



CITY COUNCIL WORK SESSION

Monday, April 03, 2023, at 6:00 PM
Council Chambers and YouTube Livestream

MISSION STATEMENT

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

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

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

The Honorable Mayor Angelyne Butler, MPA

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

The Honorable Dabouze Antoine
The Honorable Latresa Akins-Wells

Dr. Marc-Antonie 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 6:00pm and she read the Mission Statement.

ROLL CALL - CITY CLERK: A quorum was established.

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

Joshua Cox, IT Director; Pam Stevenson, Management Analyst; Chiquita Barkley, Finance Director; Arthur Geeter, Purchasing Manager; LaShawn Gardiner, Director Planning & Community Development; Shalonda Brown, Director of Human Resources; Bobby Jinks, Director of Public Works; Bruce Abrahams, Director Economic Development;

Tarik Maxwell, Director Rec. & Leisure; Latosha Clemons, Fire Chief; Nigel Whatley, Deputy Director PW; and Sandra Johnson, Deputy Police Chief

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

COMMUNITY INFORMATION/REMINDERS:

- On Saturday, April 08, 2023, the City of Forest Park's Recreation and Leisure Department will host our Annual SpringFest from 1:00pm – 5:00pm. The event will take place in Kiwanis Stadium at 667 South Ave, Forest Park GA. Easter Egg Hunt is set to begin at 4:00pm. Registration is not required and there is no cost to attend this event.
- On Saturday, April 15, 2023, from 11:00 am – 5:00pm, the City of Forest Park, sponsored by Ward 3 Councilman Hector Gutierrez, Hope Beckham, Inc., Rumors, and the Zagoria Law Firm LLC presents the inaugural Selena Day Community Event. Planned activities include Karaoke, Food Trucks, and a Look-a-like Contest. This event will be held at Starr Park, located at 5031 Park Ave. There is no cost to attend. Sponsors and vendors are still wanted. For more information, contact our Council Aides Tenisha Dixon (470) 487-3753 or Marsha Johnson (470) 630-2355.
- On April 15, 2023, from 10:00am – 2:00pm Choose Health Life is having a Community Health Fair at the Gateway Restoration Church located at 4981 Phillips Drive, Forest Park, GA. For morning information please contact Shemena Lane, Health Navigator at (404) 804-5008.
- Forest Park High School's Class of 2023 Caravan will be held on May 20, 2023 @ 11:00am. Please make your posters, banners, and yard signs to help celebrate along the caravan route.

CITY OPERATIONS:

- On Friday, March 31, 2023, the City Manager's office held a "Police Chief Candidates Meet-n-Greet". The top three finalists were presented Mr. Brandon Criss, Asst. Chief Clayton County Sheriff's Department, Sandra Johnson, Deputy Chief Forest Park Police Department, and Mr. Eddie Smith, Retired Commander of the Atlanta Police Department. Thank you to everyone who attended and participated. The recommended candidate will be presented for confirmation at the April 20, 2023, City Council Meeting.
- At the March 20th Council Meeting, we received a complaint regarding speeding and trash cans left in the street after pickup in the Albert Drive area. Police have increased patrols for speeders in the area, as well as our sanitation and code enforcement responded to the area investigated and issued several "Cart Placement" citations. We will continue enforcement in this area until we obtain compliance.

EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT/SHOUT OUT:

Councilwoman Wells observed our very own Forest Park Police, Sgt. Todd Gladden, helping a stranded motorist and wanted us to understand that this is what we are all about going above and beyond and helping each other. So, I would like to give a huge KUDO to Sgt. Gladden and thank you sir for all you do.

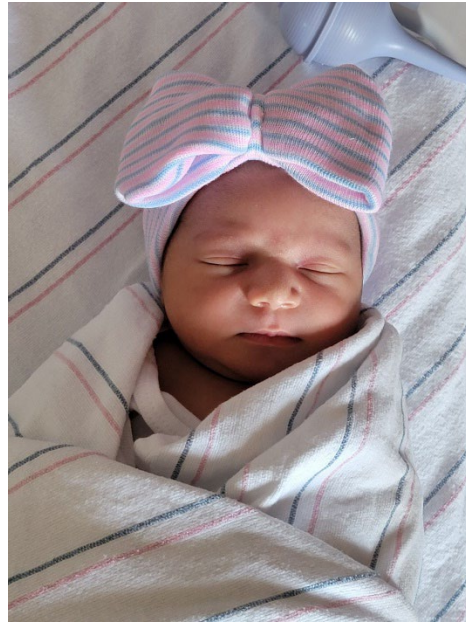


Shout out to Fire Chief Latosha Clemons for visiting and participating in Unidos Dual Language School Woman's History Month Program.



CONGRATULATIONS:

Congratulations to Forest Park Police Officer Gilbert on the birth of Little Miss Lindsey Prichard on March 26, 2023. She was 6lbs and 7oz, both mom and Lindsey are doing great.

**NEW BUSINESS:**

1. **Council Discussion on Entering into Agreement with Axon Enterprise, Inc for New/Updated Tasers**
- Police

Background/History:

The Forest Park Police Department is requesting the City Council's approval to enter into a five-year contract with AXON for the purchase of 60 Taser 7 Conducted Electrical Weapons (CEWs). The last payment for the current contract is due 2024.

An audit was conducted by Certified Axon Taser Instructor Captain Keith McGhee for functionality, battery life, and the total number of Tasers available for officer use. Captain McGhee receives regular updates from Axon indicating CEW's that are beyond the lifespan and need to be upgraded.

During the month of February 2023, an audit revealed the following: 16 weapons were nonfunctional, 31 weapons had continuous problems with extremely low batteries that are non-serviceable. Captain McGhee received a written report from Axon Representative indicating that our current weapons (X26P) exceeded their five-year useful life on April 14, 2022, The Tasers are no longer covered under warranty, or covered by Axon for repair or maintenance. Additionally, our weapons system is no longer covered by Axon Liability Insurance. Due to the less than lethal weapons being obsolete, we are asking the City Council to approve the FPPD to enter into a new contract with Axon.

Comments/Discussion Governing Body:

Deputy Chief Johnson – We have tasers that we are having problems with, and it is time to enter into a new contract. We respectfully ask the mayor and council to consider going into a new contract.

Mayor Butler – The battery life for the body cameras, from what I understand the charge does not last for an entire shift.

Deputy Chief Johnson – That is correct, and it is something we investigated, but the cost was extremely high. We will continue to research this to find great equipment for a better price.

Mayor Butler – If they do not last an entire shift, how are they to charge the battery? Is it something they can do in the vehicle?

Deputy Chief Johnson – I believe they must bring them back to the office to recharge them. There are other batteries on charge, so they just swap them out.

2. Council Discussion on Approving the Removal and Installation of equipment on self-support tower - Planning & Com. Dev.

Background/History:

Authorization of the City Council to approve a Conditional Use Permit to allow AT&T and its authorized agent, Providence Real Estate Consulting, to remove and install antennas, modules and cabling on an existing cell tower located at 66 Barnett Road. The applicant has housed cell technology equipment on the existing tower for several years. The Planning Commission recommended approval at its March 16, 2023, meeting.

Comments/Discussion Governing Body:

LaShawn Gardiner, Director of Planning & Community Development – The tower currently exists and has been there for a number of years. They would like to remove existing equipment, and then to upgrade the equipment. It is at 66 Barnett Road.

3. Council Discussion on Approving a Conditional Use Permit for a Small Event Party Venue – Planning & Community Dev.

Background/History:

Authorization of the City Council to approve a conditional use permit to allow an event/party venue to host small gatherings, bridal showers and banquets at 1067 Forest Parkway, Ste. A. The business will operate on the weekend, Friday through Sunday. The space was formerly a party supply store. The property is zoned Institutional Commercial (IC). The district does not allow an event venue as permitted or conditional use but allows places of assembly as a conditional use. Examples of places of assembly uses are assembly halls, arenas, dance halls, pool/billiard halls and similar indoor amusement or recreation uses. Planning Commission recommended approval with conditions at its March 16, 2023, meeting.

Comments/Discussion Governing Body:

Councilmember James – Questions the conditions that the planning commission is recommending?

Lashawn Gardiner, Director of Planning & Community Development – One of the conditions related to parking standards, is the applicant will not be functioning, Monday – Friday, or Monday- Saturday. We asked her to provide information on how she would work it out with the tenants that are also in the parcel. She did provide information about those tenants that utilize the property, and they were fine.

4. Council Discussion on Approving an Agreement between COFP and Clayton County Public Schools for a Summer Food Service Program – Recreation & Leisure Services

Background/History:

The Clayton County Public Schools has provided free breakfast and lunch meals from June through July to children (18 years of age and under) at the Forest Park Community Recreation Center. The renewal of this agreement will allow children in the community that heavily depended on school breakfast and lunch to eat during the school year the opportunity to receive meals throughout the summer months.

Requesting Council to approve the agreement between Clayton County Public Schools and the City of Forest Park

Comments/Discussion Governing Body:

There were no comments/discussion from the governing body.

5. Sister Cities International Discussion – Executive Offices

Background/History:

On September 8, 2020, the Forest Park City Council Approved Resolution No. 20-21 authorizing participation in Sister Cities International. This initiative was created at President Eisenhower's 1956 White House conference on citizen diplomacy. It was envisioned as an organization that could be the hub for peace and prosperity by creating bonds between people from different cities around the world. By forming these relationships, it became the hopes of a nation where people of different cultures could celebrate and appreciate their differences and build partnerships that would lessen the chance of new conflict.

One of the key components of these Sister City relationships is Goodwill Missions, which offer opportunities to deepen friendships and cultural understanding between our sister-states. If it is the desire of the City of Forest Park to deepen commitments and relationships with Senegal, Africa it is requested that we discuss and approve sending a diplomatic goodwill delegation to the country.

Comments/Discussion Governing Body:

Ms. Felicia Davis – The City of Forest Park hosted the mayor of our sister city. I just came back from visiting Yen, and on the office wall there is a picture of the mayor with the president of Senegal. On the other wall is a picture of the mayor and our mayor. They wanted me to extend the invitation, when this delegation comes, they have planned a phenomenal welcome. There are benefits the city will enjoy as a result as well, with an expectation that a delegation will also come and visit us.

Councilmember James – The cost of \$50,000.00 to be added to the budget, what does that encompass.

Ms. Davis – I can speak to some of the cost for going. Hotel stay is nominal, airfares fluctuate, but about \$2,000-\$2,500 or less per person. It would be our hope as a city, that there will be some sort of a contribution. The budget is for the whole Sister City program, not just the delegation of that one trip. I do not know how it is completely written or how many people plan to go.

Mayor Butler – Right now we factored in 8 people, and this number was projected on the airfare. The hotel cost we were not sure of, so we budgeted more than expected to make sure we did not have to come back to the council. We are asking those that want to go to contribute from \$500-\$1,000.00, so they can have some investment in this whole process.

Ms. Davis – I can say, I just took 14 HBCU alumni students for 10 days and it ended up being \$50,000. We built a tree shelter and planted 103 trees and had a lot of transportation costs that the city will not have.

Councilmember James – If approved for the 2023-24 budget, will it come back to council once the delegation has been selected? Do we have to approve that process or is it going to be automatic?

City Manager – The delegation will be appointed by the council, so it will not necessarily come back.

Councilmember Gutierrez – I love this idea, and I think it exposes us to different cultures, to show the world what Forest Park is about, and to learn about other communities. At this time, I cannot support this because. I am fending for some of the events that I have here in my community, that were taken out of the last budget. If we can talk about this for the next budget year, and things in the community that I used to have I would love to support it. However, if we do not have money for things in our community, we don't have money for a foreign country.

Ms. Davis- Dr. Cooper, there is a \$50,000.00 state department grant, specifically for cultural exchange. It included Senegal and Guinea Bissau, and I will forward that.

Councilmember Gutierrez – Thank you, I know you are for our city, and I am not saying no. The status is we do not have funding for other things, and I want to make sure I am fair to my people here.

Councilmember Akins-Wells – I agree with Councilmember Gutierrez. I am not against it, but I am a councilwoman for the City of Forest Park, first. We were told we did not have any money to do things for the community that we serve. The events were taken away, and I would not feel comfortable. People are still reaching out to me about doing stuff here, but it is a no brainer to do it for another country. If we were okay here, and our residents and employees were taken care of then yes. I do not feel comfortable supporting something in another country when my people here are not getting that same support.

Mayor Butler – This item is being brought forward, because of the planning and preparation that is needed to go into it. It will not take effect until the next budget year. Which is what we will be discussing at our upcoming retreat in the next couple of weeks. We will ask people to invest in a non-refundable deposit, to make sure they have time to plan accordingly. I would like everyone to keep that in mind as we move forward.

Councilmember Gutierrez – Can we table it?

Mayor Butler – Yes, we can do whatever we want to do.

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 for Personnel, Litigation or Real Estate matters at 6:21pm.

Motion made by Councilmember Antoine, Seconded by Councilmember James.

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

It was moved to reconvene back into the Work Session at 7:35pm.

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

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

ADJOURNMENT:

It was a motion to adjourn the Work Session Meet at 7:35pm.

Motion made by Councilmember James, Seconded by Councilmember Gutierrez.

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

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