



## CITY COUNCIL WORK SESSION

Monday, July 17, 2023, at 6:00 PM  
Council Chambers and YouTube Livestream

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**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

Ricky L. Clark Jr, City Manager  
S. Diane White, City Clerk  
Mike Williams, City Attorney

### APPROVED MINUTES

**CALL TO ORDER/WELCOME:** The meeting was called to order at 6:04pm by Mayor Butler.

**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		✓

Jeremi Patterson, Deputy Finance Director; LaShawn Gardiner, Director Planning & Community Development; Javon Llyod, PIO, Diane Lewis, Deputy HR Director; Bobby Jinks, Public Works Director; Nigel Wattlely, Deputy Public Works Director; Bruce Abrahams, Director Economic Development; Latosha Clemons, Fire Chief, David Halcome, Deputy Fire Chief; Police Chief; Brandon Criss; Tarik Maxwell, Parks and Recreation, and Joshua Cox, IT Director.

**PRESENTATION(S):**

The agenda was amended to move item number 2 "Proclamation in recognition of Muslim Heritage Month" under presentation from the Regular Session to number 1 on the Work Session.

Motion made by Councilmember James, Seconded by Councilmember Antione.

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

**Proclamation in recognition of Muslim Heritage Month – Legislative Offices****Background/History:**

"Muslim American Heritage Month" celebrates the contributions of Americans of Muslim heritage to the United States from its founding through the present. The national month's observance spotlights Muslims embracing freedom to pursue the American Dream and celebrates Muslim contributions to American society.

Forest Park has significant numbers of Muslims, and such Proclamation will continue to make Forest Park an inclusive and diverse city. 25 other cities across Georgia are expected to do a Proclamation/Resolution regarding Muslim American Heritage Month. HB 360 - a bill re: Muslim American Heritage Month is a bipartisan bill currently in the House's "Special Rules Committee."

Mayor Butler, read the proclamation to be presented recognizing July as Muslim Heritage Month, and she and the council took pictures.

1. Presentation from the Executive Director of the Clayton Housing Authority as a general introduction to the community and to provide a general overview of the Housing Authority.

There was no one available to present this item.

2. Presentation Regarding "READY REBOUND" – Getting employees back on the job faster. - Marcus Laurinitis, Account Executive.

**Background/History:**

When public safety employees get injured, their absence has a profound impact on a department's morale, budget and staffing. Ready Rebound uses the principles of sports medicine to quickly bring your valuable team members "back to the field".

**Chief Clemons** - I would like to introduce Marcus Laurenitis and Dr Byron Kennedy that's going to do a presentation on ready rebound getting employees back to full duty after injury.

**Marcus Laurenitis** – Gave a presentation on sports medicine of injury for first responders. They have built a network in the Atlanta area with specialists to help expedite care. The city employees, family members, retirees all will receive a 1-800 number and will receive assistance 24/7 from a person. It will be triage; they will work with the members to find out the injury and find the best specialist in the area. They make the appointment for the members and call them back to let them know whom to go see. You will be assigned an advocate to follow-up with you on a weekly basis to ensure you are going to your PT, let you know that

your MRIs approved. If you must go to a doctor's appointment and your vehicle is broken down, they send transportation. This way the person can focus on healing.

**Comments/Discussion from Governing Body:**

**Councilmember Gutierrez** – This is good thank you for bringing this to our people.

**Councilmember Wells** – This is a great idea, thank you chief for bringing this.

**OLD BUSINESS:**

**3. Council Consideration of Request to Reconsider Previous Vote on Redistricting–** Legislative Offices

**Background/History:**

The mayor has proposed that the City Council reconsider its vote from last week's special-called meeting regarding redistricting the City's Wards in order to balance their populations. The City Manager and City Attorney have previously recommended that the ward populations be balanced in order to assure that each resident's vote counts equally to every other resident's vote.

The vote to approve the revised districts failed by 3 votes against and 2 votes in favor. In order for a reconsideration vote to be duly considered, only one of the three who voted against the matter may make the motion to reconsider.

**Mayor Butler** - I wanted to come down and speak to the council directly. This item is a council consideration; a request to reconsider previous vote on. I am speaking to Councilwoman James, Councilman Antoine, and Councilman Mears. Prior to our special call meeting I was in the mindset of the timing of it all, and we all can agree that the timing is horrible. Even with our emotions and our feelings, we do have an obligation, that when something is brought to our attention that we do address it appropriately.

I do find that while some of this is teetering on personnel matters in our city attorney, I must be very careful as to what I say. I will say that as our city attorney, and as our directors, as Councilwoman James let's say who are our subject matter experts; they do have an obligation to bring things to us in a sufficient time frame. So, for us to be at this juncture speaks to the mediocrity that we have been receiving; and because we are going to continue in an executive session, I will refrain from additional comments. Just know that if the city manager and the council are okay with mediocrity, then my words may be mute, but just know that I am not.

In addition to that, at the bed mark of any democracy is our right to vote and I do believe that it is our obligation to ensure that we are having our elections that are free and clear of any constitutional ambiguity that may be before us. So, when it comes down to the regular session and it comes up again, I am really going to ask councilman James, Councilman Antoine, and Councilman Mears to really reconsider this act because time is truly of the essence. The longer we wait the longer the prolonged effect that this just disenfranchisement can have on our residence which I think will do us all a disservice.

**Comments/Discussion from Governing Body:**

**Councilmember James** – Madam Mayor, I do appreciate you coming forth in this, but I speak for myself personally. I will not be in favor of redistricting simply because the qualifying is next month maybe three weeks away or so. Although I do agree that we must redo the lines, as you said the timing right now is not a good time.

**Mayor Butler** - Yes and let me just address that quickly, because I asked Mr. Clark over the weekend to prepare a postcard, so the city could be prepared to mail every week if we have to those voters that are impacted by this redistricting. This is to ensure that they are aware that this is occurring, and that they have been impacted. I know the elections department will do their part as well, but I do not want to solely rely on them, because the onus is on us.

**Councilmember Antione** – Why can't we do it later?

**Mayor Butler** – Why would we when we can act now.

**Councilmember Antione** - In terms of the people, doing the right thing at the wrong time is always not the right thing. I am trying to figure out if the elections qualifying is next month is that fair to the residents, that might not be aware of this because we are rushing.

**Mayor Butler** – What is not fair to the residents is that this has been neglected on behalf of the city. Now keep in mind this is something that has come up at one point or another in our conversations, even after the census had taken place, we knew this was going to be upon us. Our former city manager is not here to speak for himself but for one reason or another it was not brought to us, that is why I do bear some onus on our city attorney because he too knew that this matter needed to come before us. It was not until Mr. Clark got into this seat that he understood the magnitude of what we had neglected, that is why we are in this predicament we are in now. So, I am asking you to be more proactive than we have been and taking this approach to passing it.

**Councilmember Gutierrez** - I voted for it so I do not know what you want to hear from me. I agree, but something that really made me think about it was knowing that it is the right thing to do. I do share Councilwoman James sentiment of it being the wrong time. The margin of votes is so small, and I want everything to be the right way. I won by seven votes, and Councilman Antione was three, I think. All votes make a difference and I do not want to be looked at as a municipality that just did not do the right thing at the right time. I share your sentiment also, not knowing of this I wish this was brought up before.

**Mayor Butler** - We all know that the timing is horrible. That is one thing that we can all unanimously agree on, but to know and still not do anything I think is a disservice to our positions as elected officials.

**Councilmember Wells**- You said it all, I did not understand why it was not voted on. It is like we are asking for a lawsuit. If you know it is wrong, it has nothing to do with time and fix it. Why would we prolong it? I agree and I am one of the ones that will be impacted some people are not. I am not worried about it; I do know that some of the residents in my ward have an issue with it. Some people from other wards are ready for a change and want to go to other wards. I would like to discuss the actual lines of the streets if there is time to do this.

**Councilmember Mears** – This has to be done, but I am going to hold my position until after the elections. For the next elections it will give us time to get it worked out. It is too quick, and I would rather leave it where it is right now.

**City Attorney** - The recommendation that I have had for a while now is that once the Census Data was in that we would go ahead and balance the wards. As you saw from the report last week the highest deviation is seven percent, the lowest is negative seven percent. What that means is we have one ward that has seven percent more residents than it would be if the ward lines were balanced. So, ideally you would adjust the lines so that all the wards have the same number of voting age residents in those wards.

The guidance we have received from GMA from case law is that a 10 percent deviation for a local government is acceptable. It is presumed that the ward lines are okay. What that means is you could have Wards, where you could have up to 10 percent deviation. My point is the fact that the council has opted to wait until the next election cycle to change the ward lines is defensible under case law, but it remains my recommendation that you do it sooner rather than later. There is still time to make the adjustments prior to this current election cycle.

**City Manager** - We reached out to the state to begin this process with minimal impact. To all of the council members we recognized the timing, but as you know with this process in order for us to get to the state reapportionments office we have to be invited. Our local delegation chair gave us the invitation matter of fact we got a meeting the following week with them to start this process. I can share with you as I shared in our previous meeting this is the right thing to do, however we recognize this is just horrible timing. My commitment should this pass is that every resident in this community will be notified.

Mayor Butler is correct; she did contact me on Saturday to talk about this postcard. I think it is a great idea because we can send this mailer to every household. So, the idea is ensuring that our residents know I can assure you they will know. In addition to that, based upon other actions of this council we will be releasing a citywide app next month to which we will also be able to push this and information continuously via that. The positive seven percent as well as the negative seven percent deviation is just something that we want to clarify. If we need to get out with staff and knock on doors, we will do what we need to do to ensure that our residents in this community know of the magnitude of this change should the council approve.

**Councilmember Gutierrez**- The deviation of seven percent you hear, and you might think what that is. So, the average is 3900 and you times that, seven percent which is 0.7 is 273 votes. If everybody in those three blocks were to vote that's more than my whole entire election. I had 139 to 132 which is like 271. That is the difference and hopefully more people will come out and vote. The reality is that seven percent is like roughly 270 votes that are going one way and not the other way.

**Councilmember Akins Wells** - We keep talking about that part of it, I want the attorney to explain it, maybe they do not understand the liability of the city if we do not do it, what could happen?

**City Attorney** – It is not so much liability. If a lawsuit was filed and it was determined that seven percent was not acceptable, and as I indicated a few moments ago that the courts have ruled that up to ten percent deviation is defensible. In this case if the court found that for whatever reason seven percent were not defensible, then you would have an order to change the lines and whether that could all happen prior to this election if in the context of litigation, I couldn't speak to that. We all have said timing is on our side, but that is the extent of the liability. It is just a question of any legal expense of defending the current lines as they are, and whatever that cost would be you could avoid that potential cost by changing them now.

**Councilmember Akins Wells** -I am confused. Even in the email I did not get that from you, I vote to understand. If they want to wait that is fine, in the initial email I think the mayor sent. It was litigation and lawsuit, and other things can be filed before the election.

**City Manager** – The constitutional challenge, relative to one person one vote.

**City Attorney** – That could be, but in terms of the timing. However, long it would take from the time of the lawsuit to the time the order is in. I cannot speak to how soon that would be. All that could be avoided if the city acted prior to.

**Councilmember Mears** – I agree that we need to bring them in line. According to the number of people that voted in the last election to the number of people that are eligible to vote in the election it really would not make a difference. When you put it all together and you take the number that is eligible to vote, and take the number that did vote, all of us together combined collectively, is not enough to make a panic and want to run and do it all at one time. I am in agreement if the state says we need to bring it in line, but we do not need to hurry and do it right now.

**Mayor Butler** – We just heard Councilmember Gutierrez say he won by seven votes and Councilmember Antione by three votes. Every vote does count, and it is not up to us to determine the urgency and the necessity of this matter based on our opinion of who and who will not vote. It is a constitutional right and people have this right if they are going to be impacted by lines being redrawn. So, it is not up to you to say if it is a necessity or not.

**Councilmember Antione** – I heard the city manager say everybody is going to be able to know that the changes are coming up.

**City Manager** -That is my commitment.

**Councilmember Antione** – Why are we still talking about this if everyone is going to be notified.

**Mayor Butler** – Keep in mind the only wards that are impacted are 3, 4, and 5. That will be the focus moving forward because we will have qualifying coming up for those respective wards. Ultimately the entire city is impacted and so while the primary focus is on wards 3, 4, and 5 then definitely everyone throughout the city will know that they are impacted by the lines being redrawn.

**Councilmember Antione** – Everyone is going to get the mailing?

**Mayor Butler** – I called Mr. Clark about 6:30 am. It was on my heart all weekend and so we went through extensively how we could make sure that we do our part to make sure our residents are notified of this change.

**Councilmember Akins Wells** – I think it is very distasteful to know this is something that needs to be done and does not do it. There are a lot of personal feelings involved. We are going to put it off and risk having to pay out some money, because we are afraid that someone is going to complain, and they don't have an election coming up. Let's do it at their election not our elections. That says a lot about the people sitting up here against.

**NEW BUSINESS:**

4. **Council Discussion and Approval on Conditional Use Permit (CUP-2023-05) - 4140 Jonesboro Rd for Self-Storage** – Planning & Community Development

**Background/History:**

This is a request for a conditional use permit to allow a 6,152 square foot renovation in the rear of the International Discount Mall to build self-storage units in the rear of the facility. The self-storage units will be rented by existing mall tenants and the general public. The property is currently zoned GC (General Commercial). The subject property fronts Jonesboro Road and is surrounded by several commercial and retail businesses to the North, West, and South. Parcels located in unincorporated Clayton County is East of the property, and Scott Road is west of the property. Mini-warehouses and storage facilities under the current code are permitted as a conditional use if approved by the governing body. The Planning Commission recommended Approval with the following conditions: (1) The applicant must obtain a building permit for interior renovations; (2) The applicant will provide a letter of approval/consent from the property owner; (3) The applicant will provide detail renderings of what proposed additions will look like; (4) The applicant will provide storage policies for owners; (5) The applicant will provide a circulation plan for entry and exit of the location for self-storage.

**SaVaughn Irons** – This facility has brought to my attention that the business owners do not have a business license. Based on that there will be some additional conditions to follow. Only individuals that have a spot and a valid business license can use the storage facility within the City of Forest Park. Two, must have active valid and current business license. Three rears of property where post storage facility entrance and exit must be well lit and cannot be dark at any time for any reasons. Four if applicant is business owner, we have a right to refusal every booth has to have an active business license with the City of Forest Park.

**Comments/Discussion from Governing Body:**

**Councilmember James** -Just for clarity the storage facility is not for the public it is just for the business owners that currently occupy the plaza.

**SaVaughn Irons** – Yes. From our conversation the owner advised there will be storage facilities developed in the interior of the back of the International Discount Mall, and that it would be for the business owners that occupy the discount mall.

**Councilmember James** – Is that something we can control if we approve to have a storage facility built. Is that something that we can monitor. How can we control it not just being a public facility.

**SaVaughn Irons** – Based on the information provided they would have to provide us with detailed information before we would provide an overall approval. Based on the conditions that were required and also the additional requirements or conditions that were proposed. We would need a detailed outline of everything they are proposing in order to provide them the approval.

**Councilmember James** – For instance if there are 10 units, are we requiring a license for each unit or are we going to just approve all ten and then whoever comes in comes in?

**SaVaughn Irons** – Based on the demographics of the current mall it will only be accessible to the people that have a current business license. If they have a current business license and are inside the International Discount Mall, then they would be able to rent them based on the owner proposed use of storage.

**Councilmember Akins Wells** – How will we be able to monitor if they have license or not? One way we can is to hold the owner accountable. We can just say no and turn it down and hold him accountable for making sure everyone in the business has a license. I say not to approve of this and give them time to get themselves together. You cannot ask us to approve something, and your tenants are not doing what they are supposed to do.

**SaVaughn Irons** – Currently, our code enforcement office along with the police department are doing business licenses sweep. As we speak, I have had an influx of business licenses requests and zoning verification for this property. They will continue to do sweeps to make sure that every person occupying the business is current with the business license standards.

**Councilmember Akins Wells-** I still say no till everyone has a license because we will not be able to monitor if this person that has this storage has a license.

**Mayor Butler** – If I heard correctly this will be for the tenants that are currently in this discount mall?

**SaVaughn Irons** – Correct.

**Mayor Butler** – I just read that it will be for existing mall tenants and the general public.

**SaVaughn Irons** – They were proposing to use it for the public. What we have discussed with them is use for the tenants only.

**Mayor Butler** – Was that before or after this agenda was published?

**SaVaughn Irons** – That was during the Planning Commission meeting, which was prior to today.

**Mayor Butler** – I had in my mind to veto this item if this were to pass based largely on what Councilwoman Wells was saying. They do not have business licenses, all of them. So, how are you going to come to us with a request and you haven't fulfilled your basic obligation to the city. Then I would want it to be exactly what it is. All these changes need to be on the agenda itself and not afterwards. If this were to pass, Mike please have my veto prepared.

5. **Council Discussion and Approval on Rezoning from RS to GC-4233 Thurman Rd.** – Planning & Community Development

**Background/History:**

The applicant is requesting to rezone the subject property from RS (Single Family Residential) to GC (General Commercial). The property is located at 4233 Thurman Road, parcel #1317A B014, Forest Park, Georgia, and is 0.287 acres. Records reflect that a structure was built in 1965, and the In-N-Out Groceries convenience store operated at the location since 2014. A fire destroyed the building in 2022. The store prior to the fire was a pre-existing non-conforming commercial use. The purpose of the rezoning is to bring the use into conformance of the current zoning category of GC. **The Planning Commission recommended to Approve the Rezoning from RS to GC with the following conditions: Reduce the front setback from 25 ft. to 14.62 ft., reduce the side setback from 10 ft. to 2.50 ft., reduce the rear setback from 30 ft. to 12.42 ft, the property shall be for a convenience store only, with no automobile gas sales, the building exterior shall be of brick, stone, or combination thereof, and landscaping shall be planted around the perimeter of the building.** If the rezoning with the noted conditions is approved the applicant will be required to submit an application to the Urban Design & Review Board for



review and approval of landscaping and exterior design of the building façade prior to receiving a building permit. Any changes or deviations from the recommended approval will have to go back before the Planning Commission.

**SaVaughn Irons** – We have been working with this applicant regarding this issue based on a previous zoning of the district. We wanted to make sure based on the peculiar shape of the lot that if granted, they are up to par as far as current zoning and setbacks even though we are asking for a reduction.

**Comments/Discussion from Governing Body:**

**Councilmember Gutierrez** – The permit is still for them to be a store?

**SaVaughn Irons** – Correct, previously this location was a store already. It burned down so they will just be rebuilding for what they previously were. The issue is that the zone is single family residential. For them to be able to rebuild it would have to be rezoned just that parcel for general commercial to operate as the store.

6. **Council Discussion and Approval on Conditional Use Permit (CUP-2023-04)- 5370 Ash Street – Planning & Community Development**

**Background/History:**

The applicant is requesting a Conditional Use Permit to operate a youth performing arts facility, rehabilitation group home for teens, summer camp, health clinic and an adult education program at 5370 Ash St. This property is located within the Single-Family Residential District (RS). Per Section 8-8-28 Single Family Residential District (RS), Places of worship, private school and daycare centers require conditional use permits to operate in the Single-Family Residential District. A church currently exists on the subject property. The Planning Commission recommended **Denial of a Conditional Use Permit** at its meeting on June 15, 2023, based on the potential of a liability of children and adult activities that include clinics, recovering alcoholics and offenders mixing. The following combination would not be allowed as a combined use.

**SaVaughn Irons** - With doing some research of this property the applicant has previously requested a conditional use permit six months prior to applying for this conditional use permit with a few different uses that were proposed as well. Based on the mixed uses in the potential liability that could be provided with children there, we recommended denial based on the fact we did have a conversation to let them know that certain uses are permitted as an accessory use or conditional use, but not all the combination together.

**Comments/Discussion from Governing Body:**

**Councilmember James** - I struggled a little bit with this and I reached out to a couple members of the Planning Commission just to kind of get their feedback. I understand that it is fun for the most part, because of so many different things that were outlined as to what they wanted to do. They wanted them to kind of streamline whatever the application process was.

**SaVaughn Irons** – Correct.

**Councilmember James** - My struggle with this is, I know of a resident a couple residents in the past that needed an AA facility, because they were court mandated to obtain AA classes, and there were none in

Forest Park. So, they had to go to Hapeville and I'm looking at the different things that they're saying, performing arts and other things and it's not unusual in my mind for a non-profit organization, or organization to have multiple things that they do under their house. I don't know if, when you say when the commission says that they're denying it because of the co-mingling of applicants can you define what you see as an issue, as a problem?

SaVaughn Irons -Typically when operating as a church you find churches sometimes have the different programs that are offered to the public but in this case, they are not operating as a church and that is why the mix of the different type of uses would not be allowed based on the code. If we look at what is permitted in the single-family residential district, some of the items requested are not for permitted use. So, based on the zoning ordinance we have to follow the code or as far as what is permitted and what you can and cannot do.

**Councilmember James** – So, if it was a church then it would be different if they had different things they were offering?

**SaVaughn Irons** - Well if they were a church or operating as such of a church there's individual programs would not have an effect on what would be offered to the public.

**Councilmember Akins Wells**- I kind of was going to ask some of the same questions as Councilmember James. I called somebody and asked a question about it. When it comes to our business, I'm trying to make it better, because we need businesses, we need people like this in the community but of course we need them to obey our ordinances as well. What could happen instead of just saying no, what would they need to change to get a yes?

**SaVaughn Irons** - If they wanted to operate as a daycare then we could permit that as a conditional use. There were so many different uses provided in the background history of the different type of users that were already proposed that were operating illegally, that was the basis on the denial with the mixture of uses. Our job in planning is just to make sure that every business that comes into the City of Forest Park follows the code to a T and we can't make any adjustments based on even if we morally feel like it might be okay, we still must do things by the book.

**Councilmember Akins Wells**- Of course. So again, it is other stuff that makes it hard for our business owners. Mike, remember we had the conversation about, if they turned it down, I want them to come back with the information about what is needed to operate. This is what we will allow to operate. Would they have to wait six months or a year to come back if they were to get it together?

**City Attorney** - Under our current ordinance they'd have to wait at least six months.

## 7. **Council Discussion and Approval on Rezoning from RS to RM- Scott Rd. (RZ-2023-02)**– Planning & Community Development

### **Background/History:**

The applicant is requesting to rezone the subject property from RS (Single Family Residential) to RM (Multi-Family Residential). The property is currently wooded and undeveloped. Three single-family homes are currently located on Scott Road. Surrounding land uses include light industrial, west, and single-family

residential north, south and east of the subject property. The intent is to build 16 townhouses on the property. **The Planning Commission recommended to Approve the Rezoning from RS to RM with the following conditions:** 1. Scott Road shall be improved to city standards prior to development, (2) All buildings shall be constructed of brick, stone, wood, stucco or any combination thereof, (3) There shall be different architectural features between units, no adjacent units shall have the same design characteristics, features or identical, (4) Each unit shall provide 2-car garages, (5) Adhere to the buffer standards as specified in the current code between industrial and residential development, (6) There shall be only 4 rental units on this parcel, and rental units shall be distributed throughout various buildings of the development so that rental units are not segregated in one building; (7) Any deviations from the conditions shall be approved by the Planning Commission.

**SaVaughn Irons** - I'm just a little background of this property as well Mr. Kendrick began the process of trying to develop the property in early 2022. He's requested several variances in the past to reduce the minimum lot size, and the minimum house size. He also wanted to increase the number of single-family homes that can be built per acre. The Ordinance states five homes per acre and Mr. Kendrick wanted to build around 11 square feet of homes per acre.

**Comments/Discussion from Governing Body:**

**Councilmember Gutierrez** - I just still have struggle like with the visuals. We're going to put 16 single homes in a place where we had three homes?

**SaVaughn Irons** – Proposed, yes sir.

**Councilmember Gutierrez** - The variances that he asked for did we give it to them?

**SaVaughn Irons** - No, his previous variance was denied.

**Councilmember Gutierrez** – So, kind of made them to whatever we already our standards are.

**SaVaughn Irons** -Yes, so based on our building standards and façade, what he would be proposing to add to the area. That was the reason for the recommendation of approval.

**Councilmember Gutierrez** -The improvements of the road that has to be done by us?

**SaVaughn Irons**- He said that he would do the improvements as well.

**Councilmember Gutierrez** - Do we regulate that or is that just?

**SaVaughn Irons** - as far as Road improvements, currently I don't think we have a uh update as far as what we regulate as far as the roadways. Typically, roads are done by GDOT. If it is a private road, then it can be regulated.

**City Manager** - Let me speak about that. My understanding is that the road will not be private. The road will become a public street. However, the private developer is funding the cost for the road improvements, and if that is the case then there are specifications. Mr. Jinks would be the entity that would be responsible for reviewing the final road digest, just to ensure that that road is up to our standard.

**Councilmember Gutierrez** – Okay, the reason I bring this up is because residents have reached out that live on that road. They are concerned with 16 new developments there and the conditions of the road. That is why I'm bringing it up.

**Councilmember Akins- Wells** - I am always about the people. They have to live there, and I know that street that you're talking about is not in my ward, but those people have been living there forever. Has anyone spoken to them to see if they would be okay with it, because that is what I would base my decision? These are the residents they have you know been lifelong residents here. What do they think about this change, would it bring apartment complex too?

**Mayor Butler** -We have town homes, and yes, they have reached out. I spoke with them. I know Councilmember James has spoken with them, and they are here. They will be speaking during the public hearing portion of it, so we will get to hear from them. I believe all three of the homeowners are here.

**Councilmember Mears** - I'm like you they've been there a long time and they ought to have a little say. I know it's public land and all but seems to be a little crowded with the number of buildings they want to build in that area.

8. **Council Discussion and Approval on Rezoning from RS to RM- Scott Rd. (RZ-2023-02)** – Planning & Community Development

**Background/History:**

The applicant is requesting to rezone the subject property from RS (Single Family Residential) to RM (Multi-Family Residential). The property is currently wooded and undeveloped. Three single-family homes are currently located on Scott Road. Surrounding land uses include light industrial, west, and single-family residential north, south and east of the subject property. The intent is to build 16 townhouses on the property. **The Planning Commission recommended to Approve the Rezoning from RS to RM with the following conditions:** 1. Scott Road shall be improved to city standards prior to development, (2) All buildings shall be constructed of brick, stone, wood, stucco or any combination thereof, (3) There shall be different architectural features between units, no adjacent units shall have the same design characteristics, features or identical, (4) Each unit shall provide 2-car garages, (5) Adhere to the buffer standards as specified in the current code between industrial and residential development, (6) There shall be only 4 rental units on this parcel, and rental units shall be distributed throughout various buildings of the development so that rental units are not segregated in one building; (7) Any deviations from the conditions shall be approved by the Planning Commission.

**Comments/Discussion from Governing Body:**

**Councilmember Gutierrez** - Are any of these new town homes or space going to be allocated towards affordable housing? Any percentage of them for either of the developments?

**City Manager** - We met with them based upon this being in Councilwoman James ward. We met with the developer, my apologies I'll make certain that before you guys vote on this and with any additional item like this coming forward, that you have the full renderings. So, then you can see this Modern Art Deco Design, that they are presenting. It is a beautiful project, and at the other end of the street from the three homes. All these units would be affordable based upon MSA standards, so great question.

**Councilmember Akins Wells** - You say affordable, affordable to who?

**City Manager** - Based upon the MSA it would be within that affordable range for housing costs and with the restriction of a portion of them being rental. What you're seeing here with this development I'm sure miss Savannah can go more into this. The design of this townhome, not that we're advocating one way or the other. The design of this town home fits the motto of what other communities are doing to attract either transient professionals or those individuals that just don't want the upkeep of it of the yard.

If you look at bordering cities to us some of their town home projects are going for six seven hundred thousand dollars. So, it's the new trendy thing to do. One of the things I don't know if the developer is here, they've put a lot of thought into the actual exterior design of this product that they're building. I would waver that it would probably be one of the most modern town home communities that you'll see even in this county. Once we can show you guys the rendering and I have it in my office.

**SaVaughn Irons** - They also proposed adding a green space and a playground for kids. They even spoke with the applicant at the planning commission meeting that said it would not be closed off to their families, which is something that they will be able to enjoy as well.

**Mayor Butler** - I know that the three current homeowners will speak during the public hearing. I don't know if you can go sneak out and grab the renderings, because I really want the council to understand, and when I was speaking with Miss Kay and her husband, I was torn. I was torn, because I understood their plight but then I also had to weigh the greater good for the community as a whole. We do have a dire need to diversify our housing stock, our housing portfolio these homes are beautiful, and we cannot want new developments to come and then when it's before us and it's the quality that the city deserves and then we shut it down.

It is a very fine line. I think that we're right now where do we want to progress and develop, or do we want to stay stagnant? The investors are here, they're coming to various aspects of the city and so just want the council to keep in mind at what this can do holistically for the city and Miss K you know I adore you and your husband, but I really had to weigh the options here and I do feel now the council does have their right to vote how they wish but as a mayor I would like to see this project go prompt a fruition.

**Councilmember Antione**- Could you give us a ballpark figure of the price?

**Mayor Butler** – She would not know that.

**SaVaughn Irons** – I don't have that information. The applicant if they are here, they can provide that information during public comment.

**9. Council Discussion and Approval on City of Forest Park Accident Review Committee – Executive Offices**

**Background/History:**

In reviewing our property, casualty & loss insurance renewal, we were alarmed by the increase based on recurring incidents involving city property. As an organization, we must always remain extremely conscious of the safety of our employees and the citizens of our community. As an employer, we recognize our obligation to ensure the safest possible workplace for our employees. As a governmental entity, we recognize our responsibility to provide a safe environment for the public we serve. It is our belief that most

accidents are preventable. In accordance with this belief, we have allocated resources to administer an aggressive loss control program in our municipality.

**Comments/Discussion from Governing Body:**

**City Manager-** As you will recall, with our recent renewal of our property casualty and loss our exposure and liability rates were out the window. Hence our premium for the year exceeded that of previous years. One of the things that I proposed to the broker is that we start being proactive so that we don't have to always react to something when it happens. The creation of this Accident Review Committee will not only ensure that our employees are accountable to the importance of them protecting our assets, but it'll also let the department head recognize what that impact of that car accident or that injury does to our overall coverage.

The mission of the City of Forest Park Georgia Safety and Accident Review Committee is to protect the general public's safety, the safety of our employees and to begin to minimize the loss to city property. This committee will ensure a fair and partial review of all accidents involving city personnel vehicles, buildings and equipment. One of the things in speaking with Miss Diane Lewis from our HR Department Deputy Director, it was on the books of Forest Park to have an Accident Review Commission, but I'm told it's been since two administrations ago when this committee has even met. What happened at that time if an employee had five chargeable accidents within a three-year period, then that employee was terminated.

What I am proposing is a complete overhaul into that program as well as monthly meetings by which the departments are recognized and identified within this proposed policy are in attendance at these meetings. Each accident is voted on first chargeable then non-chargeable and then based upon the severity of the accident points are assessed, the employees will have an opportunity to present their case. We recognize based upon the function of some of the roles within this organization some accidents are not preventable, because they're not on us.

We want to cause awareness to those things such as backing up the wrong way, backing into mailboxes, having car accidents and not following the SOP is issued. All of those things that are raising our insurance, which affects the bottom line for the organization as a whole. We're hoping that this Safety and Accident Review Committee will help to bring some sort of formality and consistency with the review of these policies. Having a policy on the book relative to the Accident Review Committee and why they were not meeting. I cannot answer that it makes no sense to me, but I can ensure effective this month if this is approved, we will have a meeting and each department will have representation.

**10. Council Discussion and Approval of CDBG Funds Reallocation – Executive Offices**

**Background/History:**

It is proposed that the City's 2021 CDBG Funds be reallocated from Starr Park renovations to perform certain renovations of the former Rite Aid building.

The vision for the new project reallocation request is for a food hall, commissary kitchen and workspace at the old Rite Aid Pharmacy building located on Forest Parkway that the city recently acquired.

With a large percentage of low-to-moderate income individuals residing in our community and the lack of opportunities to adequately provide them with sustainable food options, the City has embarked upon this innovative initiative. This project will provide culinary entrepreneurs with a space to prepare, sale, and

market their goods, while also providing alternative food options for residents and people who live or work in Forest Park. This project will connect to the new City Center Complex that we are aggressively planning for, which will be developed on city-owned property that overlooks Starr Park. The city has hired an architect to develop a conceptual floor plan and renderings to be available within four weeks.

Currently \$276,642 remains in Program Year 2021 funds.

**City Manager** - The thing we recognized is this community is trying to build its economic ecosystem. We have noticed that there are limited food options for residents that either live here or come into this town to work. So, to cure that, one of the things we're looking to do as we start talking more about economic inclusion and how we build the ecosystem of Forest Park; this government is offering opportunities for not only the residents to enhance their quality of life, but they don't have to travel outside the community to get good food, good entertainment, and good shows.

One of the things that we're really looking to hone on is how do we take some of the vacant structures that we have in this community, and really make something positive and something noteworthy out of the building. So, with the city owning Right Aid with us having a food desert here based upon the limited opportunities for food this is just a great way for us to really serve at the ham of cultivating and curating what this new wave of government looks like. Instead of us going out to the private sector to find restaurant tours, we have so many individuals within this community that have good crafts, good food but just may not know how to open a restaurant or may not have the capital funds to open a restaurant. What better way to put a vacant building that's right on our main thoroughfare to use that to revitalize it and repurpose it to allow for individuals that can cook to come inside this food hall with a shared commissary kitchen so that everybody can use it.

You all know, including myself, we purchase food from individuals for meal prep or just because they can cook. A lot of them are not legal because they don't have a business license. This is a way for our Economic Development arm to really push for an educational mission to first showcase to the business community or our community what opportunities you have, and then to allow them an opportunity to test their wares. In addition to the Food Hall concept, we'll have both restaurant tours that are established, as well as the commissary kitchen which is no more than a shared kitchen. Then on the other side of the building we'll have a flex office space so that individuals that are working from home just local entrepreneurs can simply go in utilize the flex space and we're hoping to open the first coffee shop right here on Forest Parkway within this structure.

The beauty of this project is that we're not anticipating it being just Forest Park we're looking at doing this as a concerted effort, buying between the City of Forest Park and Clayton County especially since we're leveraging the use of these Community Development Block Grant Funds to spearhead and start this project. At current we have \$276,000.00 remaining with this fund. The approval of this resolution will allow us to direct account to repurpose their funds for this endeavor. This building is already standing and will require little work that has to be done.

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

**Councilmember James** – The question I have is about the allocation for Star Park renovations. I know there is conversation about the renovations, how will the funds being reallocated how will it affect Star Park?

**City Manager** – The funds had to be expended by June 30, 2023. To keep from losing the funds we asked the county to let us reallocate them, with the understanding that based upon the RFP being released on Star Park and the bids coming back, I know it was way overbid. Because of this the project did not move

forward. Now with the understanding we are in a feasibility plan of this new city center being downtown. The goal was based upon the economy of scale. We are able to do the rehab of Star Park, the renovations to the pool as well as the city center. A nicer park as well as a bigger indoor pool and the city center all at one time, because we already have contractors on site. The focus is to make sure the renovations at Star Park are done first.

**Councilmember Antione** – Will the residents have to pay to enter this facility?

**City Manager** – With the food hall concept you do not pay to enter, you will pay for your food. Let's just say you are great at making donuts, but you don't have the capital to get a brick and mortar. With this incubator style facility, you would essentially be able to rent out your space to go in cook your wares, get workforce training as to the proper steps to open a business not only having a limited LLC, but also going through the process of doing business right here with Forest Park. Then once you get to a certain point where you have the perfect number of customers and you're beginning to see that money turns, the hope is to push you out to get your own brick and mortars and this is just your startup.

## 11. Council Discussion and Approval of Revised Resignation and Paid Leave Policy – Executive Offices

### Background/History:

It is proposed that the City's resignation and paid leave policy be revised to address the issue of employees abusing the process by tendering their resignation and immediately utilizing their paid sick or personal leave for the remainder of the service. This practice has resulted in significant disruptions in City operations and prevents the orderly transfer of duties and functions from the separating employee to other employees.

Under the revised rule, employees would have to tender their resignations at least 10 days in advance and would not be permitted to use their personal leave during this period. They may use their sick leave only if they present a certification from a licensed health care provider stating that they are under the provider's care or treatment for the days in question and that it was the provider's recommendation that the employee remain home from work for that period.

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

**Mr. Clark** - As we continue to dive deep into the operations here in the City of Forest Park, I have just witnessed far too many employees turn in their resignation notices, and then proceed to take days off. In my opinion it is tacky, if the standard is two weeks, I'm not sure why it was ever in the policy for seven days. If we are to run this organization successfully and efficiently, the standard is two weeks so that those departments are able to ensure that all of the information is shared prior to that employee resigning their employment here. Also, I feel a sense of commitment to the city and its residents to ensure that just based upon staffing levels we are still able to provide professional and efficient services.

This policy addresses and changes the seven-day benchmark to 10 days, which is essentially two weeks. In addition to that, I've had directors since I've been here less than 90 days resigned their position and then take two- or three-days' vacation, and sick leave and it baffles me that your commitment to the organization is not such that you would look out that time. However, with this policy should an employee or director take sick leave and or annually during the time in which they file their resignation, they would not be eligible to leave in good standing which means they would not receive payment for their accruals of vacation leave. This is a standard process that most communities do. It's not meant to be punitive it's just simply to say hey we appreciate you working for us for the time that you have. We're not going to hold anyone back from growth, but as an organization we would appreciate having at least two weeks to backfill that position.



## 12. Council Discussion and Approval of Revision to Personnel Manual with Respect to Employee Terminations – Executive Offices

### Background/History:

It is proposed that the City's Personnel Manual be revised to ensure that Department Heads receive the approval of the City Manager prior to terminating any employee.

With the alarming rate of litigation, personnel changes, and change of administration, the City Manager issued an emergency directive to all Department Heads requiring that all terminations be approved by the City Manager as a safeguard for the organization. This measure aims to maintain a set of standards that ensures all terminations are reasonable, fair, and equitable. The goal is to ensure that on the front end, all processes are handled to ensure ease of terminations, when necessary, hence allowing the government to justify any/all separations properly.

It is recommended that this emergency measure be made permanent and be included in the City's Personnel Manual.

**Mr. Clark** - So not to pick on any department, but there was recently a termination in which the termination did not follow city policy. I overturned the termination, I sent that to you. One of the things I continue to hear the governing body say is accountability. So, at no point would I as city manager try to go over the termination that the department has deemed necessary, however the termination must make sense. Meaning all of the paperwork has to be in accordance with policy and the infraction has to be properly documented, because the goal under my administration will always be to improve performance.

If you have an issue with an employee that issue needs to be dealt with on a daily basis, it needs to be written down and notated. Then in those evaluations taking them serious enough, so that if you have a problematic employee, we're able to show for any outstanding or potential litigation we're able to show where we successfully put the employee on a performance improvement and tried to work with them it did not work so we had no other choice but to terminate their employment. Just to ensure that we protect the liability and exposure of this city. Our directors have done an amazing job with this thus far and outside of the one all the terminations that have come across my desk have been valid. Just based upon things outside of our control so it's not meant to hinder the authority of our department heads, but I think everybody in this type of a scenario as we work to get our insurance levels down, we have to have some accountability on all sides.

**Councilmember James** - How does this affect the appeal process that employees have if they're terminated, they can appeal to the City match I think that's part of the ordinance?

**City Attorney** - The way it's written is the appeals are now considered reconsiderations, so a recommendation would come to the city manager for termination. Let's just say he would review it to make sure it's in accordance with the procedure, make sure that it's justifiable but at that point he would not be necessarily hearing from the employee in question. If an employee wishes to have that judgment reconsidered, then they could in the same time frame make a request for reconsideration. That would go before the city manager and he would have a hearing at that point where the employee, employees counsel. If necessary, they could present their side of it, and it could be reconsidered at that point.

**Councilmember Akins Wells** - I would like to say thank you City Manager Clark for coming in and finding things that need to be changed and acting on them. I kind of was under the assumption that directors had to go through the city manager before terminating someone, so that is not what the case was.

**City Manager** -I was under that impression coming in as well. I've never seen it that way where the termination didn't at a minimum go through HR, but this is just one of the things that we're working on to try to streamline those operations.

**Councilmember Mears** – That is a good idea.

### 13. Council Discussion and Approval of Forest Park Fire Department Employee Referral Program – Executive Offices

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

Faced with a competitive labor market in both the public and private sectors, the City Manager sought out a creative way to stand out to potential employees. After brainstorming with the Command Staff of the Forest Park Fire Department, in an effort to ensure we attract the very best fire personnel, we are recommending the implementation of an employee referral program. The employee referral program is designed as a partnership between the city and its most valued asset and best recruiters, our employees.

As governments all across our region experience a diminished pool of well-qualified candidates, we recognize that our number one hiring tool is our employees. There is substantial competition amongst cities, counties, private agencies, and paid internships to recruit staff successfully. In Forest Park, we want to ensure that as part of our ongoing effort to recruit, we only want the best of the best working for Clayton County's largest, full-service municipality.

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

**City Manager-** As you'll recall less than 30 days ago, I presented to you just overtime items relative to our community. I want to say it was an excess of \$777, 000.00. In that same vein I met with each of the departments in an effort to figure out how we can get that overtime number down. One of the things that I learned from Fire & Emergency Services is some of the overtime numbers for the fire department based upon staffing levels. The four to five Battalion Chiefs are essential or have essentially been working every day almost just to ensure that we feel those voids.

I've shared with the Battalion Chiefs that it is not safe for that to happen, and I always want to ensure that all of our departments have work-life balance just to ensure that when they go out on calls, they're physically fit to do the job and they're not fatigued. It's causing us additional issues with this employee referral policy that we are looking at, the successful incumbents would receive three thousand dollars for the successful referral of an employee for the Fire & Emergency Service.

The first fifteen-hundred-dollar referral bonus would be awarded after the employee completes 90 days from the hire date. The second 1500 referral bonus would be awarded after the employee successfully completes one year of employment. One of the things I know based upon my career, your biggest advertisers and recruiters for police and fire are the individuals that work within that agency.

So, we continue to look at robust ways not only to attract candidates to work here, but to retain the individuals that we have. We just feel that this is one attractive way to reward our employees for bringing

us the absolute best candidates. We do not just want to say we are the largest municipality we want to be able to say we have the greatest employees in this county. Chief Clemons is going to speak, and Battalion Chief Baker is going to speak as well, just to provide some additional insight as to the issue that we are going through.

**Chief Clemmons** - As you know staffing has been an issue not just in Forest Park, but throughout the State of Georgia. So, we have been working hard and trying to find creative ways to incentivize our employees. One of the things that I propose during the budget was to reimburse paramedics. I have had discussions with the city manager as well. We are in the process of reimbursing so this new initiative will help increase our hiring to ensure that we are hiring the most qualified candidates for the fire department. As you all are aware of, we have been hiring non-certified recruits. Although that does us well, it does not do the city a wholesome job, as we still must train them to be advanced EMTs and paramedics. This is necessary, and my battalion chief and all three shifts have been working overtime. We are trying to produce creative ways to recruit and retain.

**City Manager** – One of the directives that we put out Mayor Butler and governing body, for a moment I want to stop hiring recruits. Let us focus on hiring certified for both police and fire. With the wages that we are paying, as well as the incentives that we are going to look at providing, we believe that we should be able to get qualified, certified candidates coming in the door. We understand the importance of recruitment, the fire department has done an amazing job with the recruits that they've hired, similar to police, just building people up through the ranks. However, we really want to do a push for certified officers within both fire and police.

**Chief Clemons** - In addition we're competing, we're looking at our neighbor neighboring departments and seeing what they're doing. As far as initiatives we are all pulling from the same pool of candidates. So, any way that we can get more creative to incentivize and increase our pay, although we know that is not the most important, but we do have to be competitive to retain and recruit.

**Chief Baker** - I love our employees, I love our city. I have been here 24 years in two days. The recruitment incentive, the referral bonuses, this is something that when I worked for Children's Healthcare of Atlanta Egleston Campus, we did this to incentivize our employees to reach out and bring in certified nurses. It started off of course there's always the whole, hey I can get a few extra few bucks, but you focus on the greatness of your entity which City of Forest Park has got a lot of greatness. We focus on the greatness of your organization and by speaking that truth out there and letting people know, it also reminds you as the employee how great the place you work is. It helps you to see not the bad, because we may do ninety-eight of everything right but that two percent that could be frustrating or bad is what a lot of people will zero in on. It helps change those dynamics where we focus on the positives of our organization.

**Councilmember James** – I am all for it.

**Councilmember Antione** – Why wasn't something like this done a long time ago?

**Mayor Butler** – No time like the present.

**Councilmember Gutierrez** – Great initiative from both of you.

**Councilmember Akins-Wells** – I love you and everything you bring to your department. This is great and maybe you should talk to other departments. I think public works could use a hand, we have a lot of open

positions, and it is good to have different things employees can receive for going out to recruit other employees. Thank all of you for what you do.

#### 14. Council Discussion and Approval on Purchase of Ford Interceptors - Police Department

##### Background/History:

The Police Department currently has an aging fleet and is need of replacing some of the older emergency vehicles. The Police Department seeks ratification for an Emergency Purchase with Brannen Ford in Unadilla, Georgia for the purchase of fifteen (15) 2023 Ford Police Interceptors at \$44,700.00 each for a total amount of \$670,500.00. Due to a shortage in the automobile industry and the lack of availability of public safety vehicles, the Police Department requests an emergency purchase to ensure the city maintains essential services to its citizens. The emergency purchase process is reserved for rare and extreme circumstances. Therefore, rarely will the emergency purchase process be utilized.

**Chief Criss** – Currently we have a number of aged vehicles inside of the police department. Our oldest vehicles are the 2008, and our highest mile vehicle has 224, 000 miles. The average life of an emergency vehicle on the police side averages about six years. As you can tell, this 2008 should have been dead lined long ago. The great thing about these 670 thousand dollars that is required to purchase these vehicles, will not be coming from the taxpayers. We will be using some of our red speed funds. Those are the red speed cameras that are in the school zones to help slow down the speeders. We have those funds available to purchase these vehicles.

#### 15. Council Discussion and Approval on Reorganization of the Police Department – Police Department

##### Background/History:

The Forest Park Police Chief recently completed a thorough review of the department and seeks to implement a restructuring of the operational command staff. The reorganization will ensure that employees are in the best position to address community needs, respond to emerging crime trends, and build genuine, positive relationships with the community members. Furthermore, it will allow for a clear command structure.

The previous organizational chart had (2) Deputy Police Chief positions, and each chief had 1 Major reporting to them.

The highlights of the reorganization include:

\* The deletion of (1) Deputy Police Chief (salary savings of \$86,115.57)

\* The Department will be divided into 2 bureaus, Support Services and Uniform. The Major/Commander of these 2 units will report to the remaining Deputy Police Chief.

**Chief Criss** - One thing I started, once I got into this position is began to look at each of the areas that are under my control. The organizational chart was one of the things I looked at. Currently we have two deputy chief positions and each one of those deputy chief positions only had one employee reporting to them. It has approximately 15 people reporting to me directly. So, getting rid of some of this one position will put a little bit more responsibility on the remaining deputy chief position. It will have two people that will report to

him directly as it relates to the operations of the agency, and furthermore via salary savings of eighty-six thousand one fifty-seven.

**16. Council Discussion and Approval on Forest Park Fire Department Sign-On Bonus – Executive Offices**

**Background/History:**

Like many other municipalities, the City of Forest Park is currently experiencing difficulty attracting and retaining Firefighter candidates. The City is also preparing and anticipating staffing issues due to future retirements at all levels in the organization and is working on how to attract and, most importantly, how to retain the best staff to continue to deliver superior service. Ideas for recruiting are endless and endlessly challenging, but the time and effort invested in attracting top talent for the city is well worth it. The city desires to be the employer-of-choice and implementing the Signing Bonus for “difficult-to-fill positions” incentivizes new employees to join the City of Forest Park.

**Comments/Discussion from Governing Body:**

**City Manager** - This is just another tool within our toolbox relative to ensuring that we are hiring the best of the best candidates for the fire department. These recommendations that are coming before you stem from a command staff meeting that we hosted with Chief Clemons as well as her Command Staff. The onus was put back on them as to what we can do to bring this overtime number down, because there is no way that we can sustain it as an organization.

When listening to them and hearing their commitment to this organization as you heard one candidate speak up 24 years combined within the Command Staff there's probably over 180 years of experience. Based upon the tenure of some of these individuals they just really dedicated their lives to working in the City of Forest Park. The first part of this incentive is for firefighters AEMT and EMTIs we are recommending a four-thousand-dollar sign-on bonus, \$2,000 at the completion of three months for the employee and then a remaining \$2,000 on the completion of their probationary period.

However, the caveat is for them to be eligible for all payments they must remain employed in good standing with the city of Forest Park. So, let us just say for a period of three years, within that three-year period if they leave, they owe us the money back that we paid out for the sign-on bonus based upon them executing a contract upon their employee employment. I know that fire did not know that I was going to add the caveat about the three-year contract.

Regarding us with the signing bonus, it is only fair if we are dishing out our money for this sign-on bonus. It is only important that if we are providing the best salaries in Clayton County, the best training in Clayton County, then you can at least ensure that the money that we are paying out we are getting a positive return on that investment. As for firefighters and paramedics we are proposing to offer a five-thousand-dollar sign-on bonus for these employees. We know that other departments are going to want us to do something similar. Mayor Butler has already brought it up especially about the referral bonus, as well as Councilwoman Wells brought it up about public works and referral bonus. We just want to pilot this program with fire and then look at how we can push it out to other respective departments within the organization, because again our theme is we want the best of the best working for this city.

**Chief Clemons** - City Manager said it all.

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

**ADJOURNMENT:**

7:40pm

Motion made by Councilmember Antoine, Seconded by Councilmember James.

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

APPROVED