



CITY COUNCIL WORK SESSION

Monday, March 04, 2024 at 6:00 PM
Council Chambers and YouTube Livestream

Website: www.forestparkga.gov
YouTube: <https://bit.ly/3c28p0A>
Phone Number: (404) 366.4720

FOREST PARK CITY HALL
745 Forest Parkway
Forest Park, GA 30297

The Honorable Mayor Angelyne Butler, MPA

The Honorable Kimberly James
The Honorable Hector Gutierrez
The Honorable Allan Mears

The Honorable Dabouze Antoine
The Honorable Latresa Akins-Wells

Ricky L. Clark Jr, City Manager
Randi Rainey, City Clerk
Danielle Matricardi, City Attorney

DRAFT MINUTES

VIRTUAL NOTICE

To watch the meeting via YouTube - <https://bit.ly/3c28p0A>

The Council Meetings will be live streamed and available on the City's

YouTube page - "*City of Forest Park GA*"

CALL TO ORDER/WELCOME: Mayor Butler called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

ROLL CALL - CITY CLERK: A quorum was established.

Attendee's Name	Title	Absent	Present
Angelyne Butler, MPA	Mayor, At-Large		✓
Kimberly James	Council Member, Ward 1		✓
Dabouze Antoine	Council Member, Ward 2		✓
Hector Gutierrez	Council Member, Ward 3		✓
Latresa Akins-Wells	Council Member, Ward 4		✓
Allan Mears	Council Member, Ward 5		✓

John Wiggins, Finance Director; Jeremi Patterson, Deputy Finance Director; Nina Robinson, Senior Staff Accountant; LaShawn Gardiner, Director of Planning & Community Development; Diane Lewis, Deputy HR Director; Nigel Wattley; Deputy Public Works Director; Rochell Dennis, Project Manager; Latosha Clemons; Fire Chief; David Halcome,

Deputy Fire Chief; Joshua Cox, IT Director; Rodney Virgil, Level 2 Support Engineer; Derry Walker, Director of Code Enforcement; Pauline Warrior; Senior Management Analyst, Chief Criss, PD; Major Jones, PD; Dorothy Roper-Jackson, Court Director and Danielle Matricardi, City Attorney.

ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA WITH ANY ADDITIONS / DELETIONS:

It was moved to approve the agenda as printed.

Motion made by Councilmember James, Seconded by Councilmember Antoine.

Voting Yea: Councilmember James, Antoine, Councilmember Gutierrez, Councilmember Akins-Wells, Councilmember Mears.

NEW BUSINESS:

1. **Council Discussion and Approval to Purchase five (5) Air Packs and Cylinders for the Forest Park Fire Department** -Forest Park Fires & EMS Department

Background/History:

The Forest Park Fire Department needs to purchase five (5) air packs and cylinders. The cost is \$49,571.95 and requires council approval. The vendor is Municipal Emergency Services (MES). MES is under a government contract, and no comparison quotes or requests to bid are required.

The fund is firefighting equipment 100-61-3520-53-1136.

Chief Clemons- Noted The air packs and cylinders are self-contained breathing apparatuses with a life span of ten (10) years, and currently, five (5) are outdated and need to be replaced. Chief Clemons noted the process has already been through procurement.

Comments/Discussion from Governing Body:

Councilmember Antoine- inquired about what happens with the older apparatuses. Chief Clemons noted they are used during training.

2. **Council Discussion and Approval to Purchase two (2) Ambulances** -Forest Park Fire & EMS

Background/History:

The Fire Department would benefit from purchasing two (2) new ambulances in many ways. With the newest ambulances being utilized as front-line apparatus, they run most of our EMS Calls, more than 70% of the total yearly call volume. The next newest ambulance is a 2013 with over 195,000 miles on it. It has an average out-of-service percentage of 10-15%, meaning it is not able to be utilized during that time due to maintenance. This is based on a 5-year time span. The maintenance and repair costs are approximately 60%+ over the lifespan of the ambulance compared to the cost of a new one. These considerations, along with the overall condition of the truck, show a need for replacement. This would

change us from a diesel engine to a gasoline and allow for easier and cheaper routine maintenance costs (per Roscoe at Fleet Services).

Chief Clemons- noted that the Fire Department receives roughly 8,000 calls per year, 85% of calls being EMS calls. Chief Clemons stated the Fire Department's first-line ambulances are the first out and run all the Basic Life Support (BLS) and Advance Life Support (ALS) using the ambulances, which has added a lot of miles and maintenance on the vehicles. Chief Clemons is requesting the purchase of two (2) additional ambulances to allow the frontline ambulances to go out and service the community while the other ambulances go back into reserves.

Mr. Wiggins- noted funding has been identified in the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA).

3. **Council Discussion and Approval of a Latin American Association Partnership – Legislative Offices**

Background/History:

Councilmembers James and Gutierrez are seeking approval of an event partnership agreement between Clayton County Public Schools and the City of Forest Park for a Latin American Association on April 27, 2024, from 8:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. This event will promote the Latin American Association's (LAA) vision of providing "Opportunity for All," with diversity, equity, and inclusion being the primary focus of their organization.

Councilmember Gutierrez- noted that Clayton County Public Schools will be partnering with the Latin American Association to bring resources to this side of town and needs help promoting the event, which will take place at Forest Park High School.

Councilmember James- added that no funding was involved and requested police and fire presence to help control traffic and possibly set up a display. Councilmember James also noted speaking with Kroger delivery to provide food and stated the event is open to everyone.

Comments/Discussion from Governing Body:

Councilmember Akins-Wells- expressed that she believes it's a thin line when city resources are constantly being used for Clayton County Public Schools and wonders what the school board does; she also noted there was a problem at some point with staff members assisting during work hours.

Mayor Butler- inquired with the city attorney where the fine line lies and noted that the draft stated there would be a representative from the council and an employee from police and fire to be available for the event. Attorney Matricardi pointed out that any gratuity, city services, or property that is given away is prohibited. Still, there are special exceptions when it comes to other local government entities, such as school boards, and it would be legal to enter into a contract for those purposes. Attorney Matricardi also added that, in general, the city should want a substantial benefit in return that transfers it from being a gift to a service the city can provide.

Mayor Butler- inquired if it would be an annual event. Councilmember James noted it is the first partnership with the Latin American Association (LAA), which will be an initial kick-off. Councilmember James mentioned that Clayton County Public Schools (CCPS) will be involved with many things, such as paying for the food trucks, and will be hosted at Forest Park High School.

Mr. Clark- asked the city attorney to share the notes in the agenda software. Ms. Matricardi noted that the note states the draft partnership agreement is acceptable. However, she would like to recommend being able to edit the agreement to make it more formalized.

Councilmember Guterrez- noted being involved with the schools as an employee and stated he would rely on the city manager and city attorney to keep him accountable. Councilmember Gutierrez believes in bridging the gap between the city and the school system.

Councilmember Akins-Wells- stated she believes employees should have the option of volunteering for events.

4. **Council Discussion and Approval of an Urban Redevelopment Agency (URA) Appointment – Legislative Offices**

Background/History:

Councilmember James, Chair of the Urban Redevelopment Agency, is seeking the appointment of Yasmin Julio to fill the unexpired term of Marisol Sconiers, who recently resigned her seat. Her term is set to expire on March 21, 2026.

Councilmember James- noted that Ms. Sconiers recently resigned from the board, which opened a seat, and recommended that Ms. Julio fulfill the unexpired term. Councilmember James introduced Ms. Julio.

Ms. Julio- gave a brief introduction about herself.

Mr. Clark- suggested having guidance on formalizing appointments and convening a meet-and-greet for all the boards so the governing body would know who is on them. Mr. Clark also noted that the city clerk should be involved in informing the governing body when there are openings, completing the application process, and streamlining the process. Mayor Butler noted that was the practice in the past. Ms. Matricardi noted that due to it being a resignation in the middle of the term, things were done differently; however, for annual appointments, there will be a process.

Mayor Butler- noted going into executive session after the meeting and suggested if anyone has any recommendations to bring forth during the executive session meeting.

5. **Council Discussion and Approval on the Forest Parkway Median Landscape – Executive Offices**

Background/History:

Falcon Design Consultants, LLC (FDC) has prepared a Task Order (TO) to assist the City of Forest Park with a landscape plan, bid assistance, and construction management for landscape improvements along the median of Forest Parkway within the city limits of Forest Park. The total centerline distance of the project limits is approximately 9,900 L.F. or 1.875 miles.

Additionally, as required, FDC will provide bid assistance and construction management services to complete the City of Forest Park project. Based on meetings with GDOT, FDC will prepare plans using local GIS and aerial data.

Mr. Shelby- noted that Falcon Design Consultants, LLC (FDC) will assist the city with a landscape plan for the median along Forest Pkwy from the farmer's market to the city limits near Jonesboro Rd. and will

also supervise to ensure that the drawings are approved by the Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT).

6. **Council Discussion and Approval on the City of Forest Park Blight Tax Ordinance** – Executive Offices

Background/History:

Neighborhood blight and the presence of vacant and abandoned properties have profound negative impacts. Additionally, because blighted properties often demand higher government services (e.g., public safety Additionally because services) than other properties, the higher tax allows local governments to recover some of the costs associated with this increased burden.

City Manager Mr. Clark- noted that he was proposing to impose an additional seven (7) mills of tax on any property considered to be blighted; he also noted that this was a way of working on one of the pillars of neighborhood sustainability. Mr. Clark mentioned that the property owner would be charged based on certain criteria outlined in the proposed ordinance, allowing the property owner to have thirty (30) days to request a hearing with the municipal court to share their side of the story.

Comments/Discussion from Governing Body:

Councilmember James- inquired if the tax would apply to vacant homes and lived-in homes and if it would be on the homeowner and not the renter. Mr. Clark noted it would be for both, and the homeowner would be the one to have to pay the tax. Mr. Clark explained the majority of the homes that are deemed blighted would not be uninhabitable and explained what would make a property blighted versus an unkempt property. Mr. Clark also included calling code enforcement if one sees blighted property.

Councilmember Antoine- noted that he does not believe there is light at the end of the tunnel when dealing with low-income residents who cannot afford to fix up their property and see that it works. Mr. Clark noted that the administration has developed ways to handle those types of situations through the office of code enforcement and the creation of the beautification committee.

Mr. Clark- noted that the majority of individuals who would qualify under the ordinance are absentee property owners. Mr. Clark stated in Section E the city would benefit from creating an additional tax where illegal and criminal crimes occur, which the property owner knew or should have known about.

Mr. Walker- spoke about the One Branch program, which will assist the elderly and community in completing exterior upgrades such as cutting grass and painting the property's exterior.

Councilmember Mears- mentioned he agrees and would like to keep Forest Park beautiful.

Mayor Butler- Noted that it was long overdue and wanted to have a higher fine. Councilmember Akins-Wells inquired why it could not go higher. Mayor Butler stated it was explained to her that seven (7) mills are the standard but has an option to go higher. Ms. Matricardi noted that there is no legal standard, but it has to be reasonably related to the purpose of local government. Ms. Matricardi also noted that the Georgia Municipal Association (GMA) recommends seven (7) mills; however, some municipalities have gone up to ten (10) mills, which she does not recommend. Mayor Bulter noted that it's been a problem for

many years, and hitting the property owners with the highest will let them know the city means business and recommended increasing if it is the council's desire.

Mr. Clark- noted that Mayor Butler is very passionate about the bill and has worked on it since the previous administration. Mr. Clark questioned how adding the seven (7) mills affects the Homestead Exemption. Ms. Matricardi noted that while doing research, she could not see a complete exemption; she also said that a complete exemption means paying zero taxes and would be calculated first, followed by the homestead exemption.

Councilmember Antoine- noted he would not support a higher mil.

Councilmember James- inquired if the homestead exemption was applied to absent residents. Mr. Clark noted that residents could only file homestead exemptions on one property and that it had to be their primary domicile per state law.

7. **Council Discussion and Approval of the Final Plat-Towne Manor Townhomes-**Planning and Community Development Department

Background/History:

The Towne Manor townhome development located at 437 North Avenue is nearing completion of the 16-townhome unit subdivision and is now in the final plating stage. The Planning Commission approved the preliminary plat on August 18, 2022. The development is located on 1.61 acres on the corner of North Avenue and Burks Road.

Mrs. Gardiner- noted that the preliminary plat was approved in August 2022, and staff is almost at the conclusion of the development.

8. **Council Discussion and Approval of the Text Amendment-Termination of Conditional Use Permits** – Planning and Community Development Department

Background/History:

Article G. Section 8-8-190, as currently written in the code, does not provide clear and formal processes for the termination or continuance of a conditional use permit. The requested text amendment provides more clarity when a conditional use permit shall no longer be authorized if construction or occupancy has not occurred within six months of the date a conditional use permit was granted. The amendment further clarifies the continuance of a conditional use permit if the use for which the permit was granted is occurring on the property and states the discontinuance of a conditional use permit will occur if it is found that no activity has taken place for a period of 60 days.

Mrs. Gardiner- noted that the text amendment adds more information in Section 8-8-190, which gives a more specific time frame for when conditional use permits can be continued or no longer authorized.

EXECUTIVE SESSION: (When an Executive Session is required, one will be called for the following issues: Personnel, Litigation, or Real Estate).

It was moved to recess into Executive Session at 6:39 p.m. for Personnel, Litigation, or Real Estate matters.

Motion made by Councilmember James, Seconded by Councilmember Mears.

Voting Yea: Councilmember James, Councilmember Antoine, Councilmember Gutierrez, Councilmember Akins-Wells, Councilmember Mears.

It was moved to reconvene into the Council Work Session at 7:07 pm.

Motion made by Councilmember James, Seconded by Councilmember Akins-Wells.

Voting Yea: Councilmember James, Councilmember Antoine, Councilmember Gutierrez, Councilmember Akins-Wells, Councilmember Mears

ADJOURNMENT:

It was moved to adjourn the meeting at 7:07 pm.

Motion made by Councilmember James, Seconded by Councilmember Akins-Wells.

Voting Yea: Councilmember James, Councilmember Antoine, Councilmember Gutierrez, Councilmember Akins-Wells, Councilmember Mears

In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, those requiring meeting accommodation should notify the City Clerk's Office at 404-366-4720 at least 24 hours before the meeting.