City Council Meeting

March 24, 2025
7:00 PM
Fridley City Hall, 7071 University Avenue NE

Minutes

Call to Order
Mayor Ostwald called the City Council Meeting of March 24, 2025, to order at 7:00 p.m.

Present
Mayor Dave Ostwald
Councilmember Patrick Vescio
Councilmember Ann Bolkcom

Absent
Councilmember Ryan Evanson

Others Present
Walter Wysopal, City Manager
Scott Hickok, Community Development Director
Joe Starks, Finance Director
Mike Maher, Parks and Recreation Director
Jim Kosluchar, Public Works Director
Sarah Sonsalla, City Attorney

Pledge Of Allegiance

Proclamations/Presentations

1. Award for Outstanding Achievement in Popular Annual Financial Reporting

   Joe Starks, Finance Director, stated that the City of Fridley has once again received an award for Outstanding Achievement in Popular Annual Financial Reporting (PAFR). Over the last year, the City has also received the Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting and the Distinguished Budget Presentation Award. Mayor Ostwald commented that the report is very clear and concise and thanked staff for their hard work.

2. Fridley Public Schools Presentation

   Brenda Lewis, Superintendent of Fridley Public Schools, addressed the City Council regarding the school's budget and work that the district is doing around funding, particularly with equalization that will cause some relief for Fridley Public Schools taxpayers.

Councilmember Cardona recognized the impacts the School District has had in recent years and appreciated the sharing of this information.

Councilmember Bolkcom asked how the Council and/or residents can help. Dr. Lewis stated that she would like to meet with the Council at another time to discuss the impact that TIF has on the School District. She stated that the School District has demonstrated how it has done more with less and reviewed the work that she has done since she joined the School District. She noted that some of those rumors still circulate about what the schools once were, but invited anyone to reach out to her to see that is not how it is now.

Councilmember Vescio stated that his wife is a teacher, and he is a strong supporter of public schools. He recognized the mandates of the government with a lack of funding and stated that he will stand behind the school districts in any way he can.

Councilmember Cardona asked about the type of programming or education that could occur, that could be enticing to businesses. Dr. Lewis provided additional details on their career programming and the areas where they would like to expand and collaborate with businesses.

Mayor Ostwald thanked Dr. Lewis for the work she has done and continues to do. He looked forward to continued communication in an attempt to continue to work together.

Approval of Proposed Consent Agenda

Motion made by Councilmember Bolkcom to adopt the proposed Consent Agenda. Seconded by Councilmember Vescio.

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

Approval/Receipt of Minutes

3. Receive the Minutes from the Environmental Quality and Energy Commission (EQEC) Meeting of February 11, 2025.

4. Receive the Minutes from the Public Arts Commission Meeting of February 5, 2025.

5. Approve the Minutes from the City Council Meeting of March 10, 2025.

6. Receive the Minutes from the Council Conference Meeting of March 10, 2025.

New Business

7. Resolution No. 2025-25, Approving Application to the Minnesota Public Facilities Authority for the Locke Park Granular Activated Carbon Treatment Expansion Project.

8. Resolution No 2025-30, Accepting the 2025 City of Fridley Flock Camera Grant Agreement between the City, Friendly Chevrolet & Springbrook Apartments.

9. Resolution No. 2025-36, Supporting the Lawns to Legumes Program.

10. Resolution No. 2025-38, Approving Gifts, Donations, and Sponsorships Received Between February 15, 2025, and March 7, 2025.

Claims

11. Resolution No. 2025-37, Approving Claims for the Period Ending March 19, 2025.

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

Steve Rickman, 572 63rd Avenue, stated that while he recognizes the benefit of the improvements to Commons Park, he believes that the expansion of the northern parking lot would be intrusive to the trees in that area and to the residents. He believed that issue should be resolved before a contract is approved.

Jim Kosluchar, Public Works Director, stated that there is a potential to save some of the trees indicated for removal. He stated that the size of the parking lot was substantially reduced in size from the original proposal in response to working with those neighbors to the north. He stated that he would be glad to review the plans with the resident.

Mayor Ostwald asked for more information on the number of spaces being added for parking. Mike Maher, Parks and Recreation Director, replied that he did not have that exact number with him. He stated that the current plan has about 80 spaces and estimated that about 50 parking stalls exist today. He provided additional details on the updated plan, which helped to significantly expand the parking through design changes.

Robert Moon provided papers to Mr. Wysopal and stated that he had been served.

Adoption of Regular Agenda

Motion made by Councilmember Cardona to adopt the regular agenda. Seconded by Councilmember Bolkcom.

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

Regular Agenda

New Business

12. Resolution No. 2025-34, Approving Amendment of Feasibility Report and Calling for Public Hearing on the 2025 Street Rehabilitation Project No. ST2025-01

Mr. Kosluchar provided information on the petition received to consider traffic calming improvements along East Danube Road in conjunction with the 2025 Street Rehabilitation Project. He stated that the draft resolution amends the Feasibility Report for the project to include the findings of the traffic calming study and requests a public hearing on the recommended improvements to be held on April 14, 2025. He provided additional background information as well as details on the evaluation of existing traffic, evaluated traffic calming measures, conclusion and recommendation. He provided additional details on the related special assessment and next steps. Staff recommends approval of the resolution as presented.

Councilmember Vescio referenced the statement that 15 of the 17 residents signed the petition and asked if there was any information received from the two residents who did not sign. Mr. Kosluchar replied that he is not aware of any comments or opposition from the remaining two residents in that area.

Mayor Ostwald asked and received confirmation that notices would be mailed to impacted residents for the public hearing.

Motion made by Councilmember Vescio to approve Resolution No. 2025-34, Approving Amendment of Feasibility Report and Calling for Public Hearing on the 2025 Street Rehabilitation Project No. ST2025-01. Seconded by Councilmember Cardona.

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

13. Resolution No. 2025-32, Amending an Agreement for Construction Manager at Risk Services with RJM Construction for the Commons Park Building Project

Mr. Kosluchar provided a project overview for Commons Park and reviewed details of the proposed amendment to the agreement with RJM. He provided additional information on cost drivers, bid results, and funding impact for the building and site. He stated that staff recommend moving forward with both the building and the site, noting that they will continue to pursue cost reductions that do not reduce the utility or performance of the building and site. He provided additional details on a provision that was worked out between the City Attorney and RJM related to the change order process.

Councilmember Bolkcom asked for a shorter clarification of the presentation. Mr. Kosluchar explained that the bids on the building were very good while the bids on the site were about $400,000 higher than anticipated. He stated that staff believe they can manage some of the higher line items and tweak some items in order to receive some cost savings. He stated that the contractors seem fairly busy and have locked in work for the year, therefore, they may have bid a bit later than preferred. He stated that the engineer’s estimates may have been a bit lower than they should have been. He did not believe that rebidding would result in better pricing.

Councilmember Bolkcom asked if this additional funding would impact the work that is going to be done at other parks. Mr. Kosluchar replied that they would need to make up the difference, whether that is done through revenue, value, grants, or other avenues. Councilmember Bolkcom recognized the great work staff has done to obtain grants and asked if there would be potential that additional grant funds could be received. Mr. Kosluchar commented that there is potential that there could be grants that could be pursued for other park projects. He noted that this is the second of the large parks to be renovated and recognized that this is the showcase park for the city. Councilmember

Bolkcom agreed that this is the showcase park for the community and believed that the improvements will be a great amenity.

Councilmember Cardona asked for input from the Finance Director. Mr. Starks stated that City staff has been thorough in the review to look at all options. He stated that the bond proceeds have earned as much interest as they can and provided information on other things that have added to the available fund balance. He stated that while this is not the ideal situation, the City has options available. Mr. Kosluchar described the review process that staff follow and stated that work will continue in looking at some of the higher-priced line items.

Councilmember Cardona commented that he is very excited about the project.

Motion made by Councilmember Cardona to approve Resolution No. 2025-32, Amending an Agreement for Construction Manager at Risk Services with RJM Construction for the Commons Park Building Project. Seconded by Councilmember Vescio.

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

Mr. Wysopal asked the City Attorney to provide input on the papers that were served earlier in the meeting and whether they can move forward on the next item. Sarah Sonsalla, City Attorney, commented that the paperwork was a complaint from four residents that will supposedly be filed in District Court, but has not yet been related to the Commons Park Improvement Project. She stated that the residents want the project to be declared as a nuisance and provided a summary of the complaint. She stated that she would not comment further in a public meeting and noted that additional review will be completed with comments to follow in a closed session meeting in the future. She was comfortable with the Council moving forward tonight.

14. Resolution No. 2025-33, Awarding Commons Park Improvements Project 24-710

Mr. Kosluchar provided background information and reviewed the project location, existing conditions, project overview, bidding, funding impact, and tentative schedule. Staff recommends approval of the resolution as presented. He stated that in response to the comments of the City Attorney, the City would have 60 days to accept the bids, and therefore, action could be tabled if that were desired.

Councilmember Bolkcom asked if the project schedule would be delayed if the action were tabled tonight. Mr. Kosluchar stated that there would be no change to the bids and noted that while the contractor has indicated that they would like to start in April, the action could be delayed, but noted that would result in a delay to the completion of the project as well.

Councilmember Bolkcom asked for input from the City Attorney as to whether the project should or should not be awarded tonight. Ms. Sonsalla replied that she did not see anything in the complaint that causes her concern that the City should not move forward with the project.

Councilmember Cardona stated that there were opportunities for the parking lot conversation to happen, and therefore, while he understands the concerns of the residents, that resident was part of the group that came to talk about the parking lot issues. He stated that the majority of residents did not want the parking lot extended for safety reasons, noting that one lobe of the lot has been removed from the design. He stated that this design is the compromise that was reached in response to the resident comments. He recognized that this resident did not agree with the other residents and acknowledged that sometimes not all people will agree. He felt comfortable moving forward with the design that had been agreed upon and was supported by the majority of the residents.

Councilmember Bolkcom explained that part of the reason for the parking lot expansion is to increase safety and reduce the number of children running across the street when vehicles are parked on the street.

Motion made by Councilmember Vescio to approve Resolution No. 2025-33, Awarding Commons Park Improvements Project No. 24-710. Seconded by Councilmember Cardona.

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

Informal Status Reports

Mr. Kosluchar stated that there is a meeting at City Hall the following night related to the 44th Avenue bridge. He provided some additional information on the project and welcomed people to attend to learn more about the project and related closure. He confirmed that letters were sent to the businesses to alert them of the meeting.

Councilmember Cardona advised of the Springbrook Spree, which will be held on April 25th and is a great fundraiser for the Nature Center.

Councilmember Vescio stated that he and Mayor Ostwald attended the 57th Avenue bridge project meeting. He commented that he supports the project and believes it will be an asset for the community.

Adjourn

Motion made by Councilmember Bolkcom to adjourn. Seconded by Councilmember Vescio.

Upon a voice vote, all voting aye, Mayor Ostwald declared the motion carried unanimously and the meeting adjourned at 8:19 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Melissa Moore City Clerk	Dave Ostwald Mayor