



CITY COUNCIL WORK SESSION

Monday, July 21, 2025 at 6:00 PM
Council Chambers and YouTube Livestream

Website: www.forestparkga.gov

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Phone Number: (404) 366.4720

FOREST PARK CITY HALL

745 Forest Parkway

Forest Park, GA 30297

The Honorable Mayor Angelyne Butler, MPA

The Honorable Kimberly James

The Honorable Hector Gutierrez

The Honorable Delores A. Gunn

The Honorable Latresa Akins-Wells

The Honorable Allan Mears

Ricky L. Clark Jr, City Manager

Randi Rainey, City Clerk

Danielle Matricardi, City Attorney

APPROVED MINUTES

CALL TO ORDER/WELCOME: Mayor Butler called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

ROLL CALL - CITY CLERK: A quorum was established.

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

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

ADOPTION OF THE CONSENT AGENDA WITH ANY ADDITIONS / DELETIONS:

It was moved to amend the agenda to remove Consent Item #2-Council Discussion on the Lighting Service Agreements for 4576-4650 Burks Rd & Springdale Rd. to New Business.

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

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

ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA WITH ANY ADDITIONS / DELETIONS:

It was moved to remove Item #5 – Council Discussion and Presentation to create an Impact Fee Program, Capital Improvements Element, and to discuss the creation of the Development Impact Fee Advisory Committee; and to add Consent Item #2 – Council Discussion on the Lighting Service Agreements for 4576-4650 Burks Road and Springdale Road.

The motion was made by Councilmember James, and seconded by Councilmember Gunn.

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

CONSENT AGENDA: *There was no discussion on the consent agenda items.***1. Council Discussion on the CAD and RMS Annual Software Renewal – IT Department****Background/History:**

This is the annual renewal for the Police Department's CAD and RMS systems. This is the proprietary software used for dispatching officers, writing police reports, and issuing citations. This includes the annual cost for licensing and the support agreement and is a budgeted item in the IT Budget for June 2025 through June 2026.

Total Amount: \$161,008.21

General Fund

2. Council Discussion on the Lighting Service Agreements for 4576-4650 Burks Rd & Springdale Rd. – Public Works Department *(Moved under New Business)***Background/History:**

The City of Forest Park is seeking Council approval to enter into two (2) separate Lighting Service Agreements with Georgia Power. These agreements are intended to address low-lighting concerns at the following two locations:

- #LP107362 – 4576-4650 Burks Road: Installation of 7 additional light fixtures with an Annual Cost of \$1,576.68.
- #LP107983 – Springdale Road: Installation of 5 additional light fixtures with an Annual Cost of \$1,480.80.

The total cost to the City for both service agreements is \$254.79 per month, or \$3,057.48 per year.

These expenses will be charged to the following budget account: Street Lighting – 100-51-4260-53-1233

Deputy Director Whatley addressed the Mayor and Council, stating that the issue involved low-lighting conditions at two separate locations, which were reported through the SeeClickFix platform. Upon receiving the reports, he explained that staff conducted an on-site assessment and subsequently developed a recommendation to address the lighting concerns.

Comments/Discussion from Governing Body:

Councilmember James stated she had no questions regarding the specific lighting fixes proposed for the identified streets. However, she expressed broader concerns about citywide lighting issues. She acknowledged that the current assessment stemmed from a SeeClickFix submission, but mentioned that there are other areas, such as Hendrix Drive and Catherine Drive at night, where lighting remains inadequate. She inquired whether Mr. Clark Jr. would be willing to conduct another citywide lighting ride-along, as he had done in the past, to help identify additional problem areas.

Mr. Clark Jr. provided additional context regarding the City's street lighting efforts. He noted that approximately 1,200 lights were replaced throughout the City as part of a previous initiative. He referenced a discussion during the June 20, 2023, budget meeting, in which questions were raised about the cost implications of citywide lighting and how those expenses are distributed. He reminded the Council that the concept of a Street Lighting District had been proposed roughly two years ago. Under that model, the cost of residential street lighting would be assessed by property owners through their annual tax billing rather than being fully subsidized by the City. He noted that lighting costs may continue to rise annually without such a framework, becoming a recurring financial burden on the City's general fund.

Mr. Clark Jr. emphasized that this concept had been discussed previously but had not yet received direction from Council. He suggested it may be worth revisiting as lighting concerns continue to emerge. He also mentioned that blinking or malfunctioning City-owned lights would still be repaired as part of normal operations. Finally, he recommended scheduling another lighting assessment or ride-along, particularly given ongoing concerns about lighting in Ward 2.

Councilmember James posed a question regarding the distinction between residential and City-owned lights. She acknowledged that it might seem like a fundamental question, but felt it was essential to clarify. Specifically, she asked how it is determined whether a light is classified as residential or City-owned, especially in cases where the light fixture is located within the public right-of-way. Attorney Matricardi responded that a light in a neighborhood is typically classified as a residential light, including those on private property. She explained that developers usually install such lights during the construction of the neighborhood, and the associated costs are assessed to the homeowners, either through a Homeowners Association (HOA) or incorporated into the overall property value. She clarified that the City does not maintain these lights, as they fall under private responsibility.

Attorney Matricardi explained that when the City completes and accepts a development, infrastructure such as lighting may become public property. At that point, the City assumes ownership and maintenance responsibilities. However, she clarified that if new lights are installed in a location that serves only a specific neighborhood or a limited group of residents, rather than the general public, those lights would be considered a localized benefit rather than a public one. In such cases, the installation and maintenance costs would typically fall under a special tax assessment because the improvement does not benefit the public but only the residents of that area.

Councilmember James noted that, to her knowledge, most neighborhoods in the City do not have active Homeowners Associations (HOAs) except for one in the Governor's Glen area. She questioned how the special tax assessment model would apply in neighborhoods without an HOA and sought clarification on whether the City at large would be responsible for managing or funding those lights without a governing neighborhood entity. Attorney Matricardi explained that while there are private roads within the City, many roads have been dedicated to the City over time. If a road has been dedicated, it is likely now owned and maintained by the City. However, if a road remains private, any lighting along that road would typically be installed, operated, and maintained by the private property owner or homeowners, not the City.

Mr. Clark Jr. stated that part of the confusion may stem from the timing of when certain roads and homes were developed. He explained that infrastructure responsibilities, including lighting, would have been addressed during the original development process. However, he noted that the City of Forest Park currently covers approximately 99% of all lighting costs, including the expense of installing new lights when requested by residents. He further reported that the annual appropriated budget for street lighting is now approaching \$500,000, underscoring the growing financial impact of lighting on the City's general fund.

Councilmember James noted that all City streets appear to have standard signage, such as speed limit signs, which suggests that these are City-owned roads rather than private ones. However, she acknowledged that a more in-depth discussion may be needed to clarify the status and ownership of certain roads within the City. Mr. Clark Jr. reiterated that the City had previously proposed establishing a Street Lighting District and stated that information would be forwarded to the governing body for review. He explained that under such a model, if a resident requested an additional light in their neighborhood for safety reasons, the resident would bear the cost rather than the City. However, he acknowledged that the current practice in Forest Park has been for the City to coordinate directly with Georgia Power to request and install additional lighting when needed, with the City covering the associated costs.

Councilmember Gunn thanked staff for their attention to Springdale Road, expressing appreciation for the improvements being made in an area that has long needed attention, particularly given the number of senior citizens who reside there. She shared her excitement about the upcoming updates. While she noted she was less familiar with Burke's Road, she spoke confidently about Springdale, emphasizing the need for additional lighting, especially around a curve where children and pedestrians frequently walk. She stated that while the addition of five lights is a positive step, even more may be necessary to ensure safety. Councilmember Gunn stressed that residents who know the area are accustomed to its layout, but guests and visitors, especially during community events, may have difficulty navigating the area safely without adequate lighting.

Mr. Clark Jr. responded agreeably, assuring Councilmember Gunn that her concerns were heard and appreciated. He explained that Georgia Power is implementing new smart technology in the lighting infrastructure as part of the City's ongoing lighting upgrades and repairs. This technology allows Georgia Power to be automatically notified when a streetlight goes out, eliminating the previous need for Public Works staff to identify and mark faulty lights for repair manually. He noted that the upgrades involve transitioning to LED fixtures with integrated systems that improve response times and overall lighting maintenance through automated detection and communication.

Councilmember Gutierrez expressed his appreciation to staff and expressed his excitement about the installation of the new lights. He thanked the team for their efforts in addressing lighting improvements throughout the City.

3. Council Discussion on the Request for Blanket Purchase Orders- Public Works Department**Background/History:**

As part of the City's ongoing efforts to streamline the procurement process and ensure timely payment for recurring services, the following contracted or sole-source vendors are being presented for the creation of Blanket Purchase Orders for FY25–26:

- **Waste Management** – \$1,365,000
Sanitation Services
Fund: 540-72-4520-52-3000
- **Boswell Oil** – \$400,000
Fuel and Oil Purchases
Fund: 100-27-4900-53-1270

These Blanket Purchase Orders will support operational efficiency by allowing departments to process regular payments without repeatedly requesting purchase orders for the same vendor.

OLD BUSINESS:**4. Council Discussion on the First Annual Renewal of the 12-Month Sound Equipment Services Agreement with Digital World Live – Procurement/Recreation and Leisure Services Department****Background/History:**

City Council approved the 1st annual renewal option for 3 months for the sound equipment services contract with Digital World Live under the same prices, terms, and conditions. This vendor will continue to provide sound equipment and technician services for city events. This request is to exercise the full 12-month renewal period due to the city's representatives conducting a meeting with all parties to evaluate and provide mutual resolutions of the contract's expectations.

ANNUAL TOTAL: \$77,850.00 – General Fund

Mrs. Adams, Procurement Manager, stated that the item was being brought back before the Council for consideration in renewing the annual contract for the full 12-month term. She explained that the pricing already negotiated and accepted was based on a 12-month agreement, rather than a three-month term.

She further noted that, as directed by Council, a meeting had been conducted to ensure that a mutually workable solution was reached between the City and the vendor responsible for servicing City, sponsored events. Mrs. Adams stated that the meeting minutes and a list of agreed-upon resolutions were included in the Council's packet for review.

5. Council Discussion and Presentation to create an Impact Fee Program, Capital Improvements Element, and discuss the creation of the Development Impact Fee Advisory Committee- Planning and Community Development Department (Item Removed)**Background/History:**

In response to continued growth and increased demand on public infrastructure, the City is exploring the potential creation of a Development Impact Fee Program in accordance with the Georgia Development Impact Fee Act (DIFA), O.C.G.A. § 36-71-1 et seq. This program would provide a structured and legally

supported method for funding capital improvements necessitated by new development, helping to ensure that growth pays for growth.

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

In addition, DIFA requires the establishment of a Development Impact Fee Advisory Committee, consisting of stakeholders, including representatives from the development community and the general public. This committee will advise on the program's development and implementation, review annual reports, and recommend updates to the fee schedule and project lists.

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

6. **Council Discussion on the Stormwater waiver for Waldrop Drive**-Public Works Department

Background/History:

Falcon Design Consultants recommends that the City waive Clayton County stormwater requirements for this project regarding gutter spread, stormwater detention, water quality, and runoff reduction.

This project involves installing sidewalks, curbs, gutters, and drainage infrastructure along Waldrop Drive. Due to its linear nature and limited right-of-way space, we believe it will meet the exception for "Site Constraints" listed in Clayton County Water Authority's (CCWA) Appendix C. Policy on Practicability Analysis for Runoff Reduction. These constraints also preclude the installation of detention, water quality, and additional drainage infrastructure.

Stormwater detention, water quality, and runoff reduction measures are intended to reduce the flow rate and amount of stormwater runoff from a project and remove sediment from the flow. These measures tend to occupy large areas that the City does not have available within the current right-of-way of Waldrop Drive. Adding sidewalks to this roadway will not significantly increase runoff for this area. We do not believe these measures can be added to this project without significantly affecting nearby properties and utilities.

Nigel Whatley, Public Works Deputy Director, noted that the City is seeking Council's approval for a waiver from Clayton County Water Authority's requirements for the Waldrop Drive sidewalk project.

Comments/Discussion from Governing Body:

Councilmember Gunn requested that the information be explained in layman's terms for better public understanding.

Mr. Adam Price of Falcon Design Consultants noted that the work on Waldrop Drive is not simply maintenance; it's a complete improvement project. The existing sidewalk is being removed and replaced with a new sidewalk. ADA-compliant handicap ramps are installed, and curb and gutter are added along the roadway to improve drainage collection. These upgrades will significantly enhance the drainage conditions on the property. Mr. Price noted that stormwater requirements are established in the City's Code, Clayton County's Code, and the state level. He explained that each component of the project must

be reviewed individually. However, he also stated that the regulations provide for waivers under specific conditions, and this project meets the criteria for such a waiver.

Councilmember Gunn referenced the final sentence, which states, "We do not believe these measures can be added to this project without significantly affecting the properties and utilities." She inquired whether this was the reason the waivers were being requested and noted that there appeared to be discrepancies between personal properties and utility placements. Mr. Price confirmed that the approach is correct and pointed out that the company is authorized to conduct business in four states and many counties and cities. He emphasized that this practice is common and widely accepted across multiple jurisdictions.

Councilmember Gutierrez agreed with the request and acknowledged that waivers are sometimes necessary. However, he reminded the Council that a waiver situation also arose during a previous discussion related to the "Zaxby's" item. At that time, the Council had strong opposition against granting waivers. He expressed concern about maintaining consistency, stating, "Laws are in place for a reason, and we shouldn't pick and choose when to apply them." While he understood the reasoning behind the current waiver, primarily if it benefits the City, he cautioned against setting a precedent for future decisions. He emphasized the importance of applying standards uniformly.

Councilwoman Akins-Wells agreed with Councilmember Gutierrez's comments and shared the same concerns. She noted that she would make a similar point, recalling that when a similar situation occurred previously, members of the Council were very adamant about not granting a waiver. She added that she did not understand why a waiver was now being considered, given the strong stance taken in the past. She emphasized the importance of consistency in the Council's decisions.

Mayor Butler requested to know the difference. Mr. Price explained the key difference between the Zaxby's project and the current Waldrop Drive infrastructure project. He noted that Zaxby's was a private commercial development constructed on raw land, which allowed the developer ample space and time to plan for stormwater facilities and site layout. Because the project started from scratch, it had more flexibility to incorporate underground and above-ground stormwater systems as needed. Mr. Price noted that in contrast, the Waldrop Drive project is an infrastructure improvement project in an existing residential neighborhood that has been in place for several decades. The right-of-way is only 50 to 60 feet wide, and there is no available space outside of that right-of-way to construct stormwater facilities. The roadway occupies most of that space, leaving little to no room for installing the required systems.

Mr. Price emphasized that Clayton County's ordinance allows for waivers in situations like this, not only for site development standards, which apply here, but also for cases where the cost and practicality of meeting those requirements would be unreasonable. He added that complying with the full stormwater standards in this instance would require the City to purchase private property and install stormwater ponds in front of long-established homes, many of which have been there for 40 to 50 years. He concluded by stating that this is precisely the type of situation the waiver provision was designed to address.

7. **Council Discussion on the Stormwater waiver for Metcalf Extension-Public Works Department**

Background/History:

Forest Park ordinance Section 8-11-7.4 requires that runoff reduction be provided to the maximum extent practicable. Falcon Design Consultants recommends that the City waive runoff reduction requirements for the Metcalf Road Extension project based on Clayton County Water Authority's (CCWA) Appendix C. Policy on Practicability Analysis for Runoff Reduction. See attached. Due to "Extreme Topography" and "Site Constraints," we believe this project will qualify for a waiver.

The proposed roadway will run through steep existing topography and is near existing industrial facilities, stream buffers, wetlands, and floodplains. This leaves very little room for stormwater management infrastructure, and there is certainly not enough area for separate runoff reduction facilities along with their required pretreatment measures and setbacks. For these reasons, runoff reduction is not practicable and should be waived, in general accordance with the Georgia Stormwater Management Manual (GSMM) and Clayton County Water Authority (CCWA) standards.

Mr. Adam Price, Falcon Design Consultants, briefly explained that this project is somewhat similar to the previous item in that it is also an infrastructure road project constructed from the ground up. However, he pointed out a key difference: in this case, there was enough room on the west side of the new roadway to install two stormwater management ponds. The roadway extends up to the property previously sold to the TPA Group, and on one side of the road, there is a 2:1 slope from the Kroger property, while the opposite side includes a stream buffer. Despite these challenges, the team was able to utilize available space on the west side to accommodate stormwater facilities.

Mr. Price noted that the waiver request is being made due to extreme topography and site constraints, even though this project does include some stormwater management, unlike the previous project, which was limited by space and classified as maintenance.

Comments/Discussion from Governing Body:

Councilmember Gutierrez asked whether the City could do anything as a municipality to modernize or streamline specific outdated processes. He expressed concern that the current requirement to bring items before Council may be causing delays in project timelines. He asked if waiting for scheduled meetings to approve matters was holding up progress, and whether there were more proactive or preventative steps the City could take to avoid these types of delays. **Mr. Price** explained that his firm serves as the City Engineer for several municipalities and that he frequently conducts plan reviews. In many cases, project engineers will request that specific standards be waived, and those requests are typically evaluated and decided upon between the reviewing engineer and the engineer of record, who designed the project. He emphasized that these decisions are usually handled at the engineering level and based on the applicable code, which often gives both the reviewing engineer, and the design engineer the authority to make those determinations. Sometimes the waiver is granted, sometimes not, but it's usually a technical decision, not a political one.

Mr. Price pointed out that councils are not asked to intervene or rule on engineering judgment calls in most jurisdictions, stating, "You usually don't get in the scrum between two engineers—and honestly, that's quite boring and technical." He added that the Water Authority appears to be requesting Council's involvement in this case, which is uncommon. He further explained that in his 26 years of experience, this is the only jurisdiction where he's had to appear before an elected body to weigh in on a technical engineering issue usually handled administratively. "This is exactly what you hired me for," he stated, adding that elected officials should not be expected to parse the technical details of engineering codes and designs.

Mr. Clark Jr. clarified that when **Mr. Price** refers to "we" or "you" in his remarks, he references Clayton County, not the City of Forest Park. **Mr. Price** further explained that cities such as Lovejoy and Riverdale also go through this process, but this is the only county where that level of involvement occurs. He noted that most cities within Clayton County have Intergovernmental Agreements (IGAs) with the Water Authority, which allow the Authority to conduct stormwater reviews directly. He added that, in full

disclosure, the Water Authority recently changed its plan reviewer within the last two weeks. As a result, this type of issue may not come before the Council again, as the new reviewer may begin to exercise the authority allowed under the code to work directly with the project engineer and determine whether requirements can be waived or adjusted without Council involvement.

8. **Council Discussion on the Ordinance to amend Title 2, Article E of the City's Code of Ordinances, which shall establish Regular Ward Fund Accounts and Capital Ward Fund Accounts-Executive Offices**

Background/History:

The City desires to establish restricted ward fund accounts for each elected official to be used for lawful expenditures on public services, projects, and capital expenditures within their respective wards or the City at large, which are outside the scope of regular office expenses. The funds in each elected official's Capital Ward Fund Account and Regular Ward Fund Account shall be determined annually as a part of the required municipal annual budget approval. This ordinance, which the City Attorney has drafted, establishes the accounts, the permissible uses for the accounts, the impermissible uses for the accounts, and the process and procedure to utilize the accounts.

Mr. Clark Jr. explained that the item was a matter of general housekeeping. He stated that, during a previous meeting, it was noted that a policy related to the matter had been located through the efforts of the former City Attorney, one that had not previously been codified. He further explained that Attorney Matricardi had taken the initiative to present the policy in codified form for Council's consideration and adoption. Mr. Clark Jr. emphasized that this action would not alter the current process but would serve to formalize and clarify it. He then invited Attorney Matricardi to provide any additional remarks.

Attorney Matricardi agreed that the codification offers clearer direction regarding permissible actions under the policy. She hoped its adoption would eliminate any lingering uncertainty and help ensure consistent application moving forward.

9. **Council Discussion on the Ordinance to amend Section 7-1-3 ("Reservation of Facilities by Groups") in the City's Code of Ordinances, which shall establish and amend certain insurance and permit provisions for reservations of City parks and recreational facilities**

Background/History:

This ordinance establishes that applicants for permit reservations are required to obtain and present evidence of comprehensive liability insurance naming the "City of Forest Park, Georgia" as an additional insured. Additionally, all recreational leagues must employ off-duty, uniformed, and P.O.S.T. certified Forest Park police officers to provide adequate crowd and traffic control and security. The city attorney prepared this ordinance.

Mr. Clark Jr. stated that the ordinance under consideration represents a step toward addressing concerns raised by multiple Councilmembers regarding the City's facility and ball field rental processes. He explained that the proposed revisions reflect what staff have heard from Council in recent months and serve to modernize and clarify existing procedures. He noted that one of the key changes requires all individuals seeking to rent any City-owned facility to submit an application at least ten (10) days in advance of the desired rental date. In addition, any event expected to exceed thirty (30) attendees must also secure a Special Events Permit through the Planning and Community Development Department.

Mr. Clark Jr. further addressed concerns surrounding organized league play, stating that the ordinance now requires all leagues to go through a formal approval process developed in consultation with the City Attorney. This is to ensure that use of the City's athletic fields is fair, transparent, and accountable. He noted that, historically, some individuals or organizations have rented the fields long-term without being residents of Forest Park, which has caused logistical issues and strain on public resources. He referenced a recent incident during a graduation event at a ball field as an example of the need for stricter oversight. He also emphasized that it is and will remain standard practice for anyone renting City facilities to provide a Certificate of Insurance naming the City of Forest Park as an additional insured, with coverage of at least \$1 million, to protect against personal injury and property damage.

Additionally, the ordinance stipulates that any organized league requesting a lease agreement with the City must apply at least 90 days in advance of their intended start date. Leagues will also be required to hire off-duty, POST-certified Forest Park Police Officers to ensure adequate security and traffic control. The requirement is one officer per 50 attendees, with the Chief of Police having discretion to require more if needed.

Mr. Clark Jr. described the ordinance as a general housekeeping measure intended to protect both the public and the City. He suggested that the Council also review the fee structure for facility usage, questioning whether low fees may contribute to misuse or complaints, such as those recently received regarding noise from band practices.

Comments/Discussion from Governing Body:

Councilmember James inquired whether the ordinance provides flexibility regarding the 90-day advance requirement for organized league reservations. She noted that events or opportunities often arise within a shorter timeframe and expressed concern that a strict 90-day requirement could discourage potential applicants or result in missed opportunities for facility use. Director Maxwell responded that the City does receive requests from individuals or groups within 30 days of their event. He clarified that those are typically evaluated on a case-by-case basis and are not subject to the 90-day requirement. He further explained that the 90-day advance notice primarily applies to larger events such as festivals or organized league play, which require more planning and coordination.

Attorney Matricardi clarified that the 90-day requirement in the ordinance applies specifically to organized league play. She explained that such activities are typically recurring and require extensive planning and coordination with other leagues and City departments. The purpose of the 90-day provision is to ensure adequate time for scheduling, preparation, and resource allocation.

Mr. Clark Jr. noted that it would be unlikely for an organized team to form and request to host an entire season within just 30 days. He emphasized that the 90-day requirement applies specifically to organized league play, which involves structured, recurring activity. He further clarified that this ordinance section solely addresses organized leagues, not one-time or short-notice events.

Attorney Matricardi clarified that the certificate of insurance requirement applies specifically to organized league play or events with more than 30 participants, as those situations would require a special event permit. She noted that smaller gatherings, such as a family reserving a pavilion, would not be subject to the insurance requirement.

Councilmember Gutierrez expressed his concerns regarding the insurance requirement, stating that he was upset by the idea that such a high threshold might burden regular residents. He shared a personal example, noting that he would not have access to a million-dollar insurance policy if he wanted to host a party for a family member. He questioned who was responsible for developing these policies and asked whether Council had been included in the process.

Attorney Matricardi explained that many of the provisions, such as the 90-day notice requirement, were recently added and can be seen as marked revisions in the packet. She noted that she included the requirement for policing during league play, the certificate of insurance, and the need for a formal agreement. She clarified that any event exceeding 30 participants would qualify as a Special Event; at this point, additional review and requirements would be appropriate.

Councilmember Gutierrez emphasized the importance of being mindful of the community's socioeconomic conditions, particularly the average income levels of Forest Park residents. Given the Director's close involvement with facility rentals and event coordination, he expressed that he would have preferred to receive input from the Parks and Recreation Director. He stated his confidence in the Director's judgment.

Councilmember Gutierrez also voiced concern over the language used in the discussion, particularly any implication that affordability or the community's economic status contributed to past incidents. He stated that he did not support framing the issue in a way that associates affordability with irresponsibility or enforcement problems. He emphasized the importance of not generalizing the entire community based on a single incident, stating that while an unfortunate event may have occurred, it should be seen as an isolated situation rather than a pattern. He urged the Council to be cautious not to cast the community negatively and to remain considerate of those who organize and participate in local events.

Councilmember Gutierrez stated that while an isolated incident may have occurred, it should not be used to generalize or negatively impact the broader community. He urged the Council not to treat the situation as a recurring or systemic problem, but rather as a single event where more preparation may have been needed. He concluded by stating the need to be conscious and considerate of the individuals and groups working hard to organize community events.

Mr. Clark Jr. clarified that the ordinance under discussion is based on the City's existing code. He explained that, in practice, Director Maxwell and his department already coordinate with the Police Department when league play is scheduled. He stated that the ordinance's purpose is to codify existing practices that have not previously been incorporated into the City's formal code.

Mr. Clark Jr. also addressed concerns related to facility pricing, noting that the reference to pricing updates came directly from Director Maxwell. He has acknowledged the need to revise the Recreation and Leisure Department's fee schedule, which has not been updated for some time. He further noted that most of the proposed updates would logically align with the renovation of Starr Park and the construction of new facilities. He then invited Director Maxwell to provide additional input on the matter.

Director Maxwell asked for clarification on whether the ordinance would require any gathering of more than 30 people to provide a certificate of insurance. He expressed concern about how this might affect informal events such as family reunions, noting that he has had families that have previously rented ball fields to play kickball. He questioned whether such community-based, non-commercial events would now be subject to the same insurance requirement. Attorney Matricardi responded that gatherings exceeding 30 people would require a Special Event Permit. She explained that the requirements associated with the

permit may vary depending on the nature of the event, and that factors such as size, activities, and risk level would be considered. She noted that insurance may be required, but would be determined on a case-by-case basis.

Mr. Clark Jr. clarified that under the City's current code, any event with 30 or more attendees must apply to the Planning and Community Development Department for a Special Event Permit. He noted that most of the applications submitted under this requirement have historically been for larger-scale events. He emphasized that this process is already part of the existing code and is actively in effect.

Councilmember Akins-Wells expressed concern over the practicality and fairness of the proposed requirements. She shared that, as someone who has personally rented City facilities, it seemed unreasonable to require smaller community organizations—such as local churches using the senior center—to go through a formal permit process, hire a police officer, and meet other special event requirements simply because they are classified as an organization. She agreed with revisiting the ordinance and emphasized the importance of including the Parks and Recreation Director in discussions about ordinance development or amendments. She noted that the Director is directly involved in facility operations and should be part of crafting procedures that affect rentals.

Mr. Clark Jr. clarified that confusion may stem from the conflation of multiple sections within the ordinance. He explained that the requirement for police presence is specifically codified in Section C(3), which pertains to organized league play. This should not be confused with the requirement for individuals reserving City buildings, which is addressed separately in Section A(3) and includes the provision to submit an application at least 10 days in advance.

Mr. Clark Jr. explained that when the ordinance was distributed, it was shared in Track Changes format to help distinguish between existing language and proposed revisions. He acknowledged Councilmember Akins-Wells's concerns and noted that some confusion stems from the fact that certain provisions have long existed in the code but have not been consistently followed, particularly regarding special events. He stated that the ordinance governing special events has been in place for several years, and that many requests are appropriately routed through the Planning and Community Development Department. However, he acknowledged that there are instances where individuals are unaware of the requirement. Once informed, those applicants typically proceed through the appropriate process. He emphasized that the confusion arises not from new rules, but from previously existing provisions that were not uniformly enforced.

Councilmember Akins-Wells expressed concern that the lack of enforcement of certain ordinance provisions may be due to a lack of awareness rather than willful neglect. She acknowledged that, despite her long tenure in office, she was unfamiliar with some details and noted that some police officers and staff members may also be unaware of existing ordinances. She suggested a joint meeting or discussion involving the City Attorney, department directors, and relevant staff should have been held earlier to ensure everyone was informed and aligned. Councilmember Akins-Wells concluded that if provisions in the ordinance weren't being followed, it likely indicated a breakdown in communication or training, not an intentional disregard for policy.

Mr. Clark Jr. acknowledged the concerns raised and confirmed that the special events permit requirement had been discussed following a recent event held at one of the City's ball fields, specifically on July 4th. He noted that during that time, staff informed Director Maxwell that the special event provision had been part of the City's code all along, but had not consistently been enforced or widely known among all departments.

Councilmember Akins-Wells stated that, in her view, the current facility rental fees are appropriate given the condition of the facilities. She acknowledged the broader conversation about reviewing the fee schedule. Still, she expressed that, based on her observations, the existing fees reflect the current state and quality of the rental spaces. She encouraged Council to visit the facilities in person, noting that some may not be in a condition she would consider renting. As such, she cautioned against adjusting the fees until the facilities have been renovated or improved.

Councilmember Mears supported updating the ordinance, stating it was moving in the right direction. He emphasized the importance of making changes that protect the City and its residents, ensuring everyone can enjoy events in a safe and secure environment. He noted the need to be prepared for accidental and criminal incidents, and that having clear and updated ordinances helps ensure all parties understand expectations and responsibilities.

Councilmember Gunn asked for clarification regarding projected attendance and security requirements. When an event organizer stated that they anticipated approximately 300 attendees, she inquired whether the ordinance required a specific ratio of law enforcement, such as one officer per 50 people, to be assigned. She also asked whether this security coverage includes police officers and private security personnel, and how those requirements are determined during the permitting process. Director Maxwell responded that in cases where an event is projected to have around 300 attendees, the standard practice is to assign one officer per 100 people, deploying approximately three officers for such events.

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 6:43 p.m. for Personnel, Litigation, or Real Estate matters.

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

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

It was moved to reconvene the work session at 7:09pm.

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

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

ADJOURNMENT:

Mayor Butler adjourned the meeting at 7:09pm.

In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, those requiring meeting accommodation should notify the City Clerk's Office at 404-366-4720 at least 24 hours before the meeting.


City Clerk Signature


Mayor's Signature