



CITY COUNCIL WORK SESSION

Monday, August 04, 2025 at 6:00 PM
Council Chambers and YouTube Livestream

Website: www.forestparkga.gov

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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 Delores A. Gunn

The Honorable Latresa Akins-Wells

The Honorable Allan Mears

Ricky L. Clark Jr, City Manager

Randi Rainey, City Clerk

Danielle Matricardi, City Attorney

DRAFT MINUTES

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		X
Kimberly James	Council Member, Ward 1		X
Delores A. Gunn	Council Member, Ward 2	X	
Hector Gutierrez	Council Member, Ward 3		X
Latresa Akins-Wells	Council Member, Ward 4		X
Allan Mears	Council Member, Ward 5		X

Pauline Warrior, Chief of Staff; Rodney Virgil, Level 2 Support Engineer; Javon Lloyd, PIO; John Wiggins, Finance Director; Jeremi Patterson, Deputy Finance Director; Talisa Adams, Procurement; Shalonda Brown, HR Director; Diane Lewis, HR Deputy Director; Nicole Dozier, PCD Director; Rochelle Dennis, Economic Development Director; Dorthy Roper-Jackson, Municipal Court Director; Tarik Maxwell, Director of Rec and Leisure; Alton Matthews, Public Works Director; Latosha Clemons, Chief of Fire; David Halcome, Deputy Fire Chief; Brandon Criss, Police Chief; Derry Walker, Code Compliance Director; and Danielle Matricardi, City Attorney.

ADOPTION OF THE CONSENT AGENDA WITH ANY ADDITIONS / DELETIONS:

It was moved to approve the Consent Agenda.

The motion was made by Councilmember James and seconded by Councilmember Gutierrez.

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

ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA WITH ANY ADDITIONS / DELETIONS:

It was moved to approve the agenda.

The motion was made by Councilmember James and seconded by Councilmember Gutierrez.

Voting Yea: Councilmember James, Councilmember Gutierrez, Councilmember Akins-Wells, Councilmember Mear

CONSENT AGENDA: (There was no discussion on this item.)

1. **Council Discussion and Presentation on the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with RightSite Health Services - Fire and EMS Department**

Background/History:

Overview: The Agency and RightSite will prioritize and mutually agree to an integrated approach to non-emergent healthcare, ensuring individuals receive appropriate care. The Agency will provide all medical direction. Based on the EMS protocol, it will be determined which calls are suitable for referral to RightSite. This MOU does not replace any existing Agency protocols.

Fees for this service are at no cost to the Agency. RightSite is paid by the patient's insurance when applicable. RightSite will accept all patients and ensure that financial considerations do not prevent the delivery of appropriate patient care.

Integrating RightSite helps reduce unnecessary transport, improve patient navigation, and keep your units available for higher-acuity calls and fire operations.

OLD BUSINESS:

2. **Council Discussion of a Blanket Purchase Orders for cooperative contracted vendors: MES, BoundTree, and Bennett Fire - Fire & EMS Services**

Background/History:

As part of our ongoing efforts to streamline the procurement process, the following cooperative contracted vendors are being presented to create Blanket Purchase Orders (BPOs) for FY 25/26:

- MES Services – \$120,000 (firefighting equipment) – Fund:100-61-3520-53-1136
- Boundtree Medical – \$75,000 (1st Aid and Medical supplies) – Fund:100-60-3610-53-1703
- Bennett Fire Products – \$85,000 (suppression fire gear) – Fund:300-61-3510-52-3718

Mrs. Adams, Procurement Manager, noted that this item should have been placed under the Consent Agenda and acknowledged that it was incorrectly categorized. She apologized for the oversight and explained that the item requests Fire and Rescue to secure their Blanket Purchase Order for the full fiscal year, covering essential services and products for daily operations.

3. **Council Discussion on Cemetery Maintenance: Consideration of Service Reallocation Options**– Public Works Department

Background/History:

The City of Forest Park currently oversees the landscape maintenance of the following cemeteries:

- Main Street at Phillips Dr – City-owned
- Conley Road Cemetery – Privately owned by the Forest Park Lodge of Odd Fellows
- Elam Church Road Cemetery – Privately owned by Elam Church Cemetery

All three sites are being serviced under contract by World Scape LLC, with approximately three months remaining in their current agreement. (Balance left: $\$3950 \times 3 = \$11,850$)

Public Works is seeking directions on whether the City should continue maintaining the privately owned cemeteries at Conley Road and Elam Church Road. If the Council decides not to continue maintenance of the private sites, we recommend reallocating World Scape's services to prioritize high-visibility corridors such as: Jonesboro Road, Old Dixie Highway, and Forest Parkway that impact residents and visitors daily, while ensuring continued stewardship of City-owned assets.

City Manager Clark presented the item, noting that it was a follow-up to prior guidance. He explained that, upon further research, staff confirmed the ongoing contract. He stated that Director Matthews and the Procurement Manager would provide additional details and affirmed that the City anticipates continuing the service.

Director Matthews stated that the City has an ongoing contract with the vendor, and they remain on call to provide services as needed until the council gives further direction.

City Manager Clark informed the governing body that efforts are underway to determine official ownership of the cemetery and to explore the process of transferring it to the City, if that is the direction the Council wishes to take. He noted that this follows public interest raised at the last meeting and is intended for preservation.

NEW BUSINESS:

4. **Council Discussion and Presentation on the City Center Project Funding** - Finance/Executive Departments

Background/History:

On June 2, 2025, City Council authorized the City to secure a contract with Carroll Daniel Construction for Construction Manager at Risk (CMAR) for construction of the City Center building which includes City Hall, police, recreation, and parking. Precision Planning, Inc. (PPI) is providing design development services and will coordinate with the CMAR for the new City Center building that will be approximately 200,000SF.

The City Center Project Funding prepared for the City of Forest Park will give a comprehensive overview of the City's existing debt service, the project budget, proposed Series 2025 bond plan for financing the project for 20 or 25 years, and a Millage Sensitivity Analysis on sales tax collection & net digest verse the millage rate.

City Manager Clark addressed the governing body, expressing enthusiasm about moving forward with funding opportunities for the construction of the new City Center. He reminded Council that in December 2024, the City officially approved the Construction Manager at Risk contract with the General Manager. Since then, the City has also secured an architect for the project. He noted that the purpose of the evening's discussion was to hear from the City's financial advisor, Mr. Ed Wall, regarding next steps toward project completion. He added that a presentation in the Council's agenda packet would be displayed on screen for the public.

Mr. Ed Wall, the City's financial advisor, presented an overview of the City's existing debt and upcoming financing strategy for the proposed City Center project. He explained that the 2021 URA bond issue totaled \$11.545 million and funded multiple projects, including the City Center, STAR Park, trail improvements, and storm-related upgrades. The bonds were competitively bid to over 80 banks, with Truist offering the lowest rate at 2.55%. These bonds were structured with a 15-year fixed rate and were always intended to be refinanced as part of a long-term strategy.

Mr. Wall noted that refinancing now would eliminate the balloon payment and allow the City to benefit from economies of scale during issuance. He also referenced a 4.85% DDA bond issued in 2023 for property purchases near Main Street and adjacent to City Hall. The City's total annual debt service is approximately \$3.3 million, which is funded by new tax revenue and PILOT payments from Fort Gillem. He referenced the proposed \$104 million budget for the new City Center and invited the City Manager to provide additional input.

City Manager Clark explained that the original bids for the City Center project came in at approximately \$124 million. Value engineering reduced the project to \$104 million by evaluating design elements and materials to align with the City's fiscal goals. Modifications included removing a rooftop feature and one of two large exterior fountains while preserving the facility's grand entrance. He emphasized that the new City Center will house all City departments under one roof, except Fire Services and Public Works. The building will also include a dedicated senior area and accommodate Recreation and Leisure Services through a full gymnasium. Each department worked directly with the architect to ensure their space and operational needs were addressed.

Mr. Ed Wall, the City's financial advisor, explained that the existing \$11.5 million bullet maturity from the 2021 URA bond issue will be refinanced over a 25-year term, resulting in lower annual payments due to the extended amortization. This refinancing will improve long-term cash flow stability. For the City Center project, which totals \$104 million, the City will contribute \$43,225,000 in existing cash, reducing the amount that needs to be financed through bonds. The cash contributions include:

- \$29.675 million remaining from the 2021 URA bond proceeds
- \$11.5 million from 2021 SPLOST
- \$850,000 in TAD funds
- \$1.2 million from the Public Safety (Red Speed) account

As a result, the City only needs to issue \$62,335,000 in new bonds to fund the project entirely. Estimated issuance costs are conservatively budgeted at 3%. However, Mr. Wall expects them to be closer to 2%, noting his practice of budgeting high and delivering under cost, an approach appreciated by City Manager Clark. The proposed debt service on the new bonds (2025A) is approximately \$4.67 million annually, with the refinanced 2021 bullet bond extending through 2045. The City's total annual debt service will be about \$7 million combined with existing obligations.

Mr. Wall emphasized that 70% of the anticipated revenue from the upcoming SPLOST referendum in November is expected to cover \$4.64 million of that debt service. The remaining balance, about \$1 million, would come from the General Fund. Since the City already allocates \$3.3 million from the General Fund toward debt service, this would represent an increase of only \$300,000, assuming SPLOST passes. If the SPLOST measure fails, the General Fund would need to cover the full amount. He concluded by noting that this financing strategy mirrors successful models used by City Manager Clark for other significant projects, such as the City Center, Boathouse Restaurant, and Lee Street Park in Jonesboro, where SPLOST revenue covered nearly all debt service.

City Manager Clark asked Mr. Wall to explain what a sensitivity analysis is.

Mr. Ed Wall noted that the baseline projections assumed 0% growth in both SPLOST collections and the property tax digest. The City levies 16.743 mills, and each 1 mill generates approximately \$1.1 million in revenue. He explained that the County collects about \$68 million annually in combined Local Option Sales Tax (LOST) and SPLOST, of which the City receives a portion, estimated at around 11%, based on factors like population and tax digest size.

The analysis showed three SPLOST growth scenarios:

- At 5% annual growth, revenue would increase from \$8 million in FY2026 to nearly \$9.9 million by FY2030.
- At 0% growth, SPLOST revenue would remain flat around \$7 million annually.
- At a 5% annual decline, SPLOST would still generate above \$5.9 million by FY2030.

He emphasized that the City only needs \$4.67 million annually from SPLOST to cover City Center debt service. Even in a worst-case decline scenario, the required amount would still be met, ensuring the sustainability of the project's financing. If growth occurs, excess funds could be used for other City projects. He also highlighted historical fluctuations in the property tax digest, which declined in 2022 but rebounded with growth rates of 12%, 23%, and 4% in subsequent years, reaching over \$1.09 billion, further demonstrating the City's solid fiscal position.

Mr. Wall noted this analysis was prepared at the request of City Manager Clark to assure that the City Center financing plan is both conservative and resilient, regardless of future revenue trends.

City Manager Clark addressed a question Councilmember Akins-Wells raised regarding the City Center project cost increase. He explained that earlier estimates, specifically those tied to the original bond issued for the building previously planned on Forest Parkway, were provided before his tenure and focused primarily on a City Hall facility. In contrast, the current City Center project is significantly expanded in scope. It consolidates all City departments and includes an entire

wing dedicated to Recreation and Leisure Services, including a gymnasium, which was not part of the original concept. He noted that this expansion is the primary factor contributing to the higher project cost and represents a broader, more community-centered vision than what was initially proposed three to four years ago.

Mr. Wall concluded by emphasizing the importance of SPLOST approval in supporting the City Center project. He referred to a chart illustrating potential outcomes if SPLOST is not approved and the City proceeds with the project:

- With 5% revenue growth, property taxes would need to increase by 3.19 mills
- With 0% growth, the increase would be 4.1 mills
- If the net tax digest declined by 5%, taxes would need to rise by 5.291 mills

He stated that this analysis highlights how essential SPLOST funding is to keeping the project financially viable without burdening the City's taxpayers.

Comments/Discussion from Governing Body:

Councilmember James asked about the advantages or disadvantages of not refinancing the existing \$11 million debt, and whether it would be more beneficial for the City to pay it off entirely and remove it from the books. Mr. Wall responded that while the City could choose to wait to refinance the \$11 million debt, especially if interest rates are expected to decrease, it is not required to refinance immediately. He explained that the key is to complete the refinancing before the debt matures, and that his current recommendation to include it in the upcoming issuance was simply to take advantage of efficiencies and timing while the City is already executing a major financing package. Ultimately, he noted, the decision is up to the governing body.

Councilmember James requested clarification on what would happen if the \$11 million debt were allowed to mature without being refinanced. In response, Mr. Wall explained that if the debt is not refinanced by its 2036 maturity date, the City would be required to pay the full \$11 million in a lump sum. He noted that refinancing allows the City to spread the payments over time, making it more manageable through structured, annual debt service payments.

Councilmember James asked whether, after refinancing, the City would continue paying off the debt annually or monthly. Mr. Wall clarified that the refinanced debt would be repaid with semiannual interest and annual principal payments. He also noted that one additional debt, the URA bond for infrastructure at Fort Gillem, was not included in the earlier summary because it is being repaid separately through PILOT payments from Kroger. He emphasized that this bond has its dedicated revenue source and does not impact the City's general debt obligations.

City Manager Clark added that while the URA bond payment is funded through PILOT revenue, the funds are first received into the General Fund and immediately directed to cover the bond payment. He emphasized that the presented sensitivity model is essential for long-term planning, noting that although the City has advertised millage increases in recent years, those increases were due to tax digest growth, not the governing body raising the millage rate itself. He stressed that refinancing the \$11 million bullet maturity now is a responsible step to protect future administrations from having to cover a large one-time payment around 2032 or 2036. Refinancing over time helps reduce long-term borrowing costs.

Mr. Wall addressed a question regarding the \$11.5 million principal on the 2021 bond issue, clarifying that this full amount is due as a single principal payment in 2036 unless it is refinanced beforehand. He explained that although the annual debt service payment is currently \$2 million, it includes only interest up to that point, with the entire principal coming due at maturity. He noted that the bond was structured as a 15-year note with a 20-year amortization, creating a balloon payment scenario. He recommends refinancing the principal over the next five years to level out payments and avoid the financial burden of a lump sum in 2036. However, he added that the City is not obligated to refinance immediately and may choose to wait, depending on market conditions.

City Manager Clark shared that, based on his experience, many governing bodies choose not to delay refinancing large balloon payments like the \$11 million due in 2036, because doing so could leave future councils or administrations burdened with a significant one-time financial obligation. He noted that while this discussion was intended to provide general direction on proceeding, the City could act now or wait. He reiterated that the finance advisor had presented refinancing as one available option, and it would be up to the Council to determine whether to address the issue now or defer action to a later date.

Councilmember Gutierrez inquired whether the City's bond issuance process involves outreach exclusively to financial institutions based in Georgia or includes national banks, such as Citibank or others, that may have a presence in the state or operate more broadly.

Mr. Wall explained that the City's bonds are typically offered to Georgia-based financial institutions because they benefit from a double tax exemption; the interest they earn is exempt from state and federal income taxes. In contrast, banks based outside of Georgia, such as those in Pennsylvania or other states, do not receive the Georgia exemption and would therefore offer a higher interest rate to the City. He added that, as the City's financial advisor, his role is not simply to accept the lowest bid but to compare offers against market benchmarks. Based on the City's strong financial position, tax digest, and local economy, he estimated it would likely receive an AA credit rating if rated independently. At the time of the last bond issuance, Truist Bank offered a 2.55% rate, which was even lower than the typical market rate for AA-rated issuers, demonstrating the financial advantage of offering bonds to in-state institutions that receive the double tax benefit.

Councilmember Gutierrez explained that his question stemmed from attending leadership conferences where he encountered national investment firms expressing interest in expanding into the Georgia market and offering competitive rates. While he acknowledged the benefits of working with Georgia-based banks, he was curious whether the City conducts a national search during its financing efforts. He thanked Mr. Wall for the clarification and confirmed he had no further questions.

Councilmember Gutierrez asked whether the City, as a governing entity, can make overpayments toward its annual debt service. Specifically, he inquired whether paying more than the scheduled \$2 million annual payment would reduce the principal balance on the bonds. Mr. Wall explained that all of the City's bond issues include an early prepayment option. For example, the current 15-year bonds become eligible for prepayment after five years with no penalty. He advised that if the City has surplus funds, it's currently more beneficial to invest that money, such as placing it in Georgia Fund 1, which yields 4.37%, compared to the bond interest rate of 2.55%.

However, he noted that if market conditions change and it becomes more advantageous to prepay the bonds, the City could do so without penalty, using the savings set aside.

Mayor Butler thanked Mr. Wall and asked for his professional opinion on whether the City should consider making early payments on the bonds or continue investing surplus funds while observing market conditions and interest rate trends.

Mr. Wall advised the governing body that the decision ultimately depends on how committed they are to moving forward with the City Center project. However, in his professional opinion, he recommended waiting until after the November SPLOST vote before issuing the bonds to ensure the funding source is secured. He noted that while Clayton County has never had a SPLOST fail since the program was authorized in Georgia in 1985, and the historical odds are in the City's favor, confirming the revenue source before proceeding with the bond issuance is still fiscally prudent.

5. **Council Discussion and Presentation to approve the 2026 SPLOST List of Projects-**
Finance Department

Background/History:

The Finance Department is presenting the proposed 2026 SPLOST (Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax) project list for review and consideration. SPLOST is a voter-approved 1% sales tax used to fund capital outlay projects that serve public purposes. It allows local governments to address infrastructure, public safety, transportation, and quality-of-life needs without increasing property taxes.

The purpose of this project list is to identify spending categories and their corresponding funding allocations based on the projected SPLOST revenue of **\$39,791,335**. This list will guide how funds are distributed across major categories, ensuring transparency and accountability in the use of public dollars.

Senior Accountant Nina Robinson introduced a slide prepared by Director Wiggins to continue Mr. Wall's presentation. She explained that the slide outlined the City's proposal for the upcoming SPLOST 2026 referendum and the timeline for submission to the Clayton County Board of Commissioners. She described SPLOST as a 1% sales tax for public projects such as parks, schools, roads, and municipal facilities, and stated that the list of proposed projects aligns with these authorized purposes.

Ms. Robinson reported that the City anticipates receiving approximately \$39,791,335 in SPLOST funds if the referendum is approved in November. Of that total, the proposed allocations include:

- \$1,193,744 for roads, bridges, sidewalks, and transportation,
- \$27,853,934.50 for city facilities and equipment,
- And an allocation for parks, which she indicated is included, but did not specify the amount in this discussion portion.

She noted that the presentation was being brought forward for the Council's review and consideration before the City's proposal is submitted to the County for inclusion in the final SPLOST package.

Ms. Robinson continued her presentation by detailing the SPLOST revenue allocations in support of debt service for the City Center and related capital needs.

She reported that the proposed allocations include:

- \$8,754,937 for Parks and Recreation,
- \$994,783.38 for Public Safety Facilities and Equipment, which would likely support FF&E (furniture, fixtures, and equipment) needs for the new City Center, and
- \$994,783.38 for Technology Upgrades.

These amounts bring the total projected SPLOST allocation to \$39,791,335. Ms. Robinson concluded by inviting questions from the governing body, offering to answer what she could, or taking questions back for follow-up.

6. **Council Discussion to approve Case #TA-2025-03 Text Amendment for Title 8. – Planning and Development, Chapter 8. Zoning, Article A. – General Provisions Section 8-8-4 Definitions, of the City of Forest Park Code of Ordinances to amend such section, adding Definitions for Electric Vehicle (EV) Charging Stations and Text Amendment for Title 8. – Planning and Development, Chapter 8. Zoning, Article C. – Development and Use Standards, of the City of Forest Park Code of Ordinances to amend such section, adding section 8-8-97 Electric Vehicle (EV) Charging Stations- PCD Department**

Background/History:

The purpose of this text amendment is to update the Code of Ordinances to support the development of Electric Vehicle (EV) infrastructure within the City of Forest Park. This amendment introduces definitions for EV-related terminology and establishes standards governing the installation, use, and aesthetics of EV Charging Stations and EV Parks. These standards are designed to promote sustainable, safe, and visually cohesive infrastructure that aligns with the City's goals for environmental responsibility and urban design.

Should Mayor and Council approve this text amendment, it will provide a regulatory framework that encourages responsible EV infrastructure growth throughout the City. **(Public Hearing to follow in the 8/4/25 Regular Session Meeting.)**

Director Nicole Dozier addressed the City Council and City Manager, briefly explaining the proposed ordinance amendment related to electric vehicles (EVs). She explained that the amendment is intended to establish clear definitions, development standards, and regulations for EV charging stations and EV parking lots within the City of Forest Park. The ordinance outlines site design requirements, including landscaping, lighting, fencing, and the inclusion of trash receptacles. It also addresses parking requirements, maintenance and operations, and utility and code compliance relevant to EV infrastructure.

Director Dozier noted that the Planning Commission reviewed the proposed amendment on July 17, and the commission recommended approval.

Comments/Discussion from Governing Body:

Councilmember James thanked Director Dozier for the presentation and asked how the standards of EV charging stations and parking lots were determined. Specifically, she inquired about the process used to identify and establish the appropriate design, development, and compliance criteria in the proposed ordinance. Director Dozier responded that her team conducted research on typical standards for EV infrastructure, reviewing best practices from other jurisdictions in the region. She explained that they selected the most effective and relevant standards and also incorporated elements specific to Forest Park's priorities, such as adequate lighting and landscaping requirements for EV parking lots and charging areas.

7. **Council Discussion to approve Case # CUP-2025-03- Conditional Use Permit for 4959 and 4965 West ST to establish a childcare center within the Single-Family Residential District (RS) Ward 2- PCD Department**

Background/History:

The applicant requests approval for a Conditional Use Permit to establish a childcare center within the Single-Family Residential District (RS) in Ward 2, per Sec 8-8-28. - Single-family residential district (RS), Pre-k facilities, and daycare centers require a conditional use permit to operate within the Single-Family Residential District. On July 17, 2025, the Planning Commission approved the Conditional Use Permit Request with conditions. The conditions are as follows:

If the applicant ceases to operate the business at this location, any subsequent operator or the property owner must obtain a new Conditional Use Permit (CUP) before commencing operations. Continued use of the property for this business type within the Single-Family Residential (RS) District shall not be permitted without prior approval of a new CUP by the Planning Commission and Mayor & Council.

If the applicant ceases operating the business at this location, the property owner is required to adhere to section 8-8-90. - Parking standards (1) *Driving surfaces*. All parking areas, including parking spaces, interior drives, and ingress/egress into parking areas, must be paved with asphalt or concrete. All parking areas shall be clearly painted to show each parking space.

The proposed location has been granted a conditional use permit in the past to operate a daycare center, but due to there not being a consistent business use at this location, the ordinance requires that any new applicant reapply for a Conditional Use Permit. If the Mayor and Council approve the Conditional Use Permit Request, the applicant will move forward with her business plans to establish a childcare facility for children aged 6 weeks to 12 years. **(Public Hearing to follow in the 8/4/25 Regular Session Meeting.)**

Director Dozier addressed the City Council, stating that this item had previously been heard by the Planning Commission, where there had been discussion regarding the site's suitability for the proposed use. She noted that the property contains two existing buildings and that staff identified a need for parking improvements to enhance safety, particularly for children, and to manage vehicle entry and exit better. She explained that the Planning Commission's recommendation was based on a concern about the cost burden of immediate improvements on the current applicant. Instead, they recommended that parking upgrades be required when the use changes hands, meaning the property owner would be responsible for enhancements before a future applicant could reopen the site as a daycare. This would ensure that any subsequent applicant inherits a site with safe, compliant parking accommodations.

Comments/Discussion from Governing Body:

Councilmember James asked for clarification to confirm whether the current applicant is required to make the parking improvements or if those improvements would be required only when a future applicant seeks to operate a daycare at the site.

Director Dozier clarified that while there was initial discussion about requiring parking improvements before the current applicant took occupancy, the Planning Commission ultimately decided against it. The concern was that the cost of those improvements could unfairly fall on the current tenant, rather than the property owner. Instead, the Commission recommended that parking upgrades be required only when there is a change in tenancy, specifically, if the property continues to be used as a daycare center. At that time, the property owner would be responsible for making the improvements before entering into a lease agreement with a new tenant. She confirmed that, as it stands, no parking improvements are required of the current applicant's property owner.

Councilmember James mentioned that, although she had not had the opportunity to visit the site personally, the photos provided appeared to validate staff's initial concerns about safety, particularly for children. She noted that the parking lot's condition, including what appeared to be holes or uneven areas, could pose potential hazards, such as tripping or ankle injuries. She acknowledged the concern and thanked staff for the information before opening the floor for additional comments.

Councilmember Gutierrez sought confirmation that the parking improvements would be required only when a new tenant takes over, not at this time. He also inquired if there was still a current tenant occupying the site. Director Dozier confirmed that improvements would be required only when there is a change in tenancy. She added that the current tenant will relocate to the other building on the site, as the property contains two separate structures.

City Manager Clark clarified that the City would not issue an Occupational Tax Certificate (business license) to any new tenant at the site until all conditions set forth by the governing body had been satisfied. He explained that prior to operating, the tenant would also need to obtain Bright from the Start certification from the state. He emphasized that the conditions would apply to the entire site, not just a single building. Therefore, any future tenant, regardless of which building they occupy, would be required to meet the established conditions before being licensed to operate.

Councilmember Gutierrez asked whether the current tenants would be required to complete the site improvements if they choose to renew their business license in the following year. He sought clarification on whether the conditions set by the governing body would apply at the time of license renewal, effectively triggering the required upgrades.

Director Dozier clarified that, as stated during the Planning Commission hearing, the requirement for site improvements would be explicitly triggered when there is a change in tenancy. She noted that this location has experienced frequent turnover of tenants, and the Commission intended to ensure that any new tenant would only be permitted to operate after the property owner completed the necessary improvements. This approach avoids burdening current tenants and holds the property owner accountable before leasing to a new occupant.

Councilmember Gutierrez agreed with Councilwoman James's concerns regarding the parking lot's condition, particularly given that the site is being used as a daycare. He stated that the lot does not appear to be in acceptable condition and reiterated the importance of ensuring safety for children.

City Manager Clark addressed Councilmember Gutierrez's concerns by noting that the current tenant predates the City's recent restrictions and regulatory updates on daycare facilities. He explained that the existing tenant is considered nonconforming and is effectively grandfathered under the previous ordinances. However, he clarified that if a new tenant were to occupy the site in the future, the updated regulations and site improvement requirements would apply at that time.

Councilmember Akins-Wells shared that she agrees with the concerns raised by her colleagues, particularly regarding the safety of children. She stated that if safety is indeed the priority, then the necessary improvements to the site should not be delayed. In her view, those upgrades should not be the new tenant's responsibility. She emphasized that the City has a duty to ensure all businesses operate in a safe and visually presentable environment, not only for the well-being of the children but also to uphold the standards of the broader community.

City Manager Clark clarified that the Planning Commission functions solely as a recommending body to the governing body. He emphasized that the City Council retains full authority to make final decisions, including amending, modifying, or tabling any item. While the Commission may provide guidance, it is ultimately the Council's discretion to accept, revise, or reject those recommendations.

8. **Council Discussion and Presentation to create an Impact Fee Program, Capital Improvements Element, and discuss the creation of the Development Impact Fee Advisory Committee-** PCD Department

Background/History:

In response to continued growth and increased demand on public infrastructure, the City is exploring the potential creation of a Development Impact Fee Program in accordance with the Georgia Development Impact Fee Act (DIFA), O.C.G.A. § 36-71-1 et seq. This program would provide a structured and legally supported method for funding capital improvements necessitated by new development, helping to ensure that growth pays for growth.

As part of this initiative, the City must prepare a Capital Improvements Element (CIE), which outlines anticipated public facility needs over a defined planning period and identifies eligible capital projects and associated costs. The CIE must be adopted as an amendment to the City's Comprehensive Plan and approved by the Georgia Department of Community Affairs (DCA).

In addition, DIFA requires the establishment of a Development Impact Fee Advisory Committee, consisting of stakeholders including representatives from the development community and the general public. This committee will play an advisory role in the development and implementation of the program, review annual reports, and make recommendations on updates to the fee schedule and project lists.

This discussion intends to brief the Mayor and Council on the purpose and process of establishing an impact fee program, obtain direction on preparing the Capital Improvements Element, and consider appointing members to the required advisory committee.

Director Dozier introduced Ms. Paige Hatley, noting that she would lead the City's impact fee study as the consultant. Director Dozier stated that Ms. Hatley was present to provide a brief introduction and an overview of the forthcoming study process.

Ms. Hatley explained that a public hearing would follow the work session, in compliance with Georgia Department of Community Affairs (DCA) requirements. The hearing allows the public to provide input on capital projects that may be funded through a proposed impact fee program. She defined a development impact fee as a one-time fee collected from new development to help fund capital projects necessary to serve that growth. The City of Forest Park is studying the feasibility of implementing such fees to support future projects related to parks and recreation, public safety, and road improvements—examples include expanding fire stations or police precincts, acquiring heavy public safety vehicles, and constructing or improving road infrastructure.

Ms. Hatley noted that the study would include several required components:

- A Capital Improvements Element (CIE), based on population, housing, and employment projections, to identify needed projects;
- A fee schedule, which would be adopted by ordinance if the City proceeds with the program;
- And the appointment of a Development Advisory Committee (DAC), as required by law, consisting of 5–10 members, with at least half representing the development, building, or real estate sectors.

She stated the committee would meet up to three times during the year-long study and emphasized that further Council discussion would be needed soon to appoint members. Finally, she assured the body that there would be multiple opportunities for public input throughout the process.

Comments/Discussion from Governing Body:

Councilmember James inquired about the origin of the state law governing development impact fees, asking when it went into effect. Ms. Hatley responded that the Development Impact Fee Act was enacted in 1990 and confirmed that this is the first time the City of Forest Park is conducting such a study.

City Manager Clark explained that upon his arrival in Forest Park, he emphasized the importance of implementing impact fees. Following Council approval, the City issued a Request for Proposals to begin the process. He noted that most metro Atlanta communities have utilized impact fees since the state law was enacted in 1990. For Forest Park to do the same, particularly in the area of parks, a methodology report, as referenced by the consultant, must first be completed. Once the required steps are finalized, the City will be positioned to assess impact fees on incoming developments.

Ms. Hatley noted that Forest Park is not alone in exploring impact fees. Clayton County is also currently evaluating a program. While no other city within the county has adopted such a program, several South Fulton communities are also considering it. She emphasized that areas within metro Atlanta still have yet to assess or implement impact fees.

9. **Council Discussion on an Amphitheater Fee Waiver Request for Day of Prayer 2025–**
Recreation and Leisure Services Department

Background/History:

The Forest Park Minister Association is looking to host its annual Day of Prayer on September 20, 2025, at the amphitheater in Starr Park. This event will consist of prayer, worship, and praise. The Minister Association is requesting that the amphitheater be used at no cost.

Director Maxwell thanked the Mayor, Council, and City Manager and introduced a young man representing the Forest Park Ministers Association. He shared that the young man was present to highlight the impactful programming and spiritual activities the Association has planned for the upcoming Day of Prayer. Director Maxwell thanked the governing body for allowing the opportunity to present and for their continued support.

Dr. Payton shared that for the past 18 to 19 years, the Forest Park Ministers Association has hosted the annual Day of Prayer at the Starr Park amphitheater. The association, comprised of local churches deeply rooted in the Forest Park community, remains committed to uplifting the city through prayer, civic engagement, and collaboration.

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 7:01 p.m. for Personnel, Litigation, or Real Estate matters.

The motion was made by Councilmember James and seconded by Councilmember Akins-Wells.

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

It was moved to reconvene the work session at 7:16 p.m.

The motion was made by Councilmember Mears and seconded by Councilmember Akins-Wells.

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

ADJOURNMENT:

Mayor Butler adjourned the meeting at 7:16 p.m.

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.

City Clerk Signature

Mayor's Signature