



CITY COUNCIL REGULAR SESSION

Monday, March 07, 2022, at 7:00 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
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 A. Cooper, City Manager
S. Diane White, City Clerk
Mike Williams, City Attorney

DRAFT MINUTES

CALL TO ORDER/WELCOME: The meeting was called to order by Mayor Butler at 7:00pm and read the City's Mission Statement

INVOCATION/PLEDGE: Invocation and Pledge was led by Pastor Clinkscales of Rock Church of Atlanta

ROLL CALL - CITY CLERK: A quorum was established

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

DIRECTORS PRESENT: Chiquita Barkley, Finance Director, Darquita Williams, Deputy Finance Director; Shalonda Brown, Human Resources Director, Lashawn Gardiner, Management Analyst, Latosha Clemons, Fire Chief, Bruce

Abraham, Director Economic Development, Tarik Maxell, Director of Recreation & Leisure, Bobby Jinks, Director of Public Works, Joshua Cox, IT Director, Arthur Geeter, Purchasing Director, James Shelby, Planning & Community Development Director, Nathaniel Clark, Chief of Police and Javon Lloyd, PIO Director

PRESENTATIONS:

1. Swearing in of Urban Design and Planning Commission Board Members – Executive Office

Mayor Butler swore in Rodney Givens and Ron Dobson to the Urban Design Review Board and Michael Clinckscapes, Azfar Haque and Roderick Jackson to the Planning Commission Board.

PUBLIC HEARINGS:

Mayor Butler – These two public hearings that are on the agenda tonight will be done slightly different. Whereas a typical public hearing, is open to the public, because the hearings itself would affect the entire community; but the hearings that are on the agenda for tonight theoretically, it is just affect certain people and so we are going to read one public hearing, is Mr. Powell present? So, he has not shown up, he was the attorney that did the investigations for the first hearing for Councilmember Antoine. The background and summary, that I will read, will serve as the fact findings that he would have presented if he was here in person. Afterwards, Councilmember Antoine, if he chooses to do so will have the opportunity to speak; and that will serve as those in favor of and those in opposition against the public hearing. So, with the public hearing for Councilmember Akins-Wells, similar, I will read the background and history, Councilmember James, as a complainant will have the opportunity to speak and then Councilmember Akins-Wells will have the opportunity to speak, if she chooses to do so. All parties who are speaking will have 10 minutes and if there is any member of the governing body that wishes to comment on the public hearings can use their portion of the closing comments to address these hearings and likewise, if there is any member of the general public that wishes to speak, you will fill out a public comment form and that would be your opportunity to do so.

2. FACTS/FINDINGS/DECISION AND RECOMMENDATION REGARDING SPECIAL COUNSEL INVESTIGATION – Legislative Offices/Chief Executive Offices

It was motion to open the public hearing on the Special Counsel Investigation on Councilmember Antoine.

Motion made by Councilmember James, Seconded by Councilmember Gutierrez

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

Mayor Butler read the background and history and stated to Councilmember Antoine that he had 10 minutes to speak on his behalf.

Councilmember Antoine – stated he had no comments

It was motion to close the public hearing on the Special Counsel Investigation on Councilmember Antoine.

Motion made by Councilmember James, Seconded by Councilmember Mears

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

3. **FACT/FINDINGS/DECISION AND RECOMMENDATION REGARD ETHICS VIOLATION** – Legislative Offices/Chief Executive Offices

It was motion to open the public hearing on the Ethics Violation on Councilmember Akins-Wells

Motion made by Councilmember James, Seconded by Councilmember Mears

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

Mayor Butler read the background and history and stated to Councilmember James, as a complainant that she had 10 minutes to speak.

Councilmember James – Thank you madame mayor, first of all I just want to say that this background and history that the mayor just read, it actually comes from our unbiased ethics officer that we employed to represent complaints that the city has against us as the governing body and so, this was very unbiased and I am not going to retry the information that was presented at the hearing, but I will said that I am very pleased with the outcome and the recommendation of the ethics officer. I feel that we as elected officials have to be accountable to the words that we speak and the things that we portray in the public so, I am very grateful for this. Someone has spoken to me once and said you know it takes two to tango and one of the things that I said was that you are correct it does take two to tangle, but as some point a bully must be confronted or they are going to continue to keep bullying. So, in my estimation and even some of the things that have happened since this hearing, Councilmember Akins-Wells conduct is unbecoming, I am not one that would recommend a resignation or a removal from office, but a public reprimand, I do believe that is something that is appropriate. It gives the people an opportunity to see what is being transpired through things that are happening. I think it is inappropriate to tell a staff member to go back to where they are from; to get privileged information from police officers and meet with people to try to sue the city; it is improper to lie and say that we voted on certain things that we did not vote on. Those are inappropriate behaviors and I stood up to say that this is not acceptable and in doing so, as I stated before, the unbiased ethics officer that we hired, received the hearing information and made a decision based upon our ordinance that we passed, so I am very pleased with that and I want you all to know that it is nothing personal, it just, we have to look for our for our staff, one another and we have to be accountable as elected officials, we are not above the law, none of us, that includes myself, we are not above the law. We have laws in place for a reason and we as elected officials should abide by those laws as well.

Mayor Butler – Reset the clock, Councilmember Akins-Wells, you have the floor.

Councilmember Akins-Wells – Thank you. First of all, I would like to thank everyone for being here and apologize for you being here under these circumstances and listening to what I call a bunch of mess, because there is so many other things that we can be focused on. So, let us go back to the Facebook video, I stand on everything that I said, I do not take anything back, I am not a bully, I speak my mind and people hate that; and yes it is personal, it is very personal, because anytime you can spend more time sitting up here discussing a councilwoman and a Facebook video and someone admitted to taking money, basically corruption, it personal; so again there is a whole lot of things that Councilmember James said that contradicts a whole lot of things. First, we are going to start off with this mission statement, some people live up to and some do not, and she is one does not live up to it. Because in the mission statement states, we all strive to provide fair, professional, and courteous service through transparency and open communication as we work to achieve this mission, we will integrity beyond reproach, that is a lie. Councilwoman James on the recording for about 30 to 45 minutes during the campaigning season discussed things that we had discussed in executive session to account to a member of the city a citizen

of the city that was running for office, let us discuss things in it that was going on in executive session nothing has been done about that, nothing has been said about that. Councilmember Antoine admitted to taking money, got beat up for trying to take someone's money but nothing has been done about that and matter of fact it was covered up for a long time because according to our city manager he wanted to wait until after the election to put it out there. So, I am just saying that to say this, if you were not doing anything wrong, you do not have to worry about Councilwoman saying nothing, but if I see wrong doings in people, no matter who those people are I am going to put it out there. And a councilmember can investigate and investigate anything pertaining to the city that they want to, because it is in the charter, we can do that. So, I am not the person to sit back and know things are going on and not investigate them, like a lot of people sitting up here, because I care about my community, I care about our employees, and I am going to continue to fight for the citizens and our employees. It is personal because people want me to be quite, so when you do not be quite and abide by their rules, they look at you as a bully, well I will be a bully, if that is what you want to call it, I speak to what I said as far as I have a freedom of speech, even a dog gets tired. I was watched for three and a half years by the Forest Park Police Department, when I was first elected, then to come back and hear oh, somebody is investigating Councilmember Akins-Wells, because she got into a fight, which was a lie. Even a dog gets tired, so yes, when I responded, I responded out of anger, because I am sick and tired hearing and talking about stuff that should not even matter. I am sick of it. So yes, I am going to look into our police department when I get complaints, I am going to bring it to the city manager and do what I need to do as a councilperson; I am going to speak my mind because I have freedom of speech to do so and if you do not like it then that is a personal problem. Again, when you are being unethical and doing unethical things yourself, look in the mirror and check yourself before you try to check anyone else. I am not got to get up here and say, oh, I was wrong I probably should not have said this, I probably should not that, but I did and I stand on every single thing I said, I do not take it back; I fear no man but God, no man but God and I will not be intimidated; the people did not elect me for me to get up here and shut up to please other people. I am not where someone has my hands tied, oh we will not send you to jail if you support us and vote for everything, I am not in that situation, and I never will be. I am not the go along to get along, I am going to do what is right. I am going to fight for the people, because that is what the people put me here to do. So, again yes Kimberly, it is personal it is personal, anytime people go on Facebook trying to befriend my friends and trying to find out what Councilmember Akins-Wells doing following me to games, and it is just a bunch of mess and we have so many other things to focus on. I could have filed a complaint on her, because it is on recording and the city attorney has heard it, where you continuously talking about what we discussed in executive session, but I am not petty, I have a life and being a councilmember is not my life, it is a part of my life, so I am not going to fight you, I do not want to battle with you, not with mess like this, so if anyone wants to file a complaint, its unethical, so someone should, instead of us sitting here talking about a Facebook video, because Councilmember Akins-Wells is tired of people attacking her, because they are in their personal feelings. That is all I have to say, whatever you all decided to do is what you decide to do, I walk with God, I fear no man, no elected official and I will not go alone to get along and I will not shut up because you do not like what I say.

It was motion to close the public hearing on the Ethics Violation on Councilmember Akins-Wells

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

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

It was motion to recess into Executive Session for deliberation on Public Hearings.

Motion made by Councilmember Akins-Wells, Seconded by Councilmember Mears

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

It was motion to reconvene from Executive Session back into Regular Meeting.

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

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

As discussed in Executive Session the following motions were made

Motion was made to reprimand Councilmember Antoine

Motion made by Councilmember James, Seconded by Councilmember Mears. Mayor Butler read Resolution 22-07 for Reprimand of Councilmember Antoine

Mayor Butler – I will open the floor discussion, but there are four (4) options that we could have made; 1) do nothing; 2) removal and under the charter it takes four (4) votes of the governing body to remove an elected official, we did not have the four (4) votes to remove him; 3) was to censure or reprimand and 4) which has also taken place, was to send everything to the District Attorney's office. So, we are at this point, with the censure or reprimand, because there are not four (4) votes to accept the recommendation of the attorney which was removable. Does anyone else have any comments/discussions or questions.

Councilmember Akins-Wells – I would first like to say, that is not why we are censoring, that is what was recommended because, I am not in favor of censoring someone who admitted to taking money on top of several other things that Councilmember Antoine has done. I think that certain things and behaviors deserves certain punishments, and I am definitely not censure. You censure someone for saying something not for taking money and this person ending up with a contract on behalf of city and Councilmember Antoine coming up here to collect his check, because he felt like some of the money was owed to him, I do not think that is due a censure. I am not in favor of that, I think too he should have been removed, it is not guaranteed that the District Attorney is going to anything and then nothing still gets done, so, I think as a councilmember and us talking about transparency and being held accountable, then we are contradicting everything we are saying just by censoring someone that is involved in corruption.

Councilmember Gutierrez – This is just uncomfortable for me to be honest, knowing these people, some might just see this, but as elected officials we are put in the public eye and it is hard because I have seen the best side of both of them, but like anything, it is like running a business, I cannot expect Dr. Cooper to hold Director Jinks or Director Brown accountable or anyone else accountable if we cannot do it with each other. Something I heard, but I do not know the exact quote, but it is if you surround yourself with people that are smarter than you in certain area and I am not an attorney and not an expert in these things, Mr. Williams is and the investigator we hired. So, if his recommendation is removable with all the things he quoted in the charter, that is what I agree with. I am for the removal of you, Councilmember Antoine, it is business and not personal and it went this way, but you are still here so make sure you know pick up the ball and run with it, fix it.

Councilmember James – I just wanted to say that it says a lot for someone who can admit something they did wrong and you may not know, that even with the investigating that took place a lot of people were asked to participate in the investigation hearing, did not show up, so, we were able to get the full picture of what transpired. Councilman Antoine showed up and stated what he did and received; that says a lot about a

person that shows up. There are things we do not know, as elected officials, that many other people are involved in and we do not have that information, but we have forwarded that information to the district attorney's office. They have more power than an investigative attorney, an investigative attorney can say I want you to show up and that person do not show up; a district attorney tells you to show up and you want to show up and so, they have power to get more information, more in-depth as to what actually transpired. So, I am of the opinion, and I have talked to other people in the community, and a removal for me as elected official to remove another elected official is not my place, I think it is the place of the people that voted them in to vote them out. If you all feel like you need to remove him, then go through the process for removing him, there is a process that you can do that, but you do as voters, not as me co-person with Councilmember Antoine, to say I want you removed because I feel like this is something that you should be removed for. That is where I am and so, I would not vote for removal for that reason and again it says a lot to me about a person that can admit when they did something wrong, as opposed to saying, I did nothing wrong.

Councilmember Mears – Under the circumstances, with the way the vote would come and the involvement of the district attorney's office in the matter, reprimand with the backup of what transpired with the DA should be punishment enough. I agree with CM James, I hate to reprimand or dismiss a colleague or member, but he was man enough to man up, you see he done it and all that, but there needs to be some kind of guideline or changes in our agendas and such so that we have some way to handle this. Right now, there is a lot of personal feelings going in this and it is clouding people's judgement, you cannot let personal feelings get involved in your decision, which I feel that is what is happening now, so you have to take the list of two evils and move on with the situation.

Councilmember Akins-Wells – I have one more thing to say and then Councilmember Mears helped me with something else. It is not personal, because number one, we did not take the money; we did not feel like we were owed money so I do not understand how you can say it is personal, it is people personal feelings. So, with me being transparent and me being the person that I am, I am just going to say the writing is on the wall, and what I feel the reason no one asked him to be removed because it is a power thing, and if he is removed then he can no longer be someone's yo-yo and vote with everything that certain people want to do, if you all have notice in the previous meetings that is what has been taken place; after this meeting that is the same thing that is going to take place, because he well feel like they saved him or they kept it on the hush for this long so he owes them something so, he is going to go along and get along, which is another reason why he should not be in office because the people cannot trust him. I heard the word thrown around when it came up to Councilmember Akins-Wells and this Facebook video and the trust and the public's trust and no one say anything about that when somebody admitted to taking money and yes you are right, it says a lot about a person that can admit to it, but he did not have a choice, because it was proven that was what he did, so he did not have a choice but it also says a lot about an elected official that would feel like they are owed money because someone comes and does business in the city of Forest Park, no one owes you anything and that is why you should be removed.

Mayor Butler called for the vote

Voting Yea: Councilmember James and Councilmember Mears

Voting Nay: Councilmember Gutierrez and Councilmember Akins-Wells,

Abstain: Councilmember Antoine

Mayor Butler – since there is a tie, she voted in favor of accepting the motion.

As discussed in Executive Session the following motion was made:

Motion was made to reprimand Councilmember Akins-Wells

Motion made by Councilmember James, Seconded by Councilmember Gutierrez. Mayor Butler read Resolution 22-08 for Reprimand of Councilmember Akins-Wells

Mayor Butler – I will open the floor discussion. Just as before there are four (4) options that we could have made; 1) removal and under the charter it takes four (4) votes of the governing body to remove an elected official, we did not have the four (2) votes to remove him; 3 was to censure or reprimand and 4) a request for resignation. So, we are at this point, with the censure or reprimand, because ultimately there is not four (4) votes to accept the recommendation of the attorney which was removable. Does anyone else have any comments/discussions or questions.

Councilmember Gutierrez – I agree with the censure, and I am going off the recommendation of this unbiased ethics attorney. I will say I did see the video and I cannot put myself in Councilmember Akins-Wells' shoes, because I was not investigated by the police and did not go through all of that, but I can see that she was very emotional in the video about what happened and I think that might have triggered some of the thoughts and not to excuse some of the things she said, because later she was asked to remove the video, but she stood her ground and said I stand behind my statements, in which I do not think they were all entirely appropriate but I can see where when someone is emotional, you just say things and I cannot relate to what she had to go through nor Councilmember Antoine had to go through when they were being investigated. Hopefully, we can move forward with all this.

Mayor Butler – Just as before there are four (4) options that we could have made; 1) removal and under the charter it takes four (4) votes of the governing body to remove an elected official, we did not have the four (2) votes to remove him; 3 was to censure or reprimand and 4) a request for resignation. Does anyone else have any comments/discussions or questions?

Councilmember James – We also discussed having something more added in our charter that would have a little bit more consequences to ethical violations, so we need to not allow continued behavior to continue to happen and nothing really happens, other than the public hears about. But again you all have to vote for whomever you want to represent you, should take that opportunity, but I think again, as an elected official it is not my job to remove any elected official from office, but it is my job to make sure that we govern in the way that you all have expectations for us to govern and we hold each other accountable for our actions and that includes me as well, I am not excluded from any expectations that you all have of me.

Councilmember Mears – I have been in the city a long time and I do not believe that we have enough teeth in our charter to handle situations like this. In the 56 years I have been in the city, these kinds of situations have never come up so, in past councils in our defense do not have the proper tools to make a proper decision. People vote to put people in positions and from now on we are going to have to go back and relook at our charter and take up this kind of situation. But you cannot have arguing, disgruntledness and all in the council and amongst each other; and going out of bounds on your position or your authority and talking and showing; we have directors to do that and you got a city manager to look after the directors and when council gets involved, when you step out of line and go directly to the people that work in the city and get too involved in their business instead of going to the proper channels then you have chaos and problems and that is where we are right now. So, that is something that is going to have to be addressed by the council and the city manager and directors to get protocol or rank in file situation where we do not have that problem anymore.

Councilmember Gutierrez – I just want to add to your comment, I just think as long as we are respectful, conflict and disagreement is healthy, you cannot have people that are just robots and think the same, I know that is not what you are saying CM Mears, you are gearing more to the disrespectful side of it. But I think it is healthy that we think differently, we do not want a city council that is all the same, because it was all the same in the past and we know how much progress Forest Park had when everybody looked the same up here. I think important to have conflict if we are respectful to each other, respect is just we must have that core value.

Councilmember Akins-Wells – I would like to piggyback on what Councilmembers Gutierrez and Mears stated that these type of things never came up; I am 39 and I have been in the city for 30 years and these types of things have come up and matter of fact, it was Councilmember James who filed a complaint on the previous Mayor Deaton and asked for her to step down. I will say this again, basically what has been said up here is shut up, we do not want you to talk, express your feelings, we just want you to go along; and once again want to add more stuff in the charter, so they can shut up and you just go along; when someone asks someone to add to charter to shut me up, then I no longer serve the people and I am not just going to shut up, I am not going to do that. The people elected us to be a voice and although some of us are not, do not hold the people accountable and be made because they step up and they speak up for the people and for themselves, because I am Latresa Shantay Akins Wells before I am Councilwoman Wells. And I am going to defend myself when I feel like I am being attacked and you stated that we need to let the directors do this and we need to let the people do this, we have people higher up, but what do you as a councilmember, when it is the higher up people that budging and stabbing you, then who do we go to? We are left to defend ourselves, but you want us to shut up, I will not, I will not.

Can I go back to Councilmember Antoine's issue? (Mayor Butler stated yes) I just want to bring, because I am transparent and a lot of things was not discussed, I guess because the investigator did not bring certain things up, but as far as the purchasing of items with the city's credit card that was another thing that was kind of brushed under the rug and they did not see any wrongdoings on someone purchase a tailored suit, buying shoes for themselves, I am not an investigator, but I do know if this that if this type of being investigated, if I was investigating then I want to know who that suit was for. If was not for you, who was it for? If the nine and half shoe, that you wear was not for you, then who was it for? I do not understand how the investigator came up with that, but I just wanted to be transparent and let the people know what was really going on.

Councilmember Mears – If all of us are vigilantes and go out and get into everyone's business, we do not need a city manager. We need five councilmembers that will run the city. We have got to have organized chaos, you got to have somewhere, somehow you have got to be under control, everybody runs around taking care of everybody, you have got to get city worker to do this, and you have to have some kind of organization. When everyone gets involved and try to take care of everyone's business you are going to have chaos.

Mayor Butler called for the vote

Voting Yea: Councilmember James, Councilmember Antoine, Councilmember Gutierrez, and Councilmember Mears

Voting Nay: Councilmember Gutierrez and Councilmember Akins-Wells,

Abstain: Councilmember Antoine

PUBLIC COMMENTS: (All Speakers will have 3 Minutes)

Ms. White stated that she had three (3) additional public comment speakers, with one not being a resident, which was turned in after the 6:45pm deadline.

It was moved by Councilmember James and seconded by Councilmember Antoine to allow the additional two (2) speakers to speak.

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

There were six (6) speakers for Public Comments:

Ann Pellegrine – When I read tonight’s agenda, I saw in black and white what the community has been observing all along. Some councils have been trying to distract us with signs, names and now a video. A video where I saw someone reacting with raw emotions to ongoing attacks on her character, her family, even involving the school her attended. There is indeed conflict, and to quote the complainant Mrs. James, it erodes the confidence of the public in government. But wait a minute, why is the pot calling the kettle black, we have witnessed this unprofessional pettiness and we wonder as a community is it political or is it personal, because we see who contributes what, we know what brings job to the city. We like having someone tell it like it is, even if some do not like the way she says it. Why do this bother you so? Meanwhile real concerns like the outcome of an investigation involving illegal actions, you said nothing, not since October, through an entire election cycle, not one word. Protected in confidence and in secret even now. We have heard the word accountability thrown around a lot lately, accountability is not a weapon, you do not pick and choose when to wield it depending on how it benefits you personally or politically; accountability is truth. The people of Forest Park, the ones who are walking to get their groceries, struggling to keep housing, put food on the table, still negotiating a pandemic, unemployment, care of aging parents till getting by on the bare minimum, homeless huddled by the laundromat, just around the corner from where you held your bodacious celebratory gala. That was the video that offended us. Quote, erodes the confidence of the public in government, end quote.

Clifford Pellegrine – Good evening, Councilmember Antoine broke law. You have known this for a long time, and he should be removed from council. Everyone I have talked with agrees, waited until now for a public hearing, when the appropriate for public input was during the last election, now here we are and you vote to censure him, are you kidding me? And coupled with whatever feud you have going on with Councilwoman Akins-Wells, in that one special counsel described the problem with the word “tribalism”, all of you look bad. Is the entire governing body okay with this? This really concerns me, also, I saw nothing in the document stating what the cost of the repairs would be for the poor workmanship at Perkins Park nor anything addressing whether there are other contracts with the city involved, that concerns me. I ask that the governing body do a deep analysis of their decision regarding this matter, and I encourage you to vote instead for removing Mr. Antoine because that is the appropriate action, and you were sworn to uphold the law, lead the community of Forest Park in the direction of healing, stop talking about it and around it and do the work, very disappointed tonight.

Lois Wright – I want to talk about bringing us in unity, our whole community and one thing that I have seen do that was our summer concerts. Now I have been a resident and a homeowner in this city for a little over 25 years. I have seen bad, good; seen them come and go, but I have never seen over the last couple of years in the summertime all of the community come together, and I think that is really important that we keep these functions going to keep our communities together and I am not speaking just black, white, Hispanic, Asians. I am business owner, I do taxes and my clients consist of many residents as well as businesses here in the city, so I talked to all the people, I could say firsthand they are excited about what we are doing in the summer and we have got to keep that going; no matter who bring it forth. Kudos to you Councilmember Akins-Wells (Mayor Butler – please direct everything to the chair). Because we are the largest city in Clayton County, we ought to be the one that is setting the example, not Jonesboro. We need to start bringing things to bring our community together and the only two persons I have seen throughout

the council to make this happen is Councilmember Akins-Wells and Councilmember Gutierrez, they have functions that go on and bring the community together, let us keep this going, it is about the community. This is about all of us, stop the bickering and the craziness because you know this is our city, you all represent us, I am a resident and taxpayer and I expect the people I put in place to be respected and to give back to me, the community, the residents; as I do and I am not even a council representative, but I am a community servant and I talk to everyone. You all have to get it together, we got to get it together, this is our city. We got to do better unless and it is all about us, the residents, not them, and you all remember this when it comes election time.

Councilmember James – *Point of order Madame Mayor, although I appreciate the applause it is not appropriate and think we should not have the applause.*

Mayor Butler – *I am okay with the applause, but we are not going to get out of order with it.*

LaWanda Folami – Greetings, I am here to start back in January, all the nonsense, we are sitting around right now is just a group of governing body who has already made a decision. I remember growing up watching “how to catch a thief”; anytime you catch a thief, he is going to tell on himself. I feel like the rest of my community, he should be removed. Let me get to some good news, Censure would be for Mrs. Wells for my record and removal for Mr. Antoine, you were caught red-handed, and the best thing would be for your constituents is to just resign. Back to January 25th I just want to make recommendations for Commissioner Davis who did a warming center to assist the constituents during the time of coldness; I spoke with the minister association who poured out their hearts, Forest Park Church of the Rock, Minister Micah, Brother Cook, Minister Harris, so many joined in together in unity and we bought collectively, we were able to transport people from one location to another. This is something to think about, we have a lot of constituents hugging around the grocery stores trying to keep warm. Kudos to the Park and Recreation & Leisure; I work volunteer with Seven Pillars Academy on Rock Cut Road, we joined in with the Recreation center to have basketball for ages 14 and up. Kudos to Mr. Tariq Maxwell and Mr. Morris who did an outstanding job in helping the kids get to the championship. There is a big pothole on Conley Road, which needs filling up, instead of filling your pockets up, fill up the holes.

Ursula Kinsey – I do not know everyone on the panel, but this is the first time for me attending a council meeting, and I am somewhat saddened by what I see. Unfortunately, we are at a standstill where we have to come and look at two council people to determine whether they should be here or not and to watch you bicker amongst each other about pettiness, I think some of it is petty, when it comes to Councilmember Antoine, which is not petty to me. Because it is in your hands, your hands are dirty. But when it comes to Councilmember Wells, I find that to be a bit petty, because of the situation, I noticed what has come to the community. My son was murdered four and half years ago by gun violence; I started a documentary, Councilwoman came to me and said, this is not only happening to you, but it is happening to everyone in the community. We have to get our community back, she allowed me to share my story of my son being murdered, my only child, and presented it to the community. Your community, my community our people came out as a whole, white, black, orange, green, and brown; they were all out to say no more gun violence, we are not doing that anymore. That was bringing the community together, then on another occasion, I am in the gym doing step aerobics. So now, you are not only caring about what happened to our youth, but you are trying to make sure I live, doing step aerobics, you are bringing the community together, young and elderly doing step aerobics, that is bringing the community together. And then there is the summer, when I walk out and see in the park, different diverse of people there, I am going to be honest, I have never seen you in my life (Mayor Butler – we are going to direct all comments to the chair) I have never seen that councilperson, but I have seen that one, I rarely even seen you, all I am saying is there are some, the people are here for a reason, and we voted for somebody, and the reason we voted for that somebody is because we want them to represent us, whether it is good, bad or indifferent and it appears that is what councilwoman has done. She has provided us with information that we probably never would have known, she has kept it real, whether you like it or not, maybe her way of doing it may not be tactful but maybe we need some in-service on how to be tactful. A lot of us in the audience are not tactful, but what I can say

is she has brought the community together in a health manner, to stop the violence in the community, brought the community together in other ways so that we can be sociable and yet some of the things that has happened because of social media is unprecedented, so maybe you need to take a look at that. I do want to say, I do appreciate everything that everybody does, but let us be far.

Larry Malone – I am a certified personal trainer, and I grew up in Forest Park, went to Forest Park Middle School and Forest Park High School. Growing up my best friend's mother, Debbie Yeoman, was a Forest Park Councilwoman and we did not know what her job was, we just knew she was on Forest Park City Council, but did not know what she did, her job description. I did not know what a city councilmember do until I met Councilmember Wells, and it was funny because I met her at her real job and she overheard me training someone, and she liked what I was doing; I came up with the original format for step aerobics, it is old school music, it caters to elderly people, preferably 35 and older. (He asked members of the Wellness for Wells to stand) Members of the class came straight to the meeting when we heard about this, the program is no longer going on, but these people followed me to the dance studio, and she has brought me back per request from the citizens six times. When she came to me, she said COVID-19 is affecting the elderly people and I need something like what you got going on to do and bring wellness to the forefront of the community and that is when she came up with Wellness with Wells. As you see it helped, these people came straight from my class and struggling business, it helped my business and also helped these people. You would be surprised how much your heart and lungs are pumping can prevent things from happening to you. She does her job, because she brought wellness to the forefront of the community and growing up in Forest Park, I never seen a city councilmember do anything that I knew was going on.

ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA WITH ANY ADDITIONS / DELETIONS:

Mayor Butler, we need to amend the agenda to consider Daniel Penalzoza for an appointment to the Urban Design Review Board.

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

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

It was moved to adopt the agenda with the amendment

Motion made by Councilmember James, Seconded by Councilmember Mears

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

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

- 4. Council Approval of Council Work Session and Regular Meeting Minutes from February 21, 2022 -**
S. Diane White, City Clerk

It was motion to approve the Council meeting minutes from the February 21, 2022, meeting

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

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

NEW BUSINESS:

5. **Council to Approve Resolution 22-09 Authorizing Approval to Award a Contract to Hogan Construction Group LLC to Construct a New Public Safety Building at the Gillem Logistics Center**– Department of Planning & Community Development

It was moved to approve Resolution 22-09 authorizing approval to award contract to Hogan Construction Group, LLC

Motion made by Councilmember James, Seconded by Councilmember Antoine

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

6. **Council Approval of a Proposed Entertainment District Ordinance 22-01**– Department of Planning & Community Development

It was to adopt Ordinance 22-01 Entertainment District.

Motion made by Councilmember Antoine, Seconded by Councilmember James

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

7. **Council Approval of Resolution 22-10 in Support for the People of the Ukraine and Condemn the Russian Invasion** – Legislative Office/Chief Executive Office

It was moved to approve Resolution 22-10 in Support for the People of Ukraine.

Motion made by Councilmember James, Seconded by Councilmember Mears

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

ADDENDUM(S):

8. **Council to Approve the Appointment of Daniel Penalzoza to the Urban Design Review Board** - Planning & Community Development

It was moved to approve the appointment of Daniel Penalzoza to the Urban Design Review Board.

Motion made by Councilmember James, Seconded by Councilmember Gutierrez

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

Mayor Butler – we will swear you in after the meeting.

CLOSING COMMENTS BY GOVERNING BODY:

Councilmember James – Let me first just say that I do give Councilwoman Akins-Wells her kudos for the things she does in the community, I do not take anything away from her on the things that she has done and I do not take it away things that I have done as well; you may say you have not seen me, but I have been out there, and I have people that support me to tell you that I have been out there. Not only have I been out there, but I also send out messages on a bi-weekly basis on things that is going on, including Fun Friday in the Park, and Food Truck Friday, so I am with an effort trying to bring the community together. As far as what councilmember does, we are to make laws and govern our city and make sure that we are taking care of our employees as well as the residents, so we have different

departments, including the Rec Department. Do not think that if we do have the budget to put certain things in our, we have an \$8 million fire station that we thought would cost us \$4 million, so we have to come up \$8 million to take care of that, Therefore, there will be things that we will have to cut. Does that mean we are cutting things that bring our community together, no, it does not mean that? We have a parks and recreation department, so believe me the things that Councilmember Akins-Wells have brought to the table and the things Councilmember Gutierrez has brought to the table is not going away, these things will continue to happen. There are a couple of things I wanted to outline on some of the things that someone had said. They read a quote that says “eros the confidence of government”, I like to say that is not my quote, which is a quote that came from the ethics attorney made that quote, not me. And there was a comment made about the character of a person when something is not brought up during the election cycle. If you read our charter, as an elected official, we cannot bring up items during election cycle, that is something that is not to come up during the election cycle, it is the charter written, I did not make that law it is there, read it for yourself. So, the reason we did not get the information that the investigator found out until after the election, is because it is in the charter. It could not be given during an election cycle, and it just turned out that the results came and we as a council did not even know what the results of the investigation was; our city manager and when he brought it to us after the election. Why? Because it is in our charter, our law is what we have to abide by. So, you all can have your different opinions or whatever, but make sure that you are going by the law. Another comment was made do not shut me up, I am not asking anyone to shut up, I am to tell the truth, I do not want lies to be portrayed out that are not true. I mean it is just not true, so, as an elected official, I should not be telling you things that true, I think you should hold me accountable for that, no matter what good I do, no matter how many meetings I give, no matter how much stuff I do for the community, whatever, I should not tell you something that is not true and I should be held accountable for that. The comment made about me disclosing things in executive session; anything that is discussed in executive session that we come out and vote on it is no longer privileged information, so when you talk about wanting to give a former city manager a six months compensation, you talk about it in executive session and you come out of executive session and you vote on it, it is no longer privileged information, the people need to know. Yes, that is something that I said, we talked about giving a previous city manager, who had been gone for almost a year, six months of salary, why? It was not a lawsuit. He was friends with a councilperson and wanted six months' salary and the councilperson brought it up, that this is what we should do. That is not privileged information, it was information that could be disclosed and go out. I stand behind everything that I say, and I do not say things that are not true, I do not fabricate and make innuendos, you all do not have the full picture in some cases, you do not have the full picture of some of the things that have transpired. It is easy to take the side of someone you are hearing from all the time, it is very easy to take that side, so, I am saying that to say, make sure you get the facts and the complete story, make sure you are not one sided in receiving your information, make sure you are receiving information in its entirety. I will not bring up Mayor Dean, but if you want to talk to me on the side, I will talk with you about it.

We had a Hunger Walk, you may have seen it on the news, the community food bank held a hunger walk in the state of Georgia and we as Forest Park High School, where I was the team captain. We raised money to feed the community in Forest Park and was able to raise \$907, which will go towards having a food drive at the high school, where we will be able to invite the community to come and get food items. Big thanks to JenCare Senior Medical Center, one of our sponsors, who provided shaved ice for the walkers, and pictures will be posted soon. Big congratulations, I am probably stealing the Mayor's thunder on this one, but congratulations to Forest Park High School Girls Basketball team who are going to the state championship on Thursday. If you want, go to the Macon Coliseum to see them play, tickets available at www.gofan.co to support the Lady Panthers as they go up against Woodard Academy for the state championship. Thank you all for coming out, I appreciate you, if you need to speak with me, I am open to you and I am here to serve.

Councilmember Antoine – Good evening, everyone, and I want to tell everyone thank you for the opportunity to be her continuing the spread the good work that Forest Park is doing. I also want to share, the bible says your silence shall be your strength; when you know the truth you do not have to say much, because you know the truth. Thanks to everyone in Ward 2 that is here, the emails and internet that I got in support of me. Congratulations to those who

were sworn into the various boards; to the Sergeant with his new infant. Ward 2, we have a big major senior development that coming to College Street, 55 and older, that will be a huge development and we are looking forward to that. Thanks again for coming and let us keep it moving, pushing, and doing the people's business. God bless you all.

Councilmember Gutierrez – Just to echo my colleagues, thank you for coming out and sitting through all of this. Congratulations to the Public Works & Parks/Recreation departments for a successful food truck event at the Fountain, there were a lot of people, lot of the community and to the elected officials that were present, thank you for coming out and enjoying the community. Also shout out to Mr. Freeman of Concrete Technique, I introduce him to the middle school principal, and she mentioned to him some of the hardships and he made a \$2,500 donation on the spot which I thought was impactful. Sometimes a lot of businesses come here and say they are going to do things but do not, so I really appreciated him doing that for the middle school. March 22nd I will be having a women's panel in honor of Women's Month. I will be partnering with Forest Park Women's Roundtable which is a non-profit, that my wife is a member of, we will have a ray of speakers from different generations, and I am excited because honestly, if it was not for a lot of women, I would not be functioning as an adult. March 23rd, we will be having an event at the library, I am partnering with Ms. Sabrina Hill from District 7 School Board, we will be reading books and our teen committee "Panthers in Action" will be there, which is a good opportunity for them to interact with some of the younger crowd in Forest Park and just to promote all the services the library has to offer. I am excited about the resolution for Ukraine we approved, and we hosted a delegation here and our sympathies are with them. The world is in a war, and we are privileged and bickering about small things when in reality people are dying, so make sure you take that into account. Sgt. Lewis, congratulations on fatherhood, I think that is the most beautiful and priceless thing a man can do, the title of a father there is nothing like it and welcome Ms. Barkley to the city, you have an amazing finance department; congratulations to all the new board members and if anyone wants to talk about any of my decisions, I am available. Thanks, and take care.

Councilmember Akins-Wells – Thanks to everyone for coming out and this month is Women's History month, so, I would like to thank and show appreciation to every woman in the city of Forest Park, every employee and thank you for all that you do, women make the world go around and if it was not for us, we would not be here, again happy Women's history month. There are a few things, and I am not going to be long-winded, thank you to the directors would are still with us. First I would like to respond to Councilwoman James, and after this meeting, unless it is city business and not my business, I will not bring it up, I am not going back and forth with no one about mess, I am working on being a better Chante', because I am Chante' before I am Latresa, but I am working on being a better me, so after today I am done with it. But what I will say, you stated that you tell the truth and did not discuss things that took place in executive session, well you did, I have the recording for those that want to hear it, as well as my husband and daughter who were employees of the city, you violated the HIPPA Law by discussing my husband's health issues and stated that my husband was terminated and went to the city of Atlanta and was forced to be hired back with the city of Forest Park, when in actuality the city asked him to come back and he made more money, because he got his CDLs while he was with the City of Atlanta, all of this is on the tape, and she is bashing my husband and daughter asking how did she get this job, when I can name a whole lot of people, but I want, because I am not playing the petty game. They have friends that work for the city and she was qualified to do the job and she was hired she was not forced. So, you discussed things that was not voted on in executive session, and again it is on record; I will not file an ethics complaint because I do not have time. I have a business, my son has a business, I have a job, I do stuff and it is not tied up in city stuff. I am not sure if you all paid attention, but I pay attention body language and to the sighs and when the people and I appreciate you all, I did not know everyone from Wellness with Wells was coming, I appreciate you all and everyone that spoke on my behalf, it means more than you would ever know. Because being a councilmember that is fighting for the community, and you have certain individual that want to keep attacking because they are bothered personally, or they feel this person is in the spotlight a little more than them that is an issue. So, I paid attention to body language, when they were speaking about wellness with wells, people may not like it and that is why they want to take it out of the budget and give it to parks and rec, so that Councilwoman Wells'

name will not be on it, so they can make it seem like everyone is involved and Councilmember Gutierrez with his food truck Fridays, there are things that we push to do. I do not if you ride around the county, but you will see signs everywhere around Clayton County a Commissioner doing this, a Commissioner doing that; i.e., back to school bags, Halloween trunk or treats; people are recognized for the things they bring to the table, why is that an issue here? Because it is personal, instead of coming together saying how we can make this better for the city, it is let us do away with it, let us give it to Parks and Rec so that her name is not involved in it. But guess what, it will be, because I will then become a sponsor and raise money and then my name will still have to be on it. So, that is what it is all about, it is personal. It is no different that what other cities are doing, the county, all around the world not just right here in little old Forest Park. If you talk about unity, and you read the mission statement and all this is true and this is what you go by, instead of trying to do this and that, because of one little old person, come to the table something. Councilwoman let us sit down and see how we can make this better, get the word out to bring and get more people involved; how can we get well-known artists here, how can we get more people to participate; what can I do to help? Those are the type of conversations we should be having. I am going to tell you that we have to come up with \$4 million dollars, Fun Friday and Food Truck Friday is nowhere \$4million dollars, it is just an excuse to get rid of the things that Councilmember Akins-Wells helped initiate that brings our community together; let's take her name off of it, we do not want her involved, do not want her on stage fellowshipping with the community and bringing the people together, we want someone else to do that. But I am always going to be her, because it is my city, where I grew up and where I serve. Appreciate you for coming out, have a blessed day and safe ride home.

Councilmember Mears – Glad to see everybody here that came out; anyone that is sitting in this room can see the problem. We have had several comments about if you do the crime, you pay the time, well you have to have rules and regulations and people that will make it happen and we do not have that. Have a good night and see you next meeting.

Councilmember James – I just have to respond, (there were noise from audience) okay I will not respond.

Mayor Butler – Father Jacques, who presides over Felipe de Jesus, Pope Francis has appointed Reverend Father Jacques, a Forest Park resident as the new Bishop elect of the Roman Catholic Diocese in Charleston, SC. Father Jacques, who is from Haiti, will become the 14th Bishop of the Diocese succeeding Bishop Robert and Father Jacques will be the first black Bishop for that diocese and will be ordained April 29th. This just adds to everything we have going on in Forest Park even we hate to have him leave. Unidos had a Mardi Gras ceremony and it was amazing, they are also looking for people to come out and read to the children; I said that I would mention this to the Forest Park Minister Association to see how we can partner with them, they are also having a shortage with staff, and substitute teachers, so I would like to put this out to the community; you will have to go through the process of volunteering, but know that we do have a school in need. And if I could have a proud mother moment, my baby had her first solo flight a few weeks ago, I am terrified to fly, but when I speak to my daughter every time she gets out of that cockpit, I can hear the excitement, the enthusiasm it permeates through the phone, and so I am just happy and now she is officially flying solo. We have some new recruits in the Fire department to be introduced at the next meeting and Chaunda Melson in the finance department, lost her mother, if you could add her and her family to your thoughts and prayers as well, would be appreciated.

EXECUTIVE SESSION: There was no Executive Session

ADJOURNMENT:

It was moved to adjourn the Council Regular Meeting at 9:16pm.

Motion made by Councilmember James, Seconded by Councilmember Gutierrez

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

DRAFT