



# City Council Meeting

June 24, 2024

7:00 PM

Fridley City Hall, 7071 University Avenue NE

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## Minutes

### **Call to Order**

Mayor Lund called the City Council Meeting of June 24, 2024, to order at 7:00 p.m.

### **Present**

Mayor Scott Lund  
Councilmember Dave Ostwald  
Councilmember Tom Tillberry  
Councilmember Ryan Evanson  
Councilmember Ann Bolcom

### **Absent**

### **Others Present**

Walter Wysopal, City Manager  
Scott Hickok, Community Development Director  
Mike Maher, Parks and Recreation Director  
Joe Starks, Finance Director  
Brandon Brodhag, Assistant City Engineer  
Sarah Sonsalla, City Attorney

### **Pledge Of Allegiance**

### **Approval of Proposed Consent Agenda**

Mayor Lund requested to move Item 4 to be considered as Item 12a.

Motion made by Councilmember Bolcom to adopt the proposed Consent Agenda as amended.  
Seconded by Councilmember Tillberry.

Upon a voice vote, all voting aye, Mayor Lund declared the motion carried unanimously.

### **Approval/Receipt of Minutes**

1. Approve the Minutes from the City Council Meeting of June 10, 2024.
2. Receive the Minutes from the Council Workshop Meeting of June 10, 2024.

3. Receive the Minutes from the Housing and Redevelopment Authority (HRA) Meeting of April 4, 2024.

### **New Business**

- ~~4. Resolution No 2024-70, Supporting Anoka County Parks Long-Range Plan for the Rice Creek West Regional Trail Corridor.~~
5. Resolution No. 2024-84, Approving and Authorizing the Signing of an Agreement with Northwest Metro 916 Intermediate School District for School Resource Officer Services for 2024-2026.
6. Resolution No. 2024-85, Approving and Authorizing the Signing of an Agreement with the City of Blaine for Public Safety Services During the 2024 3M Open.
7. Resolution No. 2024-89, Approving Gifts, Donations and Sponsorships Received Between May 18, 2024 and June 14, 2024.
8. Resolution No. 2024-86, Awarding Danube Pond and Farr Lake Pretreatment Project No. 603-60-23102.
9. Resolution No. 2024-87, Awarding 2024 Americans with Disabilities Act Improvement Project No. 24-800.

### **Claims**

10. Resolution No. 2024-88 Approving Claims for the Period Ending June 20, 2024.

### **Open Forum, Visitors:** (Consideration of Items not on Agenda – 15 minutes.)

Mike Maher, Parks and Recreation Director, recognized the partnership between the City and FYSA which has been a positive relationship for many decades. He provided background information on the field use by FYSA for its different sports and the services the City provides without charging a fee. He then provided background information on the Park System Improvement Plan and the engagement that occurred beginning in 2019 to develop the plan which attempted to create a modern, equitable and balanced park system. He displayed the initial concept design for Commons Park which focused more on community activities at Commons Park and athletic activities at Community Park. He stated that through the work of the task force they heard that would not work because the baseball fields were very important at Commons Park and therefore, they amended the concept to create more of a balance between community use and baseball use. He reviewed the concept which was approved in 2022 for construction in 2025-2026. He stated that because they could not fit additional fields and the community amenities desired for Commons Park, the consultant had proposed to add additional field space on the School District property. He stated that in discussions with the School District they have not been able to achieve an agreement and therefore they cannot include the field space on that property. He stated that they are committed to the Commons Park concept that shows one baseball field on the park property, along with the other community desired amenities. He provided additional details on the four-season recreation for all proposed for Commons Park. He reviewed the next steps for Fridley and the FYSA

partnership noting that the City remains committed to providing fields for FYSA and within the park system to provide balance recreation for all residents. He stated that perhaps parks slated for development in the coming years would have potential for additional field space.

Councilmember Bolkcom asked for details on the timing of the design in order to move forward with construction in 2025. She also asked for details on the square footage and estimated costs.

Mr. Maher commented that this is a concept and the concept plans are used to identify priorities and pieces of the complex but the pieces may be moved around within the space. He commented that this will most likely not be the final layout as that will come forward through the design process. He stated that the estimates were done in 2022 dollars. He stated that staff recently worked on a park building project and provided a comparison from the 2022 estimate compared to the estimate received this year. He stated that they hope to begin construction in summer of 2025 and therefore are in the design process and will put bids out in the late winter season. He stated that the design should be close to done early this fall.

Avonna Stark commented that she is a mother of two boys who love baseball but also has an established career in politics. She commented that candidates run on promises and to serve the public. She empathized with the position of the Council but commented that all elected officials must adjust to change to continue to serve the public. She hoped that the Council could recognize the passion that the residents tonight have and the need for children to have a safe place for sports. She commented that if the voices of the families are not heard, the community could fall apart. She asked that the Council save the fields and leave the families in the community.

Matt Vanderpool shared the importance of Fridley Youth Sports. He stated that he took the parks survey and voted for the splashpad but was not aware that would cause a reduction in fields for youth sports. He commented that he would not have voted for that if he knew that was the outcome. He commented that FYSA brings together a diverse group of children and parents for weeks at a time which builds relationships and community. He commented that those connections are not created through a skating rink or splashpad. He commented that he was attracted to Fridley once he was married because he found a great property and great home and they really did not create a connection with the community because of their involvement in Fridley youth sports. He commented that it is that connection to the community that has kept his family in Fridley. He was worried that the plan for this park would limit the ability for youth sports to continue to grow and thrive and to support the connections and community that is built through sports.

Jim Stangler commented that he has been a resident for 17 years and has coached multiple sports, including baseball, for the last five years. He stated that he was involved in the engagement process including the task force. He commented that girls' softball use field three, so taking away these fields would result in more loss for baseball and softball.

Mayor Lund commented that the City retrofitted field two for baseball use as it had previously been used for girls fastpitch, which is another example of the City reacting to requests from FYSA.

Mr. Stangler commented that in the task force meetings people were pretty opinionated and he was told to keep an open mind. He stated that he believes that he did that throughout the process. He stated

that pickleball and a splashpad are great ideas. He commented that the fields are used a lot and believed that there is a way to fit things in without taking away the fields. He asked the number of fields that would be, or have been, removed in other parks in addition to what is proposed at Commons Park.

Mr. Maher commented that there was a remnant of a baseball field at Moore Lake Park which was converted into flexible field use space. He commented that the neighborhood park field space was no longer being used, although the organized sports fields get a lot of use. He commented that the same has occurred with old hockey rinks where those were not used and were removed to make space for another amenity.

Mr. Stangler stated that there are about 25 young children using Terrace Park for little league because that program continues to grow. He stated that removing the three fields from Commons Park will drastically drop numbers for baseball.

Councilmember Bolkcom asked if there are kids from other communities playing for FYSA.

Jake Karnopp stated that at the end of each year he provides demographic information. He stated that there are 157 kids signed up this year and estimated that 80 percent of those kids are Fridley residents. He commented that whether or not someone is a resident is not important to him because they provide a service to kids with no restrictions, unlike some other communities. He stated that they have found that when they open their program to kids with open arms, it assists with their success rate. He provided an example of a Columbia Heights family that began playing sports in Fridley, when then led to enrollment in the Fridley schools and then purchasing a home in Fridley. He stated that soccer has about 220 kids this year. He commented that FYSA is a growing entity on all levels. He hoped to educate the Council and community on the current situation. He stated that the current plan as presented would reduce the number of fields from three to one, which would have a negative impact on athletics. He stated that since February he has listened to objections from staff on their requests. He stated that it has been said that baseball did not score high enough on the list of amenities to maintain the number of fields, but finds it hard to believe that baseball scored lower than a skating rink. He provided a packet of information that he gathered and shared with the Council and reviewed that information. He commented that the Council continues to make comments that baseball did not rank high enough, but that is not correct and provided examples noting that funding continues to be allocated towards the two lowest amenities. He stated that 68 percent of respondents supported improvement of the baseball and softball fields. He stated that people want baseball more than winter sports or pickleball. He referenced comments that were made by Mayor Lund in a *Star Tribune* article published today and how that conflicts with the information he presented today. He stated that this is not about money, but instead maintaining the baseball fields at Commons Park. He stated that if things need to be cut from the project, the Council should start with the least desired amenities. He stated that although the statement has been made that the youth sports community was not involved in the engagement process, the data from the survey shows that to be untrue and provided examples. He believed that the data shows that the community does not support removal of the fields from Commons Park. He stated that they have continued to inquire and have been told that nothing has been finalized and there is still time. He commented that their statement has remained constant throughout this process to keep the fields at Commons Park and asked that the Council listen to the residents and correct the plan for the park. He recognized the statement has been made that the plan for Commons Park is running over budget and proposed a solution to keep Commons fields one and two with minimal upgrades to both fields. He stated that the building and splashpad could

be moved to the north and the rink could be removed from the plan to save funds. He asked the Council to think critically about what it has been told versus the factual data that has been provided.

Councilmember Evanson referenced an email sent about one week ago, acknowledging that they agreed in principal that there would be three fields on School District property. He noted that the Council has been working to solve the problem, but there was a continued request additional amenities at a cost of \$1,300,000 which was paired down to \$500,000. He asked why they are holding out for these additional amenities.

Mr. Karnopp commented that he has to put on a different hat now as a School Board member, noting that this is only his opinion and not that of the other members or Superintendent. He commented that originally there was an agreement to use School District land with the City funding the three fields. He stated that when the legal proposal was sent over for signatures, the site-specific plans were very nonspecific, which gave him pause. He stated that the School District had said that if that were to happen the School District would take over on maintenance and programming of the fields. He recognized that the fields would be a gift, but that gift would cost money as well. He provided an example of a building which is in disrepair and will cost \$7,000,000 to repair.

Mayor Lund clarified that the City never owned that space, noting that it was previously an elementary school and the City leased space at a cost of \$150,000 per year but that partnership eventually dissolved.

Councilmember Evanson commented that it was recently stated that the School District cannot maintain its assets as it is asset rich and cash poor. He stated that because the School District has a history of not being able to maintain its assets, the City even agreed to assist with maintenance. He recognized that the fields may not have all the amenities desired but it would work.

Mayor Lund asked that the public provide input and the Council refrain from engaging and debating tonight as this is Open Forum and there is an agenda for the meeting tonight.

Councilmember Evanson commented that he is trying to clear the air because there is a social media page that has said a lot of things, noting that the guy that says the City is taking things away also said no to a deal the City offered.

Mr. Karnopp commented that a deal is only struck two ways, as the City also said no when the School District conveyed its minimum needs as well. He recognized that the School District has a history of not maintaining its assets, but with the current leadership they are changing that.

Mayor Lund stated that he would not want to discuss School District business and commented that the focus should be on whether the School District would allow the fields on their property. He recognized that the School District decided that would not work for them. He commented that over \$25,000 was spent revising plans during the last four months.

Councilmember Tillberry asked if all these residents would be attending the next School Board meeting to share their concerns as well.

Mr. Karnopp commented that the School District did not decide to fund the park improvements in Fridley and the School District did not decide to remove fields from the park. He commented that two members of the Council have now made negative comments towards him, and he will continue to take the high road.

Councilmember Bolkcom recognized there is a desire for fields at this park, but if the City is offering fields in other locations that are as good or better, would that be considered.

Mr. Karnopp commented that nothing is off the table, however, whenever this situation comes up, they have presented problems with locating fields at Community Park. He stated that Terrace Park is his neighborhood park and currently hosts overflow t-ball. He commented that field would not be able to support kids older than eight years old. He commented that the smaller fields described for pickup games would not support anything other than t-ball because they are not the appropriate size and scope for older children without encroaching on people's homes.

Mayor Lund commented that it is not the problem of the School District. He was confident that the City has enough assets on City property to support the programing. He recognized the desire for the fields to stay at Commons Park, but the City does not have the luxury of focusing only on baseball as Commons Park is meant to be a community park with assets for the entire community.

Mr. Karnopp commented that if there are less than two fields at Commons Park their program would be decimated. He commented that the City is going to spend money to get rid of those assets, one of those fields has lights. He stated that the solution is right in front of them, keeping fields one and two and moving the other amenities that were desired to the north part of the park. He stated that he is open to continuing conversations.

Kimberly Farrao-Kisser commented that her son was in sports for years and is now in college. She stated that she was a member of the task force, and they went through a lot of work to develop concepts. She recognized that the original concept was more money than was available, but changes were made removing items that were critical to the parks. She noted that when the changes were made to the concepts, those did not go back to the task force for input. She commented that the residents are the taxpayers in the city and asked that the Council work with the residents. She stated that if a lot of changes are being made to the concepts, there should have been more input. She stated that the concept developed by the task force included the baseball fields. She commented that she met so many friends through parents at her son's sports. She asked the cost to run the splashpad as that will become an ongoing expense.

Councilmember Bolkcom commented that her questions about the timeline for design was not an attempt to push forward but just an understanding that there is a timeline in order to move forward with construction in 2025. She recognized that it is great that so many people are present tonight but then they could also have a meeting with people that want a splashpad.

Ms. Farrao-Kisser commented that they should have a public meeting about the park allowing all that want to provide input.

Mayor Lund commented that he would like to draw the line on this discussion tonight, noting that they will continue to keep open minds and discussions with FYSA. He recognized that there is a deadline in order to move forward with the improvement.

Councilmember Bolcom commented that there were a lot of people that took time out tonight to attend and believed that they should have the opportunity to speak if they wish.

Councilmember Ostwald commented that he would also like to make a statement.

Natividad Seefield commented that she has lived in Fridley since 1996 and believed that climate change should be considered when thinking about hockey rinks. She asked if mailings are inclusive to low-income communities. She commented on the lack of diversity in most committee meetings. She asked the liability of a splashpad.

Councilmember Ostwald commented that he would be happy to receive comments from any members of the public and noted that his information is on the City website.

Councilmember Bolcom asked how comments would be provided back to those that have provided input.

Mayor Lund commented that the typical process would be followed to respond to comments and another meeting would most likely be set up to continue conversations.

Kegan Stine asked where she could find that information.

Wally Wysopal, City Manager, commented that they could bring back those answers in a future City Council meeting packet although perhaps not the next City Council meeting.

Councilmember Evanson asked if information could be shared for updated concepts as the park improvements continue.

Councilmember Bolcom commented that an update could also be provided at a future Council meeting.

Councilmember Tillberry commented that everyone in this room has good intentions while some agree, and some do not.

**Adoption of Regular Agenda**

Motion made by Councilmember Evanson to adopt the regular agenda as amended to include Item 12a. Seconded by Councilmember Ostwald.

Upon a voice vote, all voting aye, Mayor Lund declared the motion carried unanimously.

**Regular Agenda**

**New Business**



11. Resolution No. 2024-83, Declaring Costs to be Assessed, Ordering Preparation of the Proposed Assessment Roll and Directing Publication of the Public Hearing Notice for 53<sup>rd</sup> Avenue Trail and Walk Improvements Project No. ST-2023-21

Joe Starks, Finance Director, provided details on the special assessment process including the steps that have been completed and those yet to be completed. He provided a summary of the ST2023-21 project and related assessment roll. He also provided details on assessment repayment and decrement opportunity. He recommended that the Council adopt Resolution No. 2024-83 as presented.

Councilmember Tillberry asked the per unit assessment rate for the project. Mr. Starks replied \$3,800. He stated that there has been notice to homeowners already and additional notification will be sent related to the public hearing date.

Motion made by Councilmember Tillberry to approve Resolution No. 2024-83, Declaring Costs to be Assessed, Ordering Preparation of the Proposed Assessment Roll and Directing Publication of the Public Hearing Notice for 53<sup>rd</sup> Avenue Trail and Walk Improvements Project No. ST-2023-21. Seconded by Councilmember Bolkom.

Upon a voice vote, all voting aye, Mayor Lund declared the motion carried unanimously.

12. Resolution No. 2024-90, Approving a Scope of Services for Design Engineering of the 57<sup>th</sup> Avenue Bridge Project

Brandon Brodhag, Assistant City Engineer, provided background information and the proposed alignment. He reviewed the items that the project consultant, Kimley Horn, has completed and the continued scope of services along with a breakdown of expenses. He provided details on funding and reviewed the next steps.

Mayor Lund asked if the City is still working to obtain easements from property owners. Mr. Brodhag replied that staff has agreements for some right-of-way acquisition and will work to resolve the remainder.

Councilmember Oswald asked for an update on the railroad crossing closing on 77<sup>th</sup>. Mr. Brodhag commented that with the letter of support it would be requested to close 77<sup>th</sup> Way.

Councilmember Bolkom asked for an update on timing and whether they believe the State would provide funding in the next session. Mr. Brodhag replied that the City has been pursuing Federal funding but has not yet been successful. He stated that the design funding was provided by the State which will be a benefit when continuing to apply for other funding.

Motion made by Councilmember Bolkom to approve Resolution No. 2024-90, Approving a Scope of Services for Design Engineering of the 57<sup>th</sup> Avenue Bridge Project. Seconded by Councilmember Evanson.



Upon a voice vote, all voting aye, Mayor Lund declared the motion carried unanimously.

12a. Resolution No 2024-70, Supporting Anoka County Parks Long-Range Plan for the Rice Creek West Regional Trail Corridor.

Mayor Lund stated that he requested to remove this item from the Consent Agenda because the last whereas statement in the resolution referenced number ten. He commented that he had difficulty finding item ten. He stated that the summary also states a period of three to five years for accessibility and there was no timeline for wayfinding. Mr. Wysopal commented that this is a master plan that is being revised as the original plan is from 1980. He stated that the master plan does not have dates certain within, but is meant to include these items within the Anoka County Capital Improvement Plan. He felt confident that the items will be accomplished within the identified timelines. He noted that this is more of a commitment to see that these things happen, rather than set dates of when they would happen. He commented that the items from the plan have also been incorporated in the CIP, which is satisfactory to the City. Mayor Lund commented that he has some distrust that these items will be accomplished. Mr. Wysopal provided more specific information on item ten referenced by Mayor Lund.

Motion made by Mayor Lund to approve Resolution No. 2024-70, Supporting Anoka County Parks Long-Range Plan for the Rice Creek West Regional Trail Corridor. Seconded by Councilmember Evanson.

Upon a voice vote, all voting aye, Mayor Lund declared the motion carried unanimously.

**Informal Status Reports**

The Council provided input on the recent 49er Days festivities, thanking all the volunteers that assisted with the events. It was noted that the movie and fireworks will be rescheduled as those did not occur because of the weather. Recognition was provided to Jo Young for the work she did as President of the 49er Days Committee.

**Adjourn**

Motion made by Councilmember Evanson to adjourn. Seconded by Councilmember Ostwald.

Upon a voice vote, all voting aye, Mayor Lund declared the motion carried unanimously and the meeting adjourned at 9:12 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

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Melissa Moore  
City Clerk

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Scott J. Lund  
Mayor