



## CITY COUNCIL WORK SESSION

Monday, August 01, 2022, at 6:00 PM  
Council Chambers and YouTube Livestream

### MISSION STATEMENT

It is the mission of the City of Forest Park to enhance, strengthen, and grow our city by collaborating with our community to provide the highest level of service. Striving to be recognized as a diverse community that values and respects all members. We will strive to provide fair, professional, and courteous service through transparency and open communication. As we work to achieve this mission, we will have integrity beyond reproach while employing fiscal discipline and innovation. In this work there are no praises and raises for mediocrity.

**Website:** [www.forestparkga.gov](http://www.forestparkga.gov)  
**YouTube:** <https://bit.ly/3c28p0A>  
**Phone Number:** (404) 366.1555

**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

Dr. Marc-Antonie Cooper, City Manager  
S. Diane White, City Clerk  
Mike Williams, City Attorney

## MINUTES

**CALL TO ORDER/WELCOME:** The meeting was called to order at 6:00pm by Mayor Butler and she read the Mission Statement.

**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, Mayor Pro-Tem		✓
Hector Gutierrez	Council Member, Ward 3		✓
Latresa Akins-Wells	Council Member, Ward 4		✓
Allan Mears	Council Member, Ward 5		✓

Joshua Cox, IT Director, Javon Lloyd, Public Information Officer, Chiquita Barkley, Finance Director, Kim Trawick, HR Specialist, LaShawn Gardiner, Management Analyst, Latosha Clemmons, Fire Chief, Bobby Jinks, Public Works Director, Nathaniel Clark, Police Chief and Arthur Geeter, Purchasing Manager

**CITY MANAGER'S REPORT:** Dr. Marc-Antonie Cooper, City Manager

**COMMUNITY INFORMATION/REMINDERS:**

- The City of Forest Park Human Resources Department is planning a city JOB FAIR on August 22, 2022, from 9am – 3pm at 696 Main Street. Visit [www.forestparkga.gov/HR](http://www.forestparkga.gov/HR) to register and view our open positions.
- Just as a reminder, the City of Forest Park is a “Drug-Free Workplace” and as part of our hiring process and prior to being extended an offer of employment a drug screening is required for all candidates.
- **Reminder** – City of Forest Park Fire Department will be hosting its 1<sup>st</sup> Open House this Saturday, August 6<sup>th</sup> from 12:00 noon – 6:00pm. The event will be held at Station 1 – 4539 Jonesboro Road. Bring the whole family and enjoy the festivities.
- Households can sign-up for the Affordable Connectivity Program via application process and follow the steps to find out if they qualify for high-speed internet for no more than \$30/month, in some instances qualifying families may be able to receive internet free. [https://www.whitehouse.gov/getinternet/?utm\\_source=getinternet.gov](https://www.whitehouse.gov/getinternet/?utm_source=getinternet.gov)

**CITY OPERATIONS:**

- **ONE CALL TO CITY HALL** – the City of Forest Park has officially migrated our city telephone vendor, and now have one number for residents to call. Now anyone can contact the main city hall number (404)-366-4720 and follow the prompts to reach any city department. This improvement had been planned for later this year, but due to our previous vendor abruptly leaving the market we were forced to migrate earlier than expected. However, I would like to thank, IT Director Josh Cox, and IT Tech Jimmie Rodriguez for successfully completing a 6-month project in approximately 60 days. We still must record our menu and prompts in Spanish, which will be done by August 8, and make some other minor adjustments we move forward, but a major hurdle is behind us.
- The City of Forest Park Fire Department received our new Fire Truck. Per Fire Chief Clemons the department is planning a “Push-In Ceremony” to officially place the truck into service. Once the date and time is set, we will advertise and notify the Community, media outlets and city employees to take part in the ceremony.



**EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT/CONGRATULATIONS:**

- Congratulations – Officer Askew and Officer Simmons were sworn-in with the Clayton County – Crime Suppression Task Force representing the City of Forest Park. We know you both will do our city proud.

**SHOUT OUT**

- CONGRATULATIONS to Human Resources Director Shalonda Brown on completing 101 hours of course work to be awarded her Clerks Certification from the Georgia Clerks Education Institute through UGA.
- CONGRATULATIONS Councilman Gutierrez on being accepted into the Georgia Hispanic Chamber Commerce and the J.W. Fanning Institute for Leadership Development's 2022 Cultivating Hispanic Leadership Institute (CHIL). This is a six-month leadership development program that will provide an opportunity to receive leadership training to assist with their organizational, business, and community leadership skills.

**COVID-19 / MONKEYPOX UPDATE: EMS Coordinator, Andrew Gelmini**

Between 7/25 - 7/31 there were 625 new positive cases in Clayton County, an increase from last month but a decrease of 1% from this month's total.

Case breakdown shows approx. 57.8% of Cases to be female and 41.7% Male with the remaining 0.5% to be unknown. Forest Park makes up 8.7% of County cases. Forest Park shows an increase in tracking to 10-20 new cases a week.

The 30 to 39 age group shows the highest percentage of positive cases with African Americans showing the highest positive case percentage followed by Unknown ethnicity and then Caucasian then other and lastly the Asian population.

We have plateaued with vaccines without much change from last month staying at 55% of County residents have received at least one dose of vaccine and 49% are fully vaccinated. 19% of vaccinated citizens have received the additional booster dose. The 35 - 64 age groups show the highest vaccination rate.

The CDC continues to encourage and recommend vaccination and boosters for Covid 19 which are available through several means. The current recommendations for vaccines are anyone 5 years and older. The current recommendation for boosters is at least 5 months after receiving the final dose of the first series for Moderna and Pfizer or 2 months after receiving the single dose Johnson and Johnson. A second booster dose is currently being recommended to people fifty and older with underlying medical conditions and should be administered at least 4 months after prior dose was received.

To locate a vaccine site, contact your primary medical provider. Then you can text your zip code to 438829 or call 1-800-232-0233 to find local vaccine providers. Contacting your Primary Care Physician or local pharmacy to see if they are giving vaccines and boosters or visit [vaccines.gov](https://www.vaccines.gov). The Clayton County Health District is giving vaccines based on availability and are rotating their locations to allow for easy access. They are requesting people wishing to receive the vaccine or booster to call and make an appointment at (678) 479-2223 or visit [www.claytoncountypublichealth.org](https://www.claytoncountypublichealth.org). All this information is also available on the city website under the fire department tab under covid nineteen.

Monkeypox has been a new topic of conversation and questioning since it began spreading through countries that do not normally experience outbreaks of Monkeypox. Monkeypox was first documented in humans in 1970 and since

has been reported in humans in several countries in south and western Africa. Monkeypox is a virus that is spread primarily through close, intimate contact with someone who has the virus. This can include direct contact with someone's open sores or scabs that has had the virus, prolonged direct contact with fabric that have been exposed, contact with respiratory secretions from someone that has the virus, any prolonged intimate face to face or sexual contacts. Scientists are still researching its spread and likeliness of contraction in some populations.

Monkeypox cases are showing an increase among Georgia residents, particularly in metro Atlanta. Georgia currently shows 351 cases of Monkeypox Statewide. The signs and symptoms may include flu-like symptoms such as fever, headache, muscle aches, and swollen lymph nodes. Monkeypox causes a rash, many cases in this outbreak have developed a rash without other associated symptoms. The rash shows pimple-like lesions that are deep seated and have a dot on each. Most commonly the rash is found more on extremities, face, palms, and soles. The lesions are described as painful then becoming itchy during the healing phase. In the outbreak in metro Atlanta the rash has been found to develop and stay isolated to the genitalia and rectal areas.

The CDC is continuing research and tracking of Monkeypox nationwide and is making vaccinations and testing available to high-risk individuals and areas as they are available. For more information you can visit the CDC or GA Dept of Public Health Websites.

## **NEW BUSINESS:**

### **1. Discussion around E-911 Fund – Legislative**

#### **Comments/Discussion from Governing Body:**

**Councilmember James** -I would like to discuss the details of the E911 funds We show a balance of zero in the budget, but there are funds being sent to that account, and I would like to get the information on E 911.

**City Manager** -The E911 funds show in the budget that it is funded. Currently there are some E911 funds, and when they come in, they are accounted for in the budget and their individual funds. They are accounted for separately from the budget. I explained to council via e-mail that the city does have a pool cash, where all the cash goes into one pool. Just like everything else it is accounted for separately. Just like Capital Improvement and everything else E911 is separate and has its own funds.

Currently, if you look at our revenue numbers our budget is about 745,000 in E911. The issue we are having is we are still catching up with the reconciliation that has not been done in a while. As those things come up, the finance and accounting department do the journal entries to each one of those line items which puts the money there for people to be able to see on the computer. So, there is money there and we know the money is there, but we are going back correcting things to bring it up to date. There are funds in E911, and they are used specifically for E911.

**Councilmember James** -So, they are not using the General Funds.

**City Manager** – No, they are not using General Funds. There is a pool cash for the city and all the money that comes into the city goes into one pot but is accounted for separately in each line item.

**Councilmember Wells** – Is there any way we can see the money that is coming in and going out of the account? I mentioned to you that someone brought up to me that back in 2019 or 2020 that someone mentioned, some money was being spent out of E-911 account that should not have been spent, because

it is to be used for certain things. So is there any way that council can see what is coming in, what is going out and for what it is being used.

**City Manager** – Sure, we can get a report and I know exactly what you are talking about, because that was in audit findings. That previously there were things purchase from that fund that should not have, but that money was put back according to the audit from 2019. We can get an accounting of what is going in and what is going out. What we are doing at this point is we are trying to catch it all up. So as of now we are at the end of 2020 going into 2021 and Ms. Barkley, can speak on that. We are doing the reconciliation and journal entries to make sure everything is accounted for. That is one of the reasons why if you look at it in the system you are not seeing the full balance. Even in the system, it is showing 60-70,000 there, but it is fully funded and that is why we are going back catching up all those bank reconciliations that were not done.

**Councilmember Wells** – I just think that there are certain things the council should be aware of, and I know this has nothing to do with Ms. Barkley, she is trying to clean up a lot of things. If a resident come to us and ask questions, we should be able to give them an answer. But I do not even know what is going on.

**City Manager** – Again, whenever these questions are asked, I do respond to the questions of the resident. If you look at the budget, E911 is funded. The money is there, and I am not sure where the conversation came up, but we are working to make sure that council knows exactly where all the funds went.

**Councilmember Wells** – All I am saying is if you are on the outside, it does not look right. It looks as though someone is hiding something. We know it is in there, but where is the money because we cannot see it.

**City Manager** - That is why we are updating the journal entries and reconciliations. The money is there but until you get everything updated you cannot say this is exactly what goes in there and how much it is. You may have a deposit from July 2022 waiting to be recorded and we are still working in 2021. We are keeping council aware of everything we are finding financially and that we are trying to address. No one is hiding anything, we are trying to make sure that everything we are telling council is accurate, and the only way to do that is to correct the things from the past.

We can stop and give updates of where we are at this point, but how accurate is that going to be. That is based on what we have had the past few months, but is that the most accurate information, no. Until we have everything from the back updated, everything is not balanced out. You must make sure everything is put in the accounting system.

**Councilmember Wells** - I am not saying that anyone is hiding anything, I am just saying how it looks from the outside. It can become a bigger issue like mishandling of funds, because you cannot explain something if it is not there.

**Chiquita Barkley, Finance Director** – As it relates to the E911 funds itself, we are having to go back and do journal entries to correct this. I can pull up the pool cash account line items for E911 funds. I pulled it today through June 30 of our last fiscal cycle and it was 729,000. That is not an accurate number, because we are just getting up to date. We are currently up to December 2021 in reconciling those accounts.

It will be a larger number once we reconcile those accounts. Going forward once we clean everything up it should be a 1 to 1 match and we will identify those revenues within the body of the funds of E911. That has been a problem with Forest Park. With that pool cash, and journal entries not properly done weekly or monthly, you will always have dated information and incorrect numbers.

That is a problem not for just the city but me managing that money. It is going to be a process getting those things cleaned up. So, we can only give you what we see on the books until we can get things reconciled to that specific date. The information I gave Dr. Cooper this morning was reconciled through last year.

**Councilmember Wells** – Is it just E911 or other accounts.

**Finance Director** – It is multiple accounts.

**Mayor Butler**- Can you explain how we got here to the best of your ability.

**Finance Director**- As far as I can see, the staff not been properly trained. Where I come from as I was explaining to Dr. Cooper., we used E911 funds to fund the 911 center. In that fund you have the revenue and the expenses. Here the cumbersome part is pool cash, and every fund that you have the revenue is going into one specific account. I do not know the exact number of accounts, but it is a lot, and we are going to have to go through every account including sanitation funds. We have all these different accounts, but we then go and reallocate it to a particular fund, but it is collected in the pool cash.

Pool cash journal entries are done monthly, that is when you balance the books, and it has not been done in over a year. That is a big problem and why we are still waiting on 2021 audit. The information is way outdated and as of now we should be rapping up the audit for 2022. So, this is behind at least over 2 years.

**Councilmember James** – When we first came in about five years ago it took about 2 years for the forensic audit and then some of the things that came back was about the bank reconciliation. We know about the bank reconciliation, which was back 3 years ago.

**Finance Director** - We will get there, but it is going to take patience from council and is it going to take time. It is going to take a lot of hours, and we have been working overtime, but we will get there. Hopefully, we can get an update. It will not be 3-6 months, but we can bring you into 2021 so that we can get to 2022. Then maybe 2023 will flow a bit better. Once the history has been taken care of, we can function in the present and the future. Part of the reason is in your admin system; I do not feel anyone know the ins and outs of it. We are scheduling different trainings for the department because they are heavily dependent upon the finance team to give them the information on the budget and where the money is. Sometimes it may not be accurate, because of those journal entries.

**Councilmember Antoine** - I think we all need to be patient and trust the process. I know you cannot give to us what you do not have, and I am in support of you and staff. Just present the information to us once you have it.

**Councilmember Gutierrez** – The same just being patient and thanks to council for bringing this up, we need to ask the questions so that everyone is aware. Everyone is human and nothing is perfect, and things just keep getting uncovered from the past. We are here with you Ms. Barkley; we just want to know.

**Councilmember Wells** - When you said the E911 funds were used to fund the E911 operations. We need to look at that. We always talking about cut here and there and there is a whole budget sitting in one spot, when it can be used in other departments.

**Finance Director**- Once we bring those things into alignment, we can look at that going forward in future budget cycles. Again, we would have to bring the history into the present

## 2. Council Discussion Georgia Municipal Association Conference – Legislative

**Background/History:**

Discuss the take aways from the Georgia Municipal Association Conference members of City Council and Staff attended.

**Comments/Discussion from Governing Body:**

**Councilmember James** – I wanted to bring it to the attention of the city, because we attend these conferences and Gutierrez and I spoke about sharing some of the things we got from the conference to see if they can be implemented into the city.

I attended two trainings, "Making Cultural Diversity Work" and "Building Bridges Between Cities and Colleges," I also attended their breakout sessions. Some of the key takeaways were, with cultural diversity is to increase our exposure in the diverse cultures and there are several ways we can talk about doing that legislatively. I would like to continue to move forward with that so we can be recognized as the diverse community we are, and we just need to make sure we are doing that reconciliation.

"Building Bridges Between Cities and Colleges," we have Clayton State University, and we need to tap into those resources that they have available. They shared some great things at the GMA Conference that we can do as a city to bridge that gap, and these are some of the things I am going to be bringing forth with the council to implement.

Also, I would like to give a shout out to Sparkle Adams, one of the presenters at one of the breakout sessions. It was called "Georgia Future Leaders Guiding the Way", and she gave a expert about walking in authority team council and I thought it was great for her to be on the panel to discuss what she is doing with teen council

**Councilmember Gutierrez** – I always bring something from these trainings and come back and share it with Dr. Cooper. I am glad we are doing this, because we pay for these trainings with the tax dollars, and it is good to be there with cities that are going through what we have gone through. It is nice to hear the ideas and some of the successes, and it also makes you grateful for the staff that we have. Some of the people that I have met at these trainings are going through some very unfortunate situations.

I went through two different trainings one was how to Effectively Connect the Seniors to Resources, and we do have a senior committee, and I want to make sure that is one of the populations that we are tapping into, because of Covid that populations were isolated for a while. So, I hope to implement some of these things with the seniors and council as well as with my colleagues.

**Mayor Butler** – I did attend the conference and it was amazing. One of classes that I did not bring all my notes on is on Legislative updates. Mr. Cooper has a list of things to keep an eye out on as it could pertain to Forest Park. I also have additional training coming up for the Downtown Development Authority, because of the GMA. I did get to meet a couple of companies one for the Christmas lights, and the Omnilert and ShotSpotter. I mentioned Omnilert before when I did the police line-item veto. Both will be here on August 15 for the meeting. These are two different mechanisms to make sure we are safe. Omnilert, uses visual surveillance and will activate and notify public safety if someone were to pull out a gun.

ShotSpotter is audio. Some people are confused between what is a firework and I gun shot. ShotSpotter will have different sensors set up throughout the city to pinpoint within a radius where a gunshot is coming from. I think with all that is going on they are both needed. Omni Lert hopefully, we can collaborate with the schools get them in our school and Shot Spotter throughout our whole city.

**City Manager** – There were two classes I took. Municipal Finance, which was an all-day class and I loved it. There are a lot of things that we can implement here. It did give me assurance to know that we are on the right track with what we are doing, and it did give me some ideas for in the future to basically help the city to be set up, so that moving in the future things will be a lot easier, for whom ever comes after me Ms. Barkley, or any director that is here, when it comes to Municipal Finances. We will not make the same mistakes as some of the cities they used as an example, and we will not be used as an example in the next class.

The other class was Transportation Funding with GDOT, which was also awesome, and lets me know again that we are on the right path. Thank you, Mr. Jinks and Ms. Thomas, for getting those Lap Certifications, for us as a city to start tapping into the federal money, to help with upkeeping our roads and other things. Also, for getting those projects that we could not, because we did not have certain certifications that was required for us to tap into federal money.

**3. Discussion and appointment of a Land Bank Authority Board Representative – Chief Executive Offices**

**Background/History:**

The City of Forest Park's Planning and Community Development Director Mr. James Shelby has submitted his resignation from the Land Bank Authority Board. Mr. Shelby was appointed to serve as the city's representative for a second term by City Council on April 21, 2022. Now with his resignation the City Manager is seeking the direction of Mayor and Council on a replacement.

The City of Forest Park has appointment power over one (1) seat on the Clayton County Land Bank Board. The Board Members' terms are staggered, such that some terms expire every April. Mr. Shelby's current term would have ended 4/21/23.

**Comments/Discussion from Governing Body:**

**City Manager** – I think it should be 2024, but I will confirm it. The recommendation I would like to make to council is our own Grants Analysis, Mrs. Lashawn Gardiner.

**Mayor Butler** – There were specific requirements that were needed for this board and I think Mrs. Gardiner would be a good fit. She is one of our under-utilized employees and she did accept the invitation to serve on this board if council approves.

**Councilmember James**- I agree.

**Councilmember Antoine** – Sitting on this board is there voting power that members will have to vote or do they just come in and agree on something.

**Mayor Butler** – For the land bank itself. They have regular meetings and if something needs to be voted on then they will vote on it.

**Councilmember Gutierrez** – Thank you Mrs. Gardiner for stepping up.

**Councilmember Wells** – Thank you, Thank you.

**Councilmember Mears** – Thank you.



4. **Council Discussion on Budget Amendment (Increase Requested) – City's Right of Way and Parks Lawn Maintenance** – Chief Executive Offices

**Background/History:**

The City of Forest Park is not immune to the issues of labor shortages that have plagued our nation. While the Mayor and City Council has taken steps to address this matter, we still struggle to find qualified workers. More specifically within the Public Works Division we have several open positions that we hold as continuously recruiting.

Due to these shortages, we have struggled to maintain city right of way(s) maintenance and some parks. The City Manager is requesting additional funds in the amount of \$50,000 to apply toward contracted lawn service providers through the Public Works Division to assist with this maintenance for the season.

The funds requested would be taken from the City's current fund balance, and if approved, this request would increase the city's 2022-2023 budget for the Public Works Division by the requested amount to be applied for the specified purpose.

**Comments/Discussion from Governing Body:**

**Councilmember James** – We approve a certain list of vendors to do extra work as needed. Is this money to be used for them and then it is to bring everything beautiful.

**City Manager** - It is to supplement the cutting and maintenance that Mr. Jinks and the public works department already has.

**Councilmember Antoine** - It is a no brainer, Thanks.

**Councilmember Gutierrez** - Yes, I support it.

**Councilmember Wells** - I am the reason this is on here. I have ridden around the city for the last month and the city looks a mess. I have been here all my life and I have never seen it looking this bad, and it is very embarrassing. You get phone calls from people saying I am getting citations put on my door for not cutting my grass, but the city looks a mess.

I ride around not just through my ward but the entire city, down Jonesboro Road, and Old Dixie. The weeds are growing through the sidewalk even in the city hall parking lot. Yes, everyone is short, but I am just being transparent. I think people should be held accountable.

Yes, there is a lot of work to do, and we are short, but I have seen it done. Also, we are getting all these contractors and all the money being allocated to go to them where are they. I have never seen anyone cutting Forest Parkway, Old Dixie, or none of the main streets.

I spoke to Dr. Cooper, and he said the money went toward the cemeteries and that really made me mad. Unfortunately, some people wanted to get into the cemetery business, but we work for the Citizens of Forest Park and not for the cemeteries. Those people are no longer here. We have people that have too live in this area, and it looks a mess. Just ride around the city, people need to be held accountable, if it is in Ward 4 and needs to be taken care of then I will get it taken care of it. It is sad that we keep coming to the table and no one is being held responsible.

We need to prioritize what needs to be done in the city and what can wait. I also think parks and rec., should be handling parks and rec. That will take a lot out of public works. The doing all the parks and I know Mr. Maxwell has been trying for a long time and we keep putting it off. Why is all this money being paid to contractors, he could have his own crew. This will free up some of the employees that are having to focus on the park and abandoning, Jonesboro Rd, Forest Parkway, and our communities.

We take all this money from events and say the city do not have any money, but we keep coming to the table putting money in contractor's pocket. The employees complain about needing money so we can pay them over time. I am over everything being a no brainer to some people when there are people who care and want to see things different. I am one of those that want to see something different, and I do not want to keep seeing this on the agenda. Someone needs to be held accountable and if we are not cleaning around other places, we need to leave the residents along about their places.

**Councilmember Mears** - I would like to hear the explanation from our public works director, I am sure he has an explanation.

**Bobby Jinks, Public Works Director** - There are only three in building maintenance, and they cut Ash St, they are edging and cleaning sidewalks. The street division is cutting grass and cleaning the sidewalk on West Dr. in the dead end and was on Old Dixie the rest of the week. In parks we have six maintenance workers, two foreman's and a supervisor.

They pick up all the litter in Star Park daily, empty the trash, cut all the ball fields, line off the fields for all the games and weekend events. They also cut 2nd street, city hall fire station three, the gun range and one crew work on Jonesboro Rd. and should finish Wednesday and on Friday one crew started Forest Parkway.

This is a short break down of our organization chart: street division handles street repairs and cutting grass on right of ways, no one is in sanitation and all calls are being routed. Streets has four people and six openings, sign shop falls under street and has two people and we rotate them out to cover the recycle center. Parks has nine people, five openings and a part time position of Mr. Ross who passed away. I am having to pay a worker over time 4 hours on Saturday and Sunday to come clean the park. Maintenance has five people and maintain everything. Fleet has three people and three openings.

We hired two people out of ten interviews and one person lasted only 2 days. We have interviewed several people for different positions. I have pulled all the applications; I have called and scheduled interviews for those that did not refuse one. I cannot afford to be shifting public works people around, because they are vital where they are.

**City Manager** - A lot of time people say things are an excuse, but I think Mr. Jinks, did provide to the council the facts. The fact is that every department is short staffed. We can move people around to address certain things that come. Councilwoman Wells, I agree with you about the things you see when driving around the city and you are not the first person to complain to me about it. The mayor has called me, Councilwoman James and everyone on the council has called stating different areas. We are stretching public works to the point some of the guys are going home and do not care about the overtime because, they are being worked so much. They are to the point where they are saying they just need a break and even when they say they do not need a break we have to know to give them a break.

Some people look at the financial aspect and think they can do this, but if they get hurt it is costing the city a lot more. I want the council to understanding we are doing what we can and recruiting continuously. Those ten people Mr. Jinks talked about, and why I put in my city manager report about a drug free workplace. Out of those ten people the two that was hired are the ones that passed the drug screen. HR is doing a

great job with getting a rush on background checks, but we are not cutting any corners with this. I am asking council to understand that we know we are short, and we understand the pain and frustration and that we are trying to address them every day.

**Councilmember Wells** - I still stand by what I say, and some things are excuses. You utilize people and prioritize the need of the city. If you have all these different complaints from everybody then something should have been done about it. No disrespect Mr. Jinks, and I do this with other departments, but when people I work for complain to me, it bothers me. You say there are forty something vacancies how did it get there. To me it can be handled, it needs marketing and HR putting on this job fair is a start, but this has been going on a long time. We pay all this money for people to come in and do a temporary fix, use that money to market and to recruit people. The money that was allocated to right of ways and lawn is what the money should have been used for and not for cemeteries.

**City Manager** - Councilwoman Wells, we had this conversation via email, and I sent you the documentation stating council appropriated that money for those four cemeteries.

**Councilmember Wells** - We both agreed that was ridiculous.

**Mayor Butler** - We do know that people are applying, then they are selected for an interview, once they make it pass the interview, they are giving a conditional offer contingent upon passing a background check and drug screening and then they are offered the position. Of those interviewed you hired two but made offers to several more. It is not that we are not recruiting or marketing, they are not passing one of the steps that is needed to become employed with the city.

**Councilmember James** - I think this is a step in the right direction. If we say the city looks bad and we need to do something about it, then this agenda item is a step in the right direction. We can hire the people we need to get it done, so that staff is not over worked. There is a thing as being over worked and burn out and we do not want that for our staff. Thanks to the team for putting this on the agenda, so we can get the streets where they need to be.

**Bobby Jinks** - People keep bring up the past, but in the past, we counted on 6-10 community service workers daily. Since covid we are lucky to get 1 or 2. I have sent out letters to the different jurisdiction that we use and contacted those I have family members employed at, to make sure they are receiving the letters. Even the state probation has called and asked if it was ok to send community service workers, so they will start sending us workers.

**Councilmember Antione** - We can all sit here and complain, but I understand and hope we can get it figured out.

**Councilmember Gutierrez** - We can apply these tactics, but we cannot wait until we fix all these things. I am glad you are taking the initiative to get this cleaned up. I appreciate all your hard work.

**Councilmember Wells** - I appreciate you too. I just want the city where I live and serve to look like the city it is. We cannot say the beautiful City of Forest Park when the city is not beautiful. Yes, this is a step, but we need workers, and we need to prioritize the needs of our city and we need to let park and rec, handle parks and rec. Can we allocate money for Tarik, to hire people to do the fields so it does not take away from the real needs of the city? Thanks for the explanation and I hope it gets better.

**Councilmember Mears** - Last week, Morrow which, is smaller than Forest Park, had their fun day/book bag giveaway and they are looking for work too. They pay the same thing as we do it is a bidding war

because people are from job to job, and it is hard to get a steady employee when there are so many opportunities and places jacking the scale up high. Then there is the problem with finding someone to meet your qualifications. You do not want to put someone in a place where they may be a hazardous, so there is a lot to take into consideration.

## 5. Council Discussion on Adopt a Road – Beautification Initiative – Legislative

### Background/History:

Litter prevention efforts such as Adopt-a-Road programs can have an impact and benefit to the community at large, by helping to improve property values, foster pride in clean neighborhoods, and encourage civic involvement.

It is requested that the City Council considers amending the current 2022-2023 approved budget to include in the legislative department's expenses, a line item in the amount of \$6,000 to purchase signs, trash bags, vests, and trash pickers for each ward. Funding for this initiative would come from the City's current fund balance and allocated to increase the legislative department's budget by the same amount to be distributed evenly within each ward for this specific purpose.

### Comments/Discussion from Governing Body:

**Councilmember James** – I would just like to hear an explanation from whom ever wants this on the agenda.

**Councilmember Gutierrez** - Initially, this started to incentivize people to clean up and I did not know we had to make the signs. I have been funding this with my ward funds, it is a city initiative not a Councilmember Gutierrez thing. The signs say City of Forest Park and Adopt a Road and whatever organization adopt them. So, I asked Dr. Cooper to put it on the agenda, so we can have it as an annual line item.

We can fund this from it, it gives the community pride, and it helps to keep the city clean. We named it after the Adopt a Road program in Atlanta. Dr. Cooper produced the idea to make it an equal thing for each council that is why there is 6,000.00. I always had the idea of it being a city thing, but I was funding it with my ward money. One road is in my ward it is Fort Gillam, the other is in Ward 4 that got adopted I think old Dixie.

**City Manager** -That is what it was for. Each Ward to have an Adopt a Road program, but if you choose not to do one in your area, or if there are many roads in another area you can use the funds for that. The money will be split equally amongst each ward, and if you needed more, you could come back to council and ask for it.

**Councilmember James**-One of the things outlined is trash pickers for each ward. The ward funds we have right now, I do not have a problem donating for a sign if it needs to be put up on a road. I do not know if I agree with amending the budget to have this line item included on there.

**Councilmember James** - I so have a question about paying trash pickers, do not you have to go through a process of being hired.

**Councilmember Gutierrez** - It is a tool, that you pick trash up with.

**Councilmember James** - That is a onetime charge so if we buy it why do we need a line item for that.

**City Manager** -The line item would be also for signs, bags, and things that are reoccurring.

**Councilmember James** -I do not know.

**Councilmember Gutierrez** - It do not have to be 6,000 it can be less like 1,000. It is not like they are running to be a part of this program. It has been here for a while, and we have only had two people apply for it.

**Councilmember James** -How much was the last sign?

**City Manager** - Councilmember Gutierrez spent about 500.00 in total.

**Councilmember Gutierrez** - That is with bags, pickers and the two signs.

**Councilmember James** - Why the pickers?

**Councilmember Gutierrez** - Some of them break. We check them out to whomever volunteers or want to take ownership the road. They check them out from the council aides then bring them back.

**Councilmember Antione** - Do you want to clarify again what is going on.

**Councilmember Gutierrez** - We have a program called, "Adopt a Road" where a group of people, organization or family can adopt any road. We will have a sign there and you would have to commit to cleaning it once a month. You can come to the city and request bags, vests, and pickers to do the cleaning. I saw the idea in Atlanta when I was driving by, and I said I would love to see this in Forest Park. So, I would like our city to have this as an item.

**Councilmember Antione** - What is the difference with what public works is doing?

**City Manager** - These are volunteers that can go into the inner-city neighborhoods, while public works is concentrating on the city right of ways.

**Councilmember Antione** - How confident are you of getting volunteers?

**Councilmember Gutierrez** - So far, I have only had two people. The boy scouts want to clean up in front of Huey Elementary.

**Councilmember Antione** - So what if it is approved and we do not get volunteers.

**Councilmember Gutierrez** - I do not know

**City Manager** - The money just sits there.

**Councilmember Wells** - I think it is a great idea especially since we are short staffed and how bad the city is looking. Thanks, Councilmember Gutierrez for bring this program and if it does not get approved, I will be willing to donate some of my ward money. We are having to come back and forth when we are trying to do stuff for the community, but it is so easy to give the money to the contractors. I appreciate the differences you bring to the city and what you want to make happen, and I think everyone should be willing to do what needs to be done to keep our city beautiful.

**Councilmember Mears** - I think it is a good Idea also. I have a large ward population of people that want even cut their own grass. I am willing to donate also, but people do not have the desire to clean around their own home.

**Mayor Butler** - I think this is a good idea, but I am leery going back to item number 4. We just approved this year's budget and to go in and make changes for something that is not as immediate as the lawn maintenance, and the right of way. I will also be willing to give some of my ward money, but I am not in favor of amending the budget for this and I would like to not amend the budget for a while since we just approved it. Maybe, we can get more council members to get on board with donating money to this.

**Councilmember James** - I agree, I have money that I can contribute to this as well if it is needed.

**Councilmember Gutierrez** - I just do not want to have to use all my funds for this. If I can get everyone on board that would be great, and I will keep you posted and hopefully, we can get some more roads adopted.

**Councilmember Wells** - We need to get away from who is bringing stuff to the table and how it impacts the city. Something like this, everyone needs to get involved and why is this not being promoted by the city. The city website, in the newsletter or any literature being put out there. If it is put out there more people will know about it, because everyone does not listen to YouTube or come to the meetings. Everyone should be involved when it comes to bettering and giving to the community. So, let us work on marketing and putting things out there so we can get these volunteers.

## 6. **Council Discussion on the Transfer of City Property to the Downtown Development Authority – Economic Development**

### **Background/History:**

The Economic Development Department is requesting that five lots owned by the City of Forest Park be transferred to the Forest Park Downtown Development Authority for the purposes of economic development/revitalization of Main Street. Lots are contiguous and surrounded by Hill Street, Parker Street, Summit Street and College Street. They are a total of 1.93 acres. A buffer area owned by the city next to the old water tank lot is to be included in transfer. Please refer to Exhibit A.

### **Comments/Discussion from Governing Body:**

**City Manager** – This is a request from the Downtown Development to have this land, which is just dirt and trees to be transferred over for development within our downtown area. This land contains no structure at all.

**Bruce Abrahams, Economic Development Director** -That used to be an old water tank across the street over on Hill and College Street, there is two acres over there and it belong to the city. They wish to do something with this property like housing or something. They are asking you to transfer it over so they can use it for remodeling purposes there on Main Street.

**Mayor Butler** - In my capacity as chair, it is our desire to do something residential over there. We are also working on another project that involves Carter's Cleaners, in which we have hired a company called 4PM to help get that going. It would be my desire to use the same company as it pertains to this.

We have a joint economic initiative with all three board respectively, The Downtown Development Authority, The Development Authority, and the Urban Redevelopment Authority. Then at our joint retreat we learned each board has specific roles and responsibilities and how they can play into one project.

If council see fit to transfer the land over, then the same process as with Carter's Cleaners, 4PM, will put together a plan to present to the other boards to make this a joint economic development initiative for the City of Forest Park.

**Councilmember James** - Is there a way it can be done with it being a property in the city or does it have to be in the DDA.

**Mayor Butler** - Councilmember – Before I would want to do anything with it, I would like for us to have it in our possession.

**Councilmember Antoine** - What is the recommendation for the land if it is approved, besides the housing.

**Bruce Abrahams** - Mixed used developments. This means town homes with retails on the end. On College Street by the middle school, it would be good for commercial. There are a lot of single-family homes, but no new residential going on up there. We can get what you call walk around people, pushing strollers and spending money.

**Councilmember Antoine** - I am happy to hear that, because that is my ward, and a lot of people are asking for new housing because there are a lot of old condemned properties over there.

**Councilmember Wells** - I am on the fence, but I spoke with you and Mayor Butler, about council being more involved. Council did put out the boards and I do not want it to be the boards but us collectively making decisions about what goes on in the city. The board works for the council, and I do not want one person making the decisions I want us to come together for that. If we turn it over to the development authority that is not going to happen.

I do not know what is going on with the board because no one give s us any information until it is time to vote on something. That is not how it is supposed to work, it is supposed to be a joint thing and it is not. So, why continue to give them to the board when nothing is happening. It needs to be more people involved and the citizens for one, they need to have a say on what goes on in their city and so do the council.

**Councilmember James** – For those who do not know we are getting a new middle school, which is right around the corner from this area. The middle school students are at the old Morrow High School this year, Morrow has a brand-new high school. The Forest Park middle school is going to be a Stem school, it is amazing and if you have not seen the video make sure you see it.

Then we have the new senior building also being built there. It is going to look nice, and this property is going to be very valuable. I know this is going to be a benefit to the city, but Mayor Butler, with you being at the head of the DDA, I know the progress you want for the city and the vision you have for the city. If we give the property over to the DDA, what is the benefit to the city other than the new development and new housing is there any value for the city.

**Mayor Butler** - Taxes. Revenue, Property taxes and we will have more people in our city which is what we want. When we talk about revitalizing the downtown or the main street area, we are getting people. We

have people that are at work over at Gillem that wants to move closer, and it will not be a difficult task to fill these properties at all.

The only way I feel we can make the dollars turn a little bit more in Forest Park, is to have people living here. Now, you have people that live here that take their paycheck somewhere else. So, if we can get the people here then they are spending money in the city, and it adds to the further development that we have planned for the main street downtown development area and the city.

**Councilmember James** - Is there a time-frame on when you want movement on the property to be done?

**Mayor Butler** - Once we get it in our possession, we will start working with 4PM to create a timeline as we did with Carter's Cleaner. It will not be immediate, because we must go through the process of selecting investors and that is not going to happen overnight. Then there are surveys that will have to be done and it is a whole process to get to the point of getting investors here to look at the property.

We have been talking about having investors meet and greet and this will be the opportunity to get investors here so they can hear what it is that we want. A lot of this is not new and we have had several of surveys done and residents telling us what they want, and we are now putting those plans into action. Once that is done again it will be adding to the progress going on in Forest Park.

**Bruce Abraham** - We are going to build thirty town homes, and a Zaxby's now there have been some obstacles to get those properties. Our mayor has interceded to help us get this on the role and there will be some action going on up there. The DDA can move quickly on a property, we can take them a deal and they could sign it the same day. With the board it is a process, you are supposed to bid property and it is a slow process to deliver an economic development product.

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

**ADJOURNMENT:**

It was moved to adjourn the City Council Work Session at 7:25pm

Motion made by Councilmember Antoine, Seconded by Councilmember Gutierrez.

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