



## CITY COUNCIL WORK SESSION

Monday, January 06, 2025 at 6:00 PM  
Council Chambers and YouTube Livestream

Website: [www.forestparkga.gov](http://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 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:** The meeting was called to order at 6:00 pm.

**ROLL CALL:** A quorum was established.

Attendee's Name	Title	Absent	Present
Angelyne Butler, MPA	Mayor, At-Large		X
Kimberly James	Council Member, Ward 1		X
Hector Gutierrez	Council Member, Ward 3		X
Latresa Akins-Wells	Council Member, Ward 4 Arrived at 6:03pm		X
Allan Mears	Council Member, Ward 5		X

John Wiggins, Finance Director; Jeremi Patterson, Deputy Finance, HR Director, Diane Lewis; Deputy HR Director, Fire Chief Latosha Clemons; David Halcomb, Deputy Fire Chief; Joshua Cox; IT Director; Pauline Warrior, Chief of Staff; Joshua Cox, IT Director; Rodney Virgil; Level 2 Support Engineer, Nigel Wattlely; Deputy Director Public Works, Public Works Director, Alton Matthews; Tarik Maxwell, Recreation Director, Marsellas Williams, Economic Director; Nicole Dozier, Planning Community Director; Michelle Hood, Deputy City Clerk; Brandon Criss, Police Chief; and Danielle Matricardi, City Attorney.

**ADOPTION OF THE CONSENT AGENDA WITH ANY ADDITIONS / DELETIONS:**

It was moved to adopt the consent agenda as printed.

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

Voting Yea: Councilmember James, Councilmember Gutierrez, Councilmember Mears. The motion passed.

**ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA WITH ANY ADDITIONS / DELETIONS:**

It was moved to amend the agenda to include Council Discussion of the 2025 Mayor Pro Tem.

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

Voting Yea: Councilmember James, Councilmember Gutierrez, Councilmember Mears. The motion passed.

**CONSENT AGENDA: There was no discussion on these items.****1. Council Discussion to Surplus Vehicles: Fire and EMS Department****Background and History:**

The Fire and EMS Department requests the Council's approval for surplus vehicles. The vehicles will be placed on public surplus for auction. The vehicles' year, make and model range from 1988 to 2015, exceeding the average 7-year vehicle replacement schedule. Please see the attached vehicle listing we are requesting Councils' approval on, so we can move forward with the auction. Additionally, four vehicles previously approved by the Council on 6/21/2021 are included in the attached list.

**2. Council Discussion to Adopt the City of Forest Park Pedestrian Bridge Feasibility Study- Planning and Community Development****Background/History:**

The City of Forest Park Planning & Community Development Department is requesting approval for the adoption of the City of Forest Park Pedestrian Bridge Feasibility Study. The City of Forest Park received funding from the Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC) to perform a feasibility study and develop a concept plan for a potential pedestrian bridge connecting the City Center-City Hall Complex to Downtown Main Street. The City of Forest Park retained Kimley-Horn to perform the feasibility study, prepare a Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT) concept report, and engage key stakeholders and the public.

The purpose of this study is to evaluate the feasibility of constructing a pedestrian bridge over the Norfolk-Southern Railroad and SR 331/Forest Parkway. This study provides a comprehensive analysis of the project's viability and addresses key factors such as safety, accessibility, and community benefits. It outlines the potential for improved pedestrian connectivity to Starr Park, reduced traffic congestion due to the train, and enhanced public health through walking. The study also identifies cost, environmental impact, and funding options, helping to make an informed decision on whether the bridge is a worthwhile investment for the community. If the Mayor and Council approve to adopt the pedestrian bridge feasibility study, the approval will assist the project with moving forward to the next stages and potentially securing funding, conducting detailed design work, and beginning the planning and construction phases of the pedestrian bridge. The approval will also signify that the project is deemed viable, aligns with the

community's goals, and allows for further exploration of the planning, costs, and environmental impacts necessary to implement the bridge.

## **OLD BUSINESS: NONE**

## **NEW BUSINESS:**

- 3. Council Discussion of a Resolution to Become a Member of the Georgia Interlocal Risk Management Agency and Participate in one or more of GIRMA Funds- Human Resource**

### **Background/History:**

The Ashley Wilson Act (HB 451) mandates that all public entities in Georgia provide a supplemental benefit program for first responders diagnosed with post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) as a result of exposure to traumatic events encountered in the line of duty. This legislation establishes a one-time financial safety net designed to help first responders cover uninsured costs associated with PTSD treatment and recovery.

The program ensures that first responders can access benefits quickly and confidentially, mitigating concerns about stigma or potential job loss. Importantly, this Act does not affect employer health plans, which are already required to cover PTSD and other mental health conditions.

This new program, referred to as the PTSD Program, becomes effective on January 1, 2025. Local government participation is required under this legislation, which includes completing an application and signing a participation agreement to implement the program. Approval of this agenda item will authorize the City to comply with the requirements of HB 451 and provide this critical benefit to its first responders.

**Ms. Lewis, Deputy HR Director-** highlighted that this program is a tremendous resource for first responders and thoughtfully designed to alleviate any financial burdens associated with a diagnosis. She explained that MetLife had created a program fully compliant with the new bill and featured two key components: a diagnostic benefit and a lifetime, long-term PTSD disability benefit.

- 4. Council Discussion of Case # CUP-2024-04, Conditional Use Permit to open and operate a place of worship within the Institutional Commercial District (IC).** Planning and Community Development (public hearing in regular session)

### **Background/History:**

The applicant is requesting a Conditional Use permit to open and operate a place of worship at 528 Forest Pkwy Ste. G. This property is found within a commercial strip plaza that has nine additional business suites on site. The square footage of the suite is approximately 1,270 square feet, and the applicant proposes to utilize this space to host worship services, gatherings, and church events. The hours of operation will be Monday to Friday, 10 am -5 pm, for administration, planning, and ministry functions; Friday and Saturday, 7 pm – 10 pm; and Sunday services will be held at 10:30 am. The proposed capacity would be about twenty (20) to thirty (30) members in attendance for Sunday service, and on Friday and Saturday, the applicant advised that there would be approximately fifty (50) to sixty (60) or more members in attendance.

Staff have reviewed the criteria for a conditional use permit, and the applicant does not meet the necessary criteria for approval and will have a significant impact on traffic and neighboring businesses

based on the size of parking availability, the size of the lot, and the influx of members in attendance. During the evening events on Friday and Saturday, if there are 50-60+ vehicles at one time, there would also be an increase in traffic flow on Forest Parkway and entering and exiting the parking lot. On Thursday, December 19, 2024, The City of Forest Park Planning Commission voted to deny the conditional use permit request. If the Mayor and Council deny the proposed Conditional Use Permit Request, the applicant will not be able to move forward with their request to open and operate a place of worship within the Institutional Commercial District (IC).

**Ms. Dozier, PCD Director**, noted that the applicant had submitted a petition to the Planning Commission Board, which was recommended for denial due to concerns about accommodating sixty (60) patrons in a 1,200+ square foot space. She also raised issues regarding parking availability, emphasizing that the current location houses nine (9) additional tenants and offers only six (6) to seven (7) parking spaces per unit, which could exacerbate parking challenges.

**Mayor Bulter**- noted this item would be heard at a public hearing during the regular session meeting.

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

**Councilmember Akins-Wells**- expressed her understanding that a moratorium was in place. Director Dozier clarified that she did not believe a moratorium currently applied to storefront churches. Mr. Clark confirmed that the existing moratorium is limited to beauty and barber shops. Mayor Butler inquired whether implementing a moratorium for storefront churches might be worth considering. Mr. Clark Jr. suggested directing the City Attorney to establish a temporary moratorium while revising the criteria for places of assembly. Councilmember Akins-Wells emphasized that she is not opposed to churches and noted their abundance in the area; she expressed a desire to introduce more food and retail businesses.

**Mr. Clark Jr., City Manager**- proposed revising ordinances to restrict places of assembly from occupying storefronts and requiring them to operate as standalone facilities. He further noted that staff would need direction to define the scope and duration of the moratorium while the codes are being updated. Mr. Clark Jr. asked the city attorney if the moratorium could be placed at tonight's meeting. Ms. Matricardi, the City Attorney, noted that the moratorium ordinance must be brought back before the council.

**Councilmember James**- inquired if the moratorium would be for storefronts and not churches occupying another church. Mr. Clark Jr. explained that churches are classified as places of assembly and that the moratorium would prevent applications from being accepted until the revisions are finalized.

**Councilmember James**- re-worded her question to inquire if a moratorium would be in place for an existing church building that is not occupied but would like to be occupied by a church. Ms. Matricardi stated, based on the proposed revisions, that it is not a use that the moratorium would prohibit. Ms. Matricardi also noted if the planning department is taking applicants and is unclear, to reach out to, and she will look at them.

5. **Council Discussion of Case # TA-2024-06 and TA-2024-07 Text Amendments for Article B. – Zoning Districts, and Design Guidelines Established, Section 8-8-50 Gillem District (GZ) and Section 8-8-42 Urban Village District (UV) of the City of Forest Code of Ordinances.** - Planning and Community Development (public hearing in regular session).

#### **Background/History:**

The Planning & Community Development Department has discovered some areas of the Code of Ordinances that need to be amended to allow **tiny homes and cottage dwellings as additional housing types within the city**. **The proposed text amendments will be added to Section 8-8-50 Gillem District (GZ) and Section 8-8-42 Urban Village District (UV) of the City of Forest Code of Ordinances. On Thursday, December 19, 2024, the City of Forest Park Planning Commission voted to approve the amendment to the ordinance.** If the Mayor and Council approves the proposed text amendments, The City of Forest Park will be able to move forward with allowing developments of tiny homes and cottage dwellings within the City of Forest Park's Gillem District and Urban Village District.

**Ms. Dozier, PCD Director-** noted that additional definitions and residential uses within the Fort Gillem and Urban Village District were added to include tiny homes and cottages, and some development standards were also included as a basis for use in terms of evaluation applicants.

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

**Councilmember Gutierrez-** inquired if this would be for standalone or residents wanting to build a small home in their backyard. Ms. Dozier noted it would be for standalone development for those wishing to develop in those two districts.

**Councilmember Mears-** asked about adding square footage to the structures. Ms. Dozier noted that a tiny home is a dwelling unit that is 500 sq. ft. or less, and cottage dwellings are dwellings that are 600 sq. ft. or less.

**Mayor Bulter-** inquired if staff was getting more requests or if this was more of a proactive approach. Ms. Dozier noted it's a proactive approach and mentioned that she noticed neighboring cities and counties have places that are establishing tiny home communities. Since Forest Park is looking to move forward, staff thought it would be important to allow tiny homes and cottages.

**Mayor Butler-** asked if this would be strictly for the Gillem District. Ms. Dozier noted that it would be for the Gillem and Urban Village Districts, noting that the reason for choosing those districts is the availability of land. Ms. Dozier also indicated if there are requests for tiny home communities within other zoning districts, staff will look into that.

**Mr. Clark Jr.-** noted that If the governing body believes that the construction of tiny homes is suitable for neighborhood communities, then it could be revived as such. However, as with all efforts to provide more diverse housing options in this community, the goal is to avoid an overabundance of any one type—whether tiny homes, townhomes, or apartments. The aim is to achieve a balanced and diverse housing landscape. While the likelihood of a tiny home community in the Gillam area seems uncertain, given its industrial nature, this approach allows us to evaluate potential applications based on the availability of land.

6. **Council Discussion of Case # TA-2024-09 Text Amendment for Title 8. – Planning and Development, Chapter 7. Subdivisions, Article G. – Fees, Section 8-7-81 Fee Schedule, of the City of Forest Park Code of Ordinances to amend such section and update fee schedule text. - Planning and Community Development** (public hearing in the regular session).

#### **Background/History:**

The Planning & Community Development Department has discovered some areas of the Code of Ordinances that need to be amended for clarity and formal processes. **Planning & Community**

**Development fees have not been updated since 1959. The fees have been updated to cover the service cost while remaining competitive with neighboring cities. Additionally, the text has been updated to reflect current practice in determining fees. This text update was also approved on Thursday, December 19, 2024, by the City of Forest Park Planning Commission.** If the Mayor and Council approve the proposed text amendment to update the fee schedule, The city of Forest Park will continue to move forward and remain competitive with neighboring cities.

**Ms. Dozier, PCD Director-** stated that a fee study was conducted within Clayton County. Ms. Dozier included a chart comparing the city's fees with those of Clayton County, Jonesboro, Riverdale, and Morrow. Based on the fees charged in these areas, Ms. Dozier recommended adopting the fee schedule outlined as item number nine in the packet, which specifies fees for various uses, such as commercial rezonings, residential rezonings, land development permits, and similar activities.

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

**Councilmember James-** inquired if the fee changes would have a negative impact. Ms. Dozier explained that based on the current fees, the city charges \$200-400 less than neighboring cities. Ms. Dozier included in the comparative table that the established fees are still the lowest of all those cities and municipalities.

**Councilmember James-** also inquired about how the collected fees would be utilized. Ms. Dozier responded that she believed the funds would return to the general fund. Mr. Clark Jr. added that the fees had not been updated since 1959, and this amendment was intended to align the fees with current costs and practices. He further noted that, while the updated fees were still lower than those in neighboring jurisdictions, they would help cover the cost of services provided.

**Councilmember Gutierrez-** mentioned his belief that Mr. Shelby had previously updated the fees. Ms. Dozier clarified that she was unsure to what extent any changes had been made, but she had taken the city's current fees and updated them accordingly.

**Councilmember Mears-** noted he believes the city needs this.

**Councilmember Gutierrez-** noted that he does not believe the fees have remained unchanged since 1959, but rather the ordinance itself. Ms. Matricardi added that while some fees have been updated, others, such as those for preliminary plats and final plats, have not.

7. **Council Discussion of Case # TA-2024-10 Text Amendment for Title 8. – Planning and Development, Chapter 7. Subdivisions, Article B. – Procedure, Article C. Plats and Data of the City of Forest Park Code of Ordinances to amend such section and update plat instructions-** Planning and Community Development (public hearing in regular session)

#### **Background/History:**

The Planning & Community Development Department has discovered some areas of the Code of Ordinances that need to be amended for clarity and formal processes. **Planning & Community Development plat procedures have not been updated since 1959. For purposes of clarity and transparency, the plat procedures must be updated to reflect the current review and approval process. This text update also received approval from the City of Forest Park Planning Commission on Thursday, December 19, 2024.**



If the Mayor and Council approve the proposed text amendment to update Plat Procedures and Data, The city of Forest Park Planning & Community Development department will be able to move forward with procedures and data that currently reflect our current review and approval process.

**Ms. Dozier-** noted that one of the tasks asked by the city attorney was to review the plat review and plat information. Ms. Dozier included that it removes outdated language regarding the plat process, including references to the clerk's office and other areas no longer in use. This amendment updates the ordinance to align with our current practices for plat reviews, including both preliminary and final approvals.

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

**Mayor Bulter-** inquired about doing a comprehensive review of everything about the PCD Department. Ms. Dozier noted that part of the text amendments proposed by the Planning and Community Development Department stemmed from the initial evaluation of the zoning ordinance conducted when she first joined. She was then asked to identify the zoning text amendments needed to enable the department to operate more efficiently. As a result, approximately 10 text amendments were proposed, with this being one of them. This particular amendment was also added at the request of the attorney's office. Mr. Clark Jr. noted that staff is working through similar updates in other departments. For example, the SOPs for the police department, which are significantly more extensive, will take considerably more time to complete. Mr. Clark Jr. stated that the city attorney is collaborating with the HR department to overhaul our personnel policies.

8. **Council Discussion of Case # TA-2024-11 Text Amendments for Title 8. – Planning and Development, Chapter 8. Zoning, Article E. – Tree Protection, of the City of Forest Park Code of Ordinances to amend such section, adding section 8-8-142 Tree Bank Ordinance. - Planning and Community Development (public hearing in regular session)**

#### **Background/History:**

The Planning & Community Development Department has discovered some areas of the Code of Ordinances that need to be amended for clarity and formal processes. **This update promotes environmental sustainability, enhances urban greenery, and mitigates the loss of trees due to development. A treebank allows developers to offset tree removal by contributing to a fund dedicated to tree planting and maintenance in other areas, ensuring that the community continues to benefit from tree cover. This approach helps improve air quality, manage stormwater, and preserve biodiversity while also fostering compliance with environmental regulations.**

**On Thursday, December 19, 2024, the City of Forest Park Planning Commission voted to approve the amendment to the ordinance. If the Mayor and Council approve the proposed text amendment, the City of Forest Park will be able to move forward with establishing a tree bank ordinance.**

**Ms. Dozier-** noted that this amendment was to promote environmental sustainability and mitigate tree loss due to development. Ms. Dozier included the tree bank, allowing developers to offset tree removal by contributing funds or replanting trees in other areas. This helps improve air quality, manage stormwater, and preserve the community's tree cover.

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

**Mayor Butler-** inquired if the city would have an arborist on call. Ms. Dozier noted that the staff's intent as part of the soil and erosion RFP request was to include landscaping. Ms. Dozier stated that this

approach ensures that the city has a landscaper familiar with trees and related elements who can oversee this specific part of the tree ordinance. The plan is to bring in a part-time arborist and hire a landscape architect. This will allow us to evaluate both roles and determine the most appropriate based on our plans and needs moving forward.

**Mr. Clark Jr.-** stated that he believes the intent of this ordinance, as Councilmember Gutierrez clarified, is to ensure that if a developer needs to clear a certain amount of space, they are charged accordingly under the provisions of this ordinance for those trees. Mr. Clark Jr. alluded that the ordinance does not speak to private property for residential trees.

**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 6:34 p.m. for Personnel, Litigation, or Real Estate matters.

The motion was made by Councilmember James and seconded by Councilmember Mears

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

It was moved to reconvene the work session at 7:12 p.m.

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

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

**ADJOURNMENT:**

Mayor Butler adjourned the meeting at 7:13 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.**