



**CITY OF FOREST PARK MAYOR & COUNCIL
CITY COUNCIL REGULAR SESSION**

Monday, September 20, 2021, at 7:00 PM
Council Chambers and YouTube Livestream

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

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

DRAFT CITY COUNCIL REGULAR MINUTES

The Honorable Mayor Angelyne Butler, MPA

The Honorable Kimberly James The Honorable Dabouze Antoine
The Honorable Hector Gutierrez The Honorable Latresa Akins-Wells
The Honorable Allan Mears

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

CALL TO ORDER/WELCOME: The meeting was called to order by Mayor Butler at 7:02pm

INVOCATION/PLEDGE: The invocation and pledge was led by Dr. Leon D. Beeler.

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 | | ✓ |

DIRECTORS PRESENT: Darquita Williams, Interim Finance Director; Shalonda Brown, HR Director, Bruce Robinson, Deputy Director Public Works, James Shelby, PB&Z Director, Tarik Maxell, Director of Recreation & Leisure, Joshua Cox, IT Director, Michael Gentry Police Department and David Halcome, Fire Chief

PRESENTATIONS:**1. Proclamation Presentation – Legislative****Background/History:**

Councilmember Gutierrez would like to present a proclamation acknowledging October as Hispanic Heritage Month.

The mayor read the proclamation for Hispanic Heritage Month.

2. Presentation by Superintendent of Schools Dr. Morcease J. Beasley

Dr. Morcease J. Beasley, Superintendent - of Schools gave an overview of the school system. There are currently (2) schools in virtual learning, and they are Sequoyah Middle School and Forest Park High School. Of course, we are managing the virus and the positive COVID cases and we are making decision in collaboration with the Clayton County health district, epidemiologist, principals and others. You should know that we only move a school to virtual learning if we see that the data and the number of positive cases has really negatively impacted the operation of the schools. So much so that if we have so many staff members in quarantine that we cannot operate the schools face to face and we have to go to virtual learning. We are doing our best to manage the situation. We are encouraging all person that are eligible to get vaccinated we know that students of a certain age are eligible to get vaccinated of course they would need parent permission if they were below a certain age. We are encouraging our parents and family to get vaccinated, and we are encouraging our employees to get vaccinated. Currently we have an incentive occurring encouraging employees to get vaccinated and we will award them \$500 if they are vaccinated by September 30th if they are full time and \$250 if they are part time. This is our way to minimize disruption and keep kids in school, face to face and hopefully ensure the kids are learning at very high levels. The City of Forest Park High School continues to make us very proud. In 2020, the graduation rate was 74.7% the previous year it was at 72%. It continues to go in a positive trajectory. We anticipate the data for this year has not been released by the Department of Education we anticipate improvement as well. As an Advance Placement Portfolio school, Forest Park High School is offering its students, I think a global educational experience ensuring that our kids are not just college and career ready, but they experience what it feels like to do college content at a high school level. We are very proud of the work Mr. Manning, faculty and staff are doing over there. Our school system is improving in every area. We will be sharing some information with the Clayton County Chamber, at 11:00am for those that can attend please do so. We will continue to navigate this very successfully. We will continue to feed families, provide meals and vaccinate. We will continue to wrap support around our students and their families.

Mayor Butler – what are the updates on the S.T.E.M. school? It was a part of the S.P.L.O.S.T.

Dr. Morcease J. Beasley, Superintendent of Schools – the middle school is the next school that is slated to be rolled out. I want to say that it is the next project. As a matter of fact, that is a tight piece of property over there. That is a tear down- build up, so just so that everyone will know. Once the new Morrow High School is completed the students at the old Morrow High School will go to the new facility, we will use the old facility to help house Forest Park Middle School students until the new facility is built. I hope we have the community's support as we build the new facility. If you have seen the design for the Michelle Obama school, Morrow you all know we will have a phenomenal design for Forest Park Middle School.

PUBLIC COMMENTS: (All Speakers will have 3 Minutes)

There were two (2) speakers:

Cliff Pellegrine – the city council just amended the ethics ordinance last year and new ethics board members were named. We have also hired a new City Manager and hired a new City Clerk as a result there has not been adequate documentation to prove the need to dismantle a board that has not been given an appropriate opportunity to meet. Now we have a proposal to hire a single outside agency for a back log of (2) cases. Something smells bad here in Forest Park and I do not believe it is the transfer station. Why are we in such a hurry to subvert citizen involvement in our city's business? Why are we in such a hurry to process (2) complaints? It sounds like the signs 2.0, it looks like the same trigger but a different weapon. More importantly why are we taking such a long time to get assistance to those that are facing evictions. The ARF funds must be disbursed to those in need expeditiously. Why is it so far down the list of your priorities? Why are we just considering a change from Clayton County Community Services? Should we have been taken proposals weeks ago? What is the hold up? I thank you for your time.

Dr. Leon Beeler – the Forest Park Ministers Association is going to conduct a political forum on October 7, 2021. I believe everyone here has received a flyer. The ones that have attended the forums that we have conducted before, this is a forum not a debate. So, what we will do is make sure that each candidate will have an opportunity to adequately answer questions and not be debated from each other or the audience. I want to make sure you attend. We are counting on you to send questions in. The questions will be screened and must relate to the City of Forest. The forum will be held in our community center. We have a lot of space over there to ensure that we are social-distancing and we ask that you wear your mask. We want to make sure everyone is safe. There will be a free testing and vaccination this Saturday, September 25, 2021, at Gateway Restoration Church at the corner of Phillips Road and Forest Parkway beginning at 10:00am to 2:00pm. If you have other locations that you would like to be set up, let us know. We are working with the United Way and the Clayton County to get thing done. I look forward to work with you.

ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA WITH ANY ADDITIONS / DELETIONS:

It was motioned to adopt the September 20, 2021, Council Agenda as printed.

Motion made by Councilmember James, Seconded by Councilmember Mears.

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

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

- 3. Council Approval of Council Work Session and Regular Meeting Minutes from September 7, 2021 -**
S. Diane White, Interim City Clerk

It was motioned to approve the Council Work Session and Regular meeting minutes from September 7, 2021.

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

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

NEW BUSINESS:

- 4. Council Approval of Rental Assistance Program for Forest Park Residents – Chief Executive Office**

It was motioned to approve the Rental Assistance Program for Forest Park Residents.

Motion made by Councilmember James, Seconded by Councilmember Gutierrez.

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

5. Council Approval of Surplus City Equipment – Information Technology

It was motioned to approve the Surplus of City Equipment.

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

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

6. Adoption of Ordinance 2021-12 Amending Ethics Code to Create Ethics Officer – Legislative

It was motioned to approve the approve the Ordinance 2021-12 Amending the Ethics Code to Create Ethics Officer.

Motion made by Councilmember James, Seconded by Councilmember Mears to approve the Ordinance 2021-12 Amending Ethics Code to Create Ethics Officer.

Councilmember Antoine – I heard the Clerk say she reached out to the residents on her first attempt and had 2 of the 5 participate in the meeting. But I know my appointee had two strokes and a response of phone calls and emails is something that she would not be able to do. I am in favor of giving it another try to see if we can get some new residents, but I am also in favor of the residents that do not want to sit on the board that we appoint an officer so that is where I am with it.

Councilmember James – Madame Mayor how would we go about appointing new people? Because of the ones that did not show up or was not able to come, would we go ahead and find other members. What would be the process of selecting new members for the board?

Councilmember Akins-Wells – did we appoint somebody?

Councilmember James – yes, we did.

Mayor Butler – it could be however we want it to go about selecting members. Some of the previous boards we had recently start to ask for resumes or bios.; it is in our hands.

Councilmember Akins-Wells – so, if any resident would like to be involved not just with the ethics board, we are requiring them to submit a resume' and if they do not; they won't be considered.

Mayor Butler – it is another way for us to get familiar with people that we may not be familiar with and just getting a little bit of their background. We have asked that people submit it, some have not, some chose to and then again it is up to us as to how we want to proceed.

Councilmember Akins-Wells – is that a requirement with other boards? Is that something somebody said they wanted to do? Or is that something the majority of the council decided?

Mayor Butler – the two boards that I am on that was appreciated when it was asked. So, it did not go before the council, it is up to the board.

Councilmember Mears –Madam Mayor, point of order they had to be sent off to training. We normally send them off take them and feed them and pay them too, right. We had 2 of the 5 and they are back out. There has to get a true count of someone that is going through the training and will stick it out. Back in the old days they put them on the bus and sent them somewhere and stayed all day in classes (s) and fed them and paid them and brought them back. It is not about that. The whole thing in a nutshell is the people do not want to be put on the spot when it comes to making a crucial decision and I know that everybody loves everybody but sometimes you have to be a bad guy. When you are not bad, they do not show up.

Councilmember Gutierrez- I can lend you a (rep) representative if you want to. I have 2-3 people. If anyone needs someone, I think Ms. Julie would still be down to do this. My point is I understand you Councilmember Mears and the accountability aspect for what is out there already. I am not opposed to hiring this person to lay judgement on these cases and bring back to us if that is your urgency. But taking it away from the people is just something I'm just not ready to part with.

Councilmember Akins-Wells – I agree with Councilmember Antoine as far as tabling it. Like Mr. Pellegrine stated we have a back log of (2) complaints. So, the issue to push it now, we have all this time since the beginning of the year to talk about the ethics board and people on the ethics board but because these frivolous complaints are out there and now the pressure is on. I say don't take nothing out of the citizens hands I wish we could have citizens on every board because that is the one thing, they get to do they already do not involve. I say speak for Ward 5 and not for all of them because I have people that are willing to participate, I will even let you pick someone out of my ward if that will make you feel better. But don't speak for everybody because some people would be glad for someone to invite them to be involved in their city.

Councilmember Antoine – for me, I want to try this attempt again. It is not hard. It is not something that would take long we could appoint some new citizens and if that doesn't work then we can go on because we have no choice, we tried. So, let's give the citizens another chance and then if that doesn't work then we can go with appointing one individual, I think that is the fairest way. I know that my person was very sick, and she was not up to sitting on a board.

The motion was amended by Councilmember James and seconded by Councilmember Mears to hire an ethics officer to hear the (2) two pending cases and council will reappoint members to the Ethics Board.

Motion made by Councilmember James, Seconded by Councilmember Mears.

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

CLOSING COMMENTS BY GOVERNING BODY:

Councilmember Antoine – thank you all that came to the meeting tonight. I apologize that I am not here it is not that I am wasting time, I had surgery, but God is good I am recovering. I will see you all soon. Bundle up because Fall is coming really soon. God bless you and know that Dabouze Antoine loves you all.

Councilmember Gutierrez – thank you for everyone that came out today. Thank you for the public comments. I am excited about getting this money to our people here in Forest Park. I know that the City Manager and city employees will work diligently on working to get that done. I am also excited to see that proposal by our Forest Park organization I am all about giving back to our people. I am excited to that see we are finally proposing and bringing things to the table for us to decide on. It is election time, so I highly encouraged everyone to go to the Ministers Association's forum. I went when I was invited when I ran and it was a good time, gave me exposure and give my ideas to the

community. I was very appreciative of that, so make sure you attend and listen in that way you know who is running in your city. I appreciate the proclamation to my colleagues and the City of Forest Park. It is Hispanic Heritage month it is a big part of my identity, and I am happy we are recognizing. We canceled the tailgate because of the rain. I am really excited about the initiative we have with the seniors committee we will have the first event on September 24, 2021, beginning at 5:00pm to 8:00pm at 696 this is to bridge the gap between us and the people. If you are interested in joining the Seniors Committee, I think it is a great opportunity to propose ideas to for our city. Come out and enjoy some Bingo with us. If you are not registered the vote or know someone that needs to be registered, please come out. We will have live music and DJ's it will be hosted by *The Panthers in Action* (youth committee). The event will be held on September 28, 2021, beginning at 4:00pm to 7:00pm at Starr Park. There will be music and games. Please come out to enjoy the Hispanic Heritage festival on October 2, 2021, at Starr Park beginning at 1:00pm to 8:00pm. There will be live music, cultural foods, vendors, face painting, the famous bull and bounce houses. We would really appreciate some sponsors to funds more things. On October 8, 2021, our Police Chief is hosting a Coffee with the Chief event that will be at the BP gas station located at 4950 Forest Parkway beginning at 7:30am to 8:30am. I really appreciate the flyer that is printed in Spanish so I want to shout out Chief Clark, I think it is extremely important that all of our citizens can come out to talk to you. Welcome to all of the new people that were hired. Thank everyone for being out here and make sure you are out there spreading love be careful COVID is still out there. We are in week 7, I teach 2nd graders and they are beating up on your councilman. Thanks everyone for coming.

Councilmember Akins-Wells – thank everyone for coming out. Again, to piggyback off the election. Please, please, please get out and vote. We need people in office that is going to focus on the people and not themselves. Go to the forum to see who the best candidate and please, please, please cast your vote. I would like to go back to the ethics stuff that was voted on. The only reason why I voted yes because it is never about me. So, these frivolous me that has been filed I am covered, no weapon formed against me shall prosper and I will continue to put that out there. Whatever is in God's plan and not man that is what it will be, but no one will dictate how I look at someone or if I speak to someone or whatever. Thank Councilmember Antoine for speaking up and not letting people have control over us as elected officials. On October 29, 2021, will be showing movie at Starr Park in the amphitheater. The last Fun Friday will be the third Friday in October instead of November. I do not want it to be cold and waste money and people not show because of the weather. We will be going out with a bang! So, ff you do not have anything planned, please come out and fellowship with your community. You all have a great night.

Councilmember Gutierrez – thank you Councilmember Wells you reminded me of our Food Truck Friday that will be held on October 1, 2021. We are partnering up with Clayton County Public School Social Studies department we will be showing the movie "CoCo". We will have live music and DJ. The next day we will have the clean up on Watts Road. Hopefully, I can get some people out there. I really would appreciate if We had a program here in Forest Park where you could sponsor a road. You can have your name on the street and sponsor the area and clean it once a month. That is a great thing to put your name on a sign and take ownership of that road.

Councilmember Mears – I am glad everyone came out tonight. Short and sweet, that is always good. I appreciate you for coming, get your shots and come back to see us.

Councilmember James – I just wanted to tell everyone to go out to the website under Ward 1 I hosted my Forest Park Ward Meeting I changed the name from Neighborhood Meeting to Forest Park Ward Meeting on this past Thursday. Director Shelby gave a project overview of the Livable Center's Initiative for Downtown Main Street. You all can watch the video it is very informative. Where we've informed the stake holders of the vision and goals for downtown and developed the framework of the policies and programs to help accomplish that vision. We also shared how we shared guidance for the development and identified the key redevelopment sites and the strategies to activate those visions are listed. It is a great information. You will see the presentation of what Main Street looks like now and see what the proposed Main Street will look like; it is a beautiful thing. So, please go to the website and look at the neighborhood meeting for September and get that information. Also, at the meeting he shared the information on the

pedestrian bridge. You will see how the bridge will go across the railroad tracks and Forest Parkway will lead to Starr Park. It is a beautiful thing that we are doing, please take a look at it. We also had our Firefighter/Paramedic Armstrong to give information about the *National Preparedness Week* and Schoolboard member Williams gave information about the updates for COVID. Make sure you go out and get the information. If you want to be informed my job is to make sure you get the information that's happening in Forest Park. We have what I call our subject matter experts that are available to make sure you get that information. So go out and check out that. Regarding the ethics officer I think it is a good move for us to try to identify something that is going to help us move forward in our city. I want to protect not only those that are in our city but those that work for our city. We want to make sure they are not put in a place where they do not need to be. So, it is important to do what we can, so they have an avenue to express what their concerns are. A lot of times you say there are only (2) complaints but there are other complaints that people have not said because of the lack of being able to be heard. So, I am willing to give it another try. So, if you know anyone that is interested in serving on the Ethics Board, please reach out to me. As long as I am your council person, I am going to do what I can to ensure that everyone is treated fairly, and they have an out and avenue to be heard. I want to remind you about the Homecoming Parade that will be held on October 12, 2021. This will be a very celebratory event. This Saturday, September 25, 2021, we will host the 5K Run/Walk race. We have put together a team the *Forest Park Panthers Strong* will be out there at 8:30am.

Mayor Butler – thank everyone for coming out tonight. The State of the City address is coming up on October 13, 2021, I hope to see everyone that is presence in these seats in those seats at Living Tabernacle at 7:00pm.

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

ADJOURNMENT:

It was motioned to adjourn the Council September 20, 2021, Regular meeting at 7:45pm.

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

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