



City Council Meeting

April 14, 2025

7:00 PM

Fridley City Hall, 7071 University Avenue NE

Minutes

Call to Order

Mayor Ostwald called the City Council Meeting of April 14, 2025, to order at 7:00 p.m.

Present

Mayor Dave Ostwald
Councilmember Patrick Vescio
Councilmember Ryan Evanson
Councilmember Luke Cardona
Councilmember Ann Bolcom

Absent

Others Present

Walter Wysopal, City Manager
Melissa Moore, Assistant City Manager
Jim Kosluchar, Public Works Director
Carl Lind, Graduate Engineer
Ryan George, Public Safety Director
Beth Kondrick, Deputy City Clerk
Sarah Sonsalla, City Attorney

Pledge Of Allegiance

Proclamations/Presentations

Ryan George, Public Safety Director, stated that within the past two weeks, there was a retirement in the Police Department and a resignation of the Fire Chief. He stated that the employees for Fire and Police have transitioned to the new positions. He introduced the new Fire Chief and Police Deputy Director and welcomed them to their new positions.

Patrick Faber, Deputy Director, thanked everyone for their leadership and trust in him with the position.

James Lange, Fire Chief, stated that he is excited for the opportunity and looks forward to continuing to serve the community.

Approval of Proposed Consent Agenda

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

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

Approval/Receipt of Minutes

1. Receive the Minutes from the City Council Conference Meeting of March 24, 2025.
2. Approve the Minutes from the City Council Meeting of March 24, 2025.
3. Receive the Minutes from the Special City Council Meeting of March 31, 2025.

New Business

4. Resolution No. 2025-39, Accepting the 2025 City of Fridley Flock Camera Grant Agreement between the City and River Road East Apartments.
5. Resolution No 2025-41, Approving Appointment to the Fridley Housing and Redevelopment Authority Commission.
6. Resolution No. 2025-42, Approving Appointment to the Fridley Parks and Recreation Commission.
7. Resolution No. 2025-47, Authorizing Execution of Active Transportation Grant for Safe Routes to School (SRTS) Improvements Project.
8. Resolution No. 2025-49, Authorizing a Water Quality Cost Share Agreement with Coon Creek Watershed District for Rain Garden Planning.
9. Resolution No. 2025-50, Approving Final Plat, PS #23-03 Petitioned by Stonebrooke Engineering on behalf of the City of Minneapolis.

Licenses

10. Resolution No. 2023-43, Approving 2025-2026 Business License Renewals.
11. Resolution 2025-45, Approving Temporary Liquor Permit for Totino Grace High School Fundraising Event.

Claims

12. Resolution No. 2025-40, Approving Claims for the Period Ending April 9, 2025.

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

Tad Jude, Commander of the Fridley American Legion Post 303, thanked the Council and community for the support they have provided the post. He recognized the issues the Legion has experienced during the pandemic, like other restaurants. He commented on the services to veterans, education of the community, and community celebrations they provide. He recognized the community for their support at a recent event three weeks ago and thanked the Mayor and Councilmember Bolkcom for the support they continue to provide as they plan for the future of the Legion.

Mayor Ostwald recognized that the American Legion has been a prominent part of the community for many years and looked forward to many years to come.

Councilmember Bolkcom asked if there are other ways the public can assist. Mr. Jude replied that there is a GoFundMe page for donations. He stated that they welcome everyone and look forward to offering more opportunities for the community in the future.

Councilmember Cardona appreciated the support that Councilmember Bolkcom is providing with the business plan. He stated that he and his neighbors are proud supporters of the Legion and stated that he would be willing to help with marketing and promotions. He stated that the community can support the Legion by going in and enjoying the food and drinks, noting that you do not have to be a member to attend.

Adoption of Regular Agenda

Motion made by Councilmember Evanson to adopt the regular agenda. Seconded by Councilmember Vescio.

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

Regular Agenda

Public Hearing(s)

13. Public Hearing and Resolution No. 2025-44, Revoking the Massage Therapy Business License for Daily Massage

Beth Kondrick, Deputy City Clerk, provided background information as well as concerns that had been received and the investigation that was completed. She stated that Public Safety and the City Clerk's Office held a meeting and determined the following violations of City Code: failure to maintain a current list of all employees; menace to health, safety, and welfare; and the licensee is not of good moral character. She asked the City Council to conduct the public hearing and consider immediate revocation of the Massage Therapy Business License and denial of the 2025-2026 business license.

Councilmember Bolkcom asked how long the business has held a license. Ms. Kondrick replied that the business received its first license under this ownership in September of 2024. She explained that the previous business owner held a license for many years in the Moon Plaza location.

Councilmember Evanson asked if there were any complaints prior to the change in ownership. Chief George stated that he had never received any complaints on the previous owner.

Councilmember Evanson recognized that there were adult services advertised and asked if the City is aware of the extent to which those things were occurring at the business. Chief George replied that he is not aware of what occurred in the business, but the advertising sites that were used by the business are primarily used for escort and massage parlors that offer things sexual in nature. He stated that those sites are used by larger organizations that work in the trafficking of people and sexual exploitation.

Councilmember Cardona asked and received confirmation that this specific address for the business is listed in the advertisement.

Mayor Ostwald asked if legal counsel would like to add anything. Sarah Sonsalla, City Attorney, stated that she did review the information in the packet and the complaints, and there is sufficient information to support revocation of the license if the Council chooses to do so.

Mayor Ostwald opened the public hearing.

Jiajun Wan, business owner, commented that she is new to the business and is struggling to learn how to do things correctly. She stated that she struggles with English and did not understand the sites she was using for advertising. She commented that she provides professional massage services and did not want her license revoked.

Mayor Ostwald recognized the language barrier of the business owner.

Eric Wright, husband of the business owner, stated that his wife was approached by an advertising company, and when she first purchased the business, she was struggling for customers and tried out the advertising service. He stated that the company assured her that the advertising would be done correctly for professional massage services. He stated that his wife has a lot of emails to prove these conversations with the advertiser.

Councilmember Evanson asked where the business believed that it would be advertising. Mr. Wright replied that the business assured her that the advertising would all be professionally done. Ms. Wan commented that she had conversations and approved the messaging in Chinese and was unsure if something was lost in translation.

Councilmember Bolkcom stated that when a company is hired to do the advertising, they should provide a copy of the advertisement. Mr. Wright commented that she was provided with an example that appeared to be professional, and they were not aware this was being advertised on adult websites. He stated that he does not have much involvement in the management of the store, and what was presented to them does not add up to what occurred. He stated that this is his wife's first business in the United States. He stated that they were not aware of any of the issues until an inspection was done last month, and that is when they became aware that the advertising was being done on an adult website. He stated that they immediately contacted the advertiser and requested that the ad be removed. He believed the ad was taken down within a few days.

Mayor Ostwald stated that ultimately, it is the responsibility of the business owner to know what is going on.

Councilmember Vescio stated that beyond advertising, there was an unlicensed therapist working at the business. He stated that perhaps the advertising was not understood, but this is a second violation. Mr. Wright stated that it has been difficult to find a massage therapist to work at the store because they are not very busy, and therefore, most people do not have the incentive to complete the licensing for part-time work. He stated that it also takes time for someone to become licensed by the City.

Councilmember Vescio stated that people are unable to provide massage therapy without a license. Mr. Wright commented that the employee is licensed in other cities and has applied for the Fridley license. Councilmember Vescio asked if the employee was providing massages without the license. Mr. Wright replied that the therapist has a license in St. Louis Park.

Chief George stated that there was an inspection in January when the unlicensed employee was noticed, and information was provided to the business that the employee must be licensed. He stated that in the follow-up inspection, the business owner stated that the employee was no longer there and was in California. He stated that during further follow-up with employees of Dave's Sports Shop, it was determined that employee is still working at the massage business, and the business owner then admitted that she had lied, and the employee is still working there. He asked why the employee would be deceptive when asked if she was working there. Ms. Wan replied that the employee does not work there every day and had been gone for the two weeks prior. She recognized that the therapist does need a license to work in her business.

Councilmember Evanson asked if there is evidence that the employee is licensed in another community and whether there have been any complaints. Ms. Kondrick stated that when an application is received, there is a background check, and communication does occur with other cities. She stated that if and when they receive an application, there would be a background check. She was not aware of any application that had been submitted.

Councilmember Bolkcom stated that there is more than one violation, with different stories being told. She stated that there are so many things wrong with this situation, and in fairness to anyone else with a license that follows the rules, this action must be considered. She stated that regardless of whether the applicant was aware of the advertising, it still happened. She stated that they do not want that type of business in Fridley.

Mr. Wright commented that this is a small business that supports their family, and they are not trying to do anything nefarious. He stated that his wife is sorry about the unlicensed therapist and is willing to make that right. He stated that the advertising was removed as soon as they were made aware of the issue.

Councilmember Bolkcom asked how long the advertisement was up. Ms. Wan replied that she first started advertising in November with one company and in February with the new company.

Mayor Ostwald asked the recourse of the applicant if the license is revoked. Chief George replied that if a license is revoked, the business would be ineligible for a license in the future as a massage therapy business and as a massage therapist.

Motion made by Councilmember Evanson to close the public hearing, Seconded by Councilmember Cardona.

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

Councilmember Evanson stated that perhaps some of these things happened out of ignorance, but these are issues of potential trafficking and prostitution. He stated that even if the business owner means well, he is unsure they know how to operate this type of business, which can lead to bad things. He stated that people can be trafficked, and prostitution can occur when people do not know how to run this type of business. He stated that this is a series of highly consequential actions, and the owner has been untruthful. He recognized that the downside of this decision would be catastrophic if the Council chose not to act on this matter, and these things were happening. He was sorry if the owner is a victim of not knowing how to run a business.

Councilmember Vescio stated that the advertising, unlicensed therapist, and lack of clear understanding from the business owner are problems. He stated that it would be unacceptable for the City to allow this behavior to continue in Fridley.

Councilmember Bolkcom echoed the comments of the first two Councilmembers. She stated that they do not know that there has not been trafficking at this location, and at this point, they are beyond the point of helping the business owner better understand. She stated that ignorance is not an excuse at this point.

Councilmember Cardona stated that every day, the Police are asked to protect the community, the visitors, and the businesses. He stated that when the Council is presented with this information, they are responsible for ensuring that they are also protecting the community. He stated that he could not allow the business to continue in good conscience at this time.

Mayor Ostwald agreed with the recommendation of Public Safety, legal counsel, and staff. He stated that it is ultimately the responsibility of the business owner to know what is required and expected.

Motion made by Councilmember Evanson to adopt Resolution No. 2025-44, Revoking Massage Therapy Business License for Daily Massage. Seconded by Councilmember Vescio.

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

14. Resolution No. 2025-46, Conducting a Public Hearing and Ordering Traffic Calming Improvements Along Danube Road

Motion made by Councilmember Evanson to open the public hearing. Seconded by Councilmember Bolkcom.

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

Jim Kosluchar, Public Works Director, provided a summary of the request and background information. He reviewed details of the evaluation of existing traffic and potential traffic calming methods. He reviewed the traffic study conclusion and recommendation to construct a series of two reinforced concrete speed humps and associated pavement markings and signage along East Danube Road from West Danube Road to North Innsbruck Drive with an estimated cost of just under \$30,000. He provided information on the special assessment proposed and City funding sources. He reviewed the next steps, should the Council approve this item tonight. He stated that there was an informational open house meeting on this topic prior to the Council meeting tonight.

Patricia Freeburg, 5557 East Danube, asked where the speed bumps would be located. She stated that the road was supposed to be resurfaced anyway and commented on drainage issues that exist in this area. She asked if everyone in the project area would be paying the special assessment or whether it would only be the homes around the speed bumps.

Mr. Kosluchar explained that everyone in the project area will be assessed for the overall road project and explained that the speed bump assessment would be split between the East Danube properties. He stated that staff are aware of the drainage issues and staff have been working to improve that to the extent possible. He recognized that concrete is difficult to maintain, noting that the City has contracted for repairs on those streets for years, and at some point, that transitioned to patching in preparation for this project.

Ms. Freeburg commented on issues she witnessed with previous contractors who completed work in the area, as well as a broken window she suffered as a result. Mr. Kosluchar believed that work was being completed by CenterPoint and stated that this is the first he is hearing about this and will follow up with the resident.

Megan and Boyd Hergendorf, 5467 East Danube, referenced a previous question that arose, suggesting a traffic barrier that would close access, and asked if that has been considered. Mr. Kosluchar replied that would be a dramatic change and was perhaps on the list to be considered. He stated that the closure of a street would be very difficult and would be a larger solution than needed. He believed that the speed humps will provide a reduction in both speed and volume.

Mr. Hergendorf commented that there are hills at both ends of the street, and there are numerous cars that cannot make it up the hill during snow events and then gain speed and run through the stop sign. He stated that the speed humps will cause an additional hinderance for those trying to get up the hill. Mayor Ostwald noted that may cause those drivers to take a different route, which would decrease the traffic on the road.

Mr. Hergendorf commented on the high traffic volume on East Danube. Mayor Ostwald commented on similar traffic calming measures that were completed on Channel Road and that has been very successful.

Todd Fischer, 5544 East Danube, commented that he does support the traffic calming because the volume of traffic is horrendous. He did not agree that the property owners would have to pay the

additional cost for the improvement to receive the same benefit that other property owners on calmer streets receive. He believed there would be sufficient space within the budget to include this item without charging the residents the additional assessment.

Councilmember Bolkcom asked how the Channel Road calming measures were funded. Mr. Kosluchar replied that was assessed to the overall project.

Mayor Ostwald referenced the statement that was made in the presentation that the numbers did not warrant the City-led traffic calming and therefore is being assessed to the property owners. He asked if the numbers were different for Channel Road. Ms. Kosluchar replied that Channel Road had rerouted traffic because of the closing of Lucia Lane, and therefore, the City funded those improvements as the City change caused the increase in traffic.

Councilmember Cardona asked if there are other examples where the City has taken this obligation on outside of Channel Road. Ms. Kosluchar commented that this will be the second street with speed humps noting that Channel Road was the first.

Mr. Fischer asked the threshold for a City-led initiative, noting that the East Danube numbers are very high. Ms. Kosluchar commented that speed would be the threshold for speed bumps while the majority of traffic is moving in the appropriate speed level. He noted that the main issue on the road is traffic volume.

Councilmember Cardona stated that the neighbors requested additional traffic calming, which is why this is being considered. Mr. Kosluchar confirmed that at the original workshop, it was brought to the attention of staff that there was cut through traffic causing an issue. He stated that after monitoring, the residents were made aware that the improvement would be subject to assessment, and a form of petition would be needed. He stated that the petition was filled out by 15 of 17 property owners and returned to the City very quickly. He recognized that there is a desire for this improvement from the property owners, but was unsure if they feel the benefit is accurately depicted by the assessment.

Jennifer Mulvahill asked if the properties assessed for this improvement would be done by address or driveway. She referenced corner properties that are included in the assessment, but was unsure if those properties had been notified. She asked if temporary sandbagging could be done in the location of the speed bumps, noting drainage concerns. Mr. Kosluchar commented drainage will be considered in the design of the speed humps to ensure water is kept at the curb. He stated that they do not have any temporary measures that would accurately depict what a speed bump would be. He stated that the best example would be found on Channel Road.

Katia Cudovo, 655 Kimble Street NE, commented that she is actually present to speak about the previous case. She stated that she was watching from home and came to the meeting to speak. She stated that, as someone who provides interpretation services, that case was tough to watch.

Motion made by Councilmember Cardona to close the public hearing, Seconded by Councilmember Evanson.

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

Councilmember Evanson asked the traffic count on East Danube Road. Mr. Kosluchar replied that it was in the 700 range. He stated that West Danube has a very low traffic count. He estimated 300 to 400 for a typical local street.

Councilmember Evanson stated that if the City were to entertain paying for the cost of the traffic calming measure, that would set a precedent going forward. He recognized the significantly higher traffic count on this road and asked if that would be a threshold to consider paying for the improvement. He stated that perhaps a standard could be created for that type of threshold to ensure that it would not set a precedent. He stated that if such a standard could be created, he could entertain the City paying for that improvement, but if not, then he would not want to set a precedent.

Councilmember Bolkcom commented that this is much different than Channel Road and believed it would set a precedent. She stated that traffic on this road has not changed as a result of something the City did.

Councilmember Vescio recognized that the schools are a major force in traffic for those residential areas. He stated that a large amount of the traffic is related to the schools for Lucia Lane and Channel Road and for East Danube Road. He asked if traffic counts were done when school was not in session and there were no events to provide a comparison. Mr. Kosluchar replied that they did not do counts at those times. Councilmember Vescio noted that Google Maps will tell drivers to take East Danube Road.

Councilmember Evanson commented that it seems that the traffic count is higher than what it should be for a road of this type. He stated that if a threshold could be developed to support the City covering the cost, he would support that, but would not want to set a precedent.

Councilmember Cardona asked where the traffic would go if it were routed off East Danube. Mr. Kosluchar replied that traffic would go to Matterhorn or Innsbruck. He confirmed that those two streets are designated as collector streets and have higher traffic volumes.

Wally Wysopal, City Manager, stated that the question of funding is not germane to the action tonight. He stated that the petition was presented, staff determined feasibility, and they would now set forth to make that happen. He explained that the petition did not say the residents supported the improvement if they would not have to pay for it, but asked for the traffic calming measure with the understanding there would be an associated cost. He stated that staff are aware that the Council would like staff to look at other methods to fund the cost, but recognized that each project is unique, and it would be challenging to determine a standard going forward that would not set precedent. He stated that this action would provide the result requested by the residents in the petition.

Councilmember Vescio asked for clarification on the action requested tonight. Ms. Kosluchar stated that with the schedule of the contractor, there could be additional time to deliberate, if desired. He stated that the resolution states that the City will do the improvement and sets a method to assess special assessments, which will be evaluated in the fall.

Councilmember Bolkcom commented that the residents have already signed a petition agreeing to pay the cost.

Motion made by Councilmember Evanson to adopt Resolution No. 2025-46, Conducting a Public Hearing and Ordering Traffic Calming Improvements Along East Danube Road. Seconded by Councilmember Bolkcom.

Upon a voice vote, all voting aye, Mayor Ostwald declared the motion carried 4 ayes – 1 nay (Vescio opposed).

New Business

15. Ordinance No. 1430, Amending the Fridley City Code Chapter 105, Commissions (First Reading)

Melissa Moore, City Clerk, provided an overview of information on advisory commissions and the proposed amendments to the related chapter of the City Code.

Councilmember Evanson asked for clarification that the youth member would only be proposed for the parks, planning, environmental, and arts commissions and not the charter or HRA. He asked how youth would be alerted to the opportunity. Ms. Moore replied that this is the first step in the journey, and they would then build relationships with the schools and teachers to solicit youth who may be interested.

Councilmember Evanson asked for clarification on the appointment process. Ms. Moore commented that the opportunity would be open to any Fridley youth sports organization and not just the Fridley Youth Sports Association. She described the process that would be followed for nominations and appointments.

Councilmember Vescio referenced the minimum age of 15 and asked if they would be open to all schools/districts within the city boundaries. Ms. Moore commented that as long as the student is a resident of Fridley, they would be eligible and would not have to attend a high school in Fridley.

Motion made by Councilmember Evanson to approve a first reading of Ordinance No. 1430, Amending the Fridley City Code Chapter 105, Commissions. Seconded by Councilmember Cardona.

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

Informal Status Reports

Councilmember Bolkcom thanked everyone who participated in the Spring Spree event at Springbrook.

Councilmember Cardona congratulated the two Public Safety members who were recognized for their promotions tonight. He reminded residents to attend the town hall on April 26th at 10 a.m. at City Hall, noting the topic of public safety.

Councilmember Vescio commented that the Council visited Cummings to tour the facility, noting that he was impressed with the history of the company and its innovation.

Adjourn

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

Upon a voice vote, all voting aye, Mayor Ostwald declared the motion carried unanimously and the meeting adjourned at 8:50 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Melissa Moore
City Clerk

Dave Ostwald
Mayor