, staff has reached out to the following organizations to be present at the event.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- St. Anthony Police Department</li> <li>- St. Paul Fire Department</li> <li>- St. Paul Regional Water Services - Water Wagon</li> <li>- League of Women Voters Roseville Area</li> <li>- Home Energy Squad</li> </ul> <p>This is an opportunity for the Community Engagement Commission to continue discussing ideas for activities for the upcoming Spring Together event and other ways to promote it to all residents. As well as determine who from the commission will be present at the event.</p>
<b>Budget Impact</b>	N/A
<b>Attachment(s)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Spring Together Map</li> </ul>

<b>Action(s) Requested</b>	Staff recommends continuing discussions for the upcoming Spring Together event
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Idaho Ave W

Idaho Ave W

1542



Falcon Heights Orchestra

Falcon Heights Resources  
Popcorn & Cotton Candy

Lawn Games

Electric Box with outlets

1555



1549

1543

Curtiss Field Park



Iowa Ave W