OFFICIAL PROCEEDINGS

Pursuant to due call and notice thereof, the regularly scheduled meeting of the Spring Lake Park City Council Work Session was held on October 19, 2026 at the Spring Lake Park City Hall, 1301 81st Ave NE, at 5:30 PM.

1. CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Nelson called the meeting to order at 5:30 PM.

MEMBERS PRESENT:
Councilmember Ken Wendling
Councilmember Barbara Goodboe-Bisschoff
Councilmember Lisa Dircks
Councilmember April Moran
Mayor Robert Nelson

MEMBERS ABSENT: None

STAFF PRESENT:
Public Works Director George Linngren, Police Chief Josh Antoine, Administrator, Clerk/Treasurer Daniel Buchholtz, Parks and Recreation Director Anne Scanlon

OTHERS PRESENT:

Kristi Cobbs	8085 Jefferson Street NE	Spring Lake Park

2. DISCUSSION ITEMS

A. 2027-2031 Capital Improvement Plan

Administrator Buchholtz presented the proposed 2027–2031 Capital Improvement Plan (CIP), which identifies approximately $8 million in anticipated capital expenditures over the five-year planning period. He explained that the CIP serves as a planning document to identify future capital needs, establish priorities, and identify potential funding sources. Major expenditures include water tower rehabilitation, street and utility improvements, equipment replacements, and park improvements.

Buchholtz noted that funding remains a significant challenge for park improvements, as the City does not have a dedicated revenue source for park capital projects. Historically, these improvements have been funded through grants, park dedication fees, and transfers of available General Fund surpluses. He stated that the Council may need to consider establishing a more sustainable funding source for future park improvements.

The Council discussed several proposed projects, including replacement of the City's electronic message sign along Highway 65. Buchholtz explained that the existing sign is

experiencing reliability issues and replacement parts are no longer available. A replacement would require a significant investment, and the Council would need to determine whether the communication benefits justify the expense.

Mayor Nelson expressed interest in exploring opportunities to generate advertising revenue from the sign to offset replacement and ongoing maintenance costs. Buchholtz indicated that staff would research the legal and policy considerations associated with commercial advertising on a municipal sign, including First Amendment concerns and the development of an appropriate advertising policy. Councilmembers also discussed the importance of evaluating the effectiveness of the sign compared to other communication methods. Buchholtz noted that the City's annual community survey provides limited information regarding how residents receive City communications, although the relatively small number of responses makes it difficult to draw broader conclusions.

The Council also discussed the proposed curbside voting accessibility device, which would allow individuals requesting assistance to notify election staff from their vehicles. Buchholtz explained that the device would improve accessibility for individuals unable to enter City Hall and would be funded through the election fund. Councilmembers discussed the anticipated use of the device, its cost, and applicable election procedures. Some members questioned the need for the equipment based on historically limited requests for curbside voting, while others supported the additional accessibility it would provide.

Additional discussion focused on the planned Arthur Street water tower rehabilitation, replacement of the sewer jetter truck, water meter and radio replacements, the 2027 Street Improvement Project, Public Works equipment, and ongoing storm sewer improvements. Buchholtz reported that the City's existing water meter radio technology is becoming obsolete and that staff will need to develop a long-term replacement strategy. The Council also discussed the potential future use of water main lining technology as an alternative to traditional excavation and replacement.

Mayor Nelson emphasized the importance of coordinating infrastructure improvements to avoid unnecessary disruption and repeated assessments to property owners. Buchholtz noted that the purpose of the CIP is to provide for coordinated long-term planning and that projects and funding estimates will continue to be updated as circumstances change.

The Council generally expressed support for the planning process and identified projects. No formal action was taken. Staff will continue to refine the CIP and investigate potential advertising revenue opportunities.

B. Draft Animal Ordinance

Administrator Buchholtz presented the proposed comprehensive update to the City's animal regulations, including provisions allowing limited backyard chickens, quail, and beekeeping. He explained that the ordinance was drafted following direction provided by a majority of the City Council at its October 5, 2026, work session and incorporates regulatory approaches used by other metropolitan communities.

Councilmembers Moran and Dircks expressed support for the proposed ordinance, noting that it incorporated the regulations and safeguards discussed at the previous work session. These include limits on the number of chickens, licensing requirements, educational requirements, notification of neighboring property owners, and standards for animal housing and maintenance.

Mayor Nelson reiterated his opposition to allowing backyard chickens and beekeeping, citing concerns regarding public health, wildlife, disease transmission, enforcement costs, and potential impacts on neighboring properties. He questioned whether the demand for these activities justified the additional regulatory responsibilities for the City.

Councilmember Goodboe-Bisschoff also expressed concerns regarding the proposal, particularly the potential effects on neighboring properties and the opportunity for public input. She questioned why the ordinance had not been referred to the Planning Commission and requested that residents have an opportunity to provide comments at a public hearing.

Buchholtz explained that the ordinance primarily concerns animal licensing, public health, nuisance prevention, and enforcement rather than zoning or land use regulations. Accordingly, a Planning Commission review or public hearing is not legally required. He noted, however, that the Council could direct that a public hearing be held before considering adoption of the ordinance.

Councilmember Moran expressed support for holding a public hearing to allow residents both in favor of and opposed to the proposed ordinance to provide comments and identify potential concerns. Councilmembers discussed whether the hearing should be held before the Planning Commission or directly before the City Council.

Following discussion, the consensus of the Council was to schedule a public hearing before the City Council to receive public input on the proposed animal ordinance prior to consideration of its adoption.

C. Discussion from the Floor Rules and Procedures

Administrator Buchholtz presented draft revisions to the City's rules governing Discussion from the Floor and public hearings. He explained that the proposed revisions were intended to establish clearer expectations for public participation, maintain orderly meetings, and clarify the distinction between public comments and interactive discussion with the City Council.

Councilmembers discussed several proposed provisions, including limits on speaking time, procedures for individuals representing groups or organizations, and opportunities for residents to submit comments when the allotted public comment period has expired.

Councilmember Goodboe-Bisschoff expressed concern that the proposed rules allowing additional speaking time for designated representatives of groups or organizations could result in extended presentations without sufficient limits. She requested that the language be revised to establish clearer time restrictions.

Councilmembers also discussed changing the name of "Discussion from the Floor" to "Open Forum" to better describe the opportunity for public comments. There was general support for the proposed name change.

Councilmember Wendling emphasized the importance of providing a clear process for individuals who are unable to speak because of time limitations. He requested that the policy specifically identify how written comments may be submitted and to whom they should be directed, ensuring that residents have a means of communicating their concerns to the Council.

The Council also discussed the placement of the public comment period on the regular City Council agenda. Mayor Nelson and Councilmember Goodboe-Bisschoff suggested moving the public comment period to follow presentations, immediately before the Consent Agenda, to accommodate scheduled presenters and individuals attending meetings for ceremonial or other specific purposes. Councilmember Moran expressed a preference for retaining the public comment period in its current location, emphasizing the importance of allowing residents to address the Council early in the meeting.

Following discussion, Buchholtz stated that staff would revise the proposed rules to address the concerns identified by Councilmembers and present options regarding placement of the public comment period. He indicated that the City Council could make a final determination when formally considering adoption of the revised rules.

The Council directed staff to bring the revised policy back for consideration at the November 16, 2026, City Council meeting.

3. REPORT

A. City Council and Staff Reports - None

4. ADJOURN

Mayor Nelson adjourned the meeting at 6:40 pm.

Robert Nelson, Mayor

Attest:

Daniel R. Buchholtz, Administrator, Clerk/Treasurer