



## CITY COUNCIL WORK SESSION

Monday, April 07, 2025 at 6:00 PM  
Council Chambers and YouTube Livestream

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

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

The Honorable Mayor Angelyne Butler, MPA

The Honorable Kimberly James  
The Honorable Hector Gutierrez

The Honorable 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; Joshua Cox, IT Director; Rodney Virgil, Level 2 Support Engineer; Javon Lloyd, PIO; John Wiggins, Finance Director; Diane Lewis, Deputy HR Director; Nicole Dozier, PDC Director; Rochelle Dennis, Interim Economic Development Director; Alton Matthews, Public Works Director; Nigel Whatley, Public Works Deputy Director; David Halcome, Deputy Fire Chief; 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 adopt the consent agenda.

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

Councilmember James noted she would second the motion but noted no consent agenda items were on the agenda.

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

It was moved to adopt the agenda as printed.

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

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

### **CONSENT AGENDA: No items**

### **NEW BUSINESS:**

1. **Council Discussion to Approve Clayton County pocket/skate park on 851 Alpine Way and authorize city funding to continue sidewalk improvements from the daycare center on the corner of Jonesboro Road and Alpine Way to the park property-** Planning and Community Development Department

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

The City of Forest Park's Planning & Community Development Department, along with the Public Works Department, recently held a predevelopment meeting with representatives from Clayton County to review the specifications and scope of the proposed pocket park/skate park project. Clayton County plans to develop a pocket/skate park at 851 Alpine Way, which will feature an open multipurpose area, restroom and maintenance facilities, a gathering and picnic pavilion, a tot lot (small playground), a parking lot, a 10-inch-wide pedestrian trail, a fenced-in skate park, and a parking pad designed for two community mobile medical units.

The mobile medical units aim to provide essential healthcare services in underserved areas with limited access to healthcare. These units will offer various services, including preventative and primary care, specialized care, health education, and cost-effective health solutions. Their presence will enhance healthcare availability, especially in regions with limited infrastructure, ensuring critical medical services are more accessible to those in need.

As part of the project, City staff have requested that Clayton County install sidewalks along the park's frontage to enhance accessibility and connectivity. Additionally, staff are seeking authorization from the Mayor and Council to allocate City funding for infrastructure improvements, including extending existing sidewalks from the daycare center at the corner of Jonesboro Road and Alpine Way to the park property.

Should the Mayor and Council approve the request for the pocket/skate park and funding for sidewalk improvements, Clayton County will proceed with the park development, while City staff will begin installing sidewalks to improve accessibility. This will help promote active transportation, ensure safe pathways, and contribute to residents' overall quality of life. By providing convenient and accessible routes, the City encourages healthier lifestyles, fosters community engagement, and ensures that all residents, regardless of mobility, can fully enjoy the park and its benefits.

Keith Soloman, Clayton County Architect; Mary Fox, Interim Director of Clayton Building Maintenance; Chad White, project manager; and John Qualls introduced themselves and gave a brief presentation of what the pocket/skate park would look like.

**Keith Soloman, Clayton County Architect-** presented plans for a new pocket park on an undeveloped parcel next to a daycare. The proposed park includes a pavilion, a fenced playground, a restroom building, a skate park, and parking spaces for mobile medical units. Mr. Soloman stated that it is designed as a passive park with 10-foot sidewalks winding throughout, providing a community space for recreation and gatherings. The restroom will be a pre-manufactured building with two toilets and a water fountain. Mr. Soloman noted that the skate park will be the first in Clayton County, making this a landmark addition within city limits. Mr. Soloman explained that the project is funded through a federal grant from the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA), secured by the Clayton County Office of Resilience and Sustainability. The Alpine Way parcel was chosen to meet eligibility criteria and be county-owned. While there was a zoning recommendation for sidewalk connectivity to Highway 54, Mr. Soloman noted that the project's budget is fixed and cannot cover that addition. He asked the city to consider supporting the park's placement and, if possible, assist with creating sidewalk connectivity for easier community access.

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

**Councilmember James-** expressed gratitude for selecting the City of Forest Park as the location for the new pocket park and shared excitement that the skate park will be the first of its kind in Clayton County and Ward One. Acknowledging the importance of accessibility, she confirmed that project funding is allocated for Ward One. She stated her willingness to use a portion of those funds to support the sidewalk component of the project, helping to move it forward.

**Mr. Clark Jr., City Manager-** inquired about the proposed sidewalk cost. Director Dozier noted it would be \$60,000. Mr. Clark Jr. confirmed that the annual appropriation for Ward One capital funds is \$48,000. He stated that if it is the council's pleasure, a motion would be needed to allocate the remaining funds toward the construction of sidewalks for the new pocket park project. He added that the sidewalks erected in front of the site should match the existing sidewalks to ensure continuity, at least to the end of the subject property.

**Councilmember Gunn-** emphasized that the new skate park will be a major addition to the community's youth and commended the team for considering Clayton County for the project. She expressed gratitude for their efforts in allowing Forest Park to lead by example, showing other counties what investing in and supporting young people looks like.

**Councilmember Gutierrez-** expressed his excitement about the skate park project, recalling that several youths mentioned traveling to Jonesboro during his campaign to find a place to skate. He shared how proud he was to now see the planned park's visuals, which include the skate area and trails, a play space for children, and access to a mobile clinic—offering something for everyone in the community. He emphasized that safety is always a concern with skating, and while skaters are often tough and resilient, having a clinic nearby is an important and thoughtful addition. Councilmember Gutierrez also addressed Councilmember James, noting that if necessary, they could explore sharing project costs or tapping into capital outlay funds since the park will serve and benefit the entire community.

**Councilmember Akins-Wells-** expressed heartfelt gratitude, noting that for a long time, there has been a gap between the county and the cities, but this project sets a new tone—demonstrating that

collaboration is not only possible but powerful. She emphasized how significant the project is for the community and thanked all involved for their past and future contributions. Echoing the sentiments of her colleagues, she also expressed her willingness to contribute funding support, reinforcing the collective commitment to making the project a success.

**Councilmember Mears-** thanked the presenters for their efforts and expressed his enthusiasm for the project. He shared that he has some available funds and would love to contribute toward the project to help move it forward and enhance its impact on the community.

**Mr. Clark Jr.-** proposed a collaborative funding solution to cover the estimated \$62,000 cost for the sidewalk portion of the project. He suggested that if three governing body members commit \$20,000, the full amount could be covered while leaving enough funds for additional projects within their respective wards. He noted that Ward Four would be excluded from this particular contribution due to recent investments already made there, including a basketball court and two parks completed earlier in the year. Mr. Clark Jr. stated that if the members are willing to commit, the funding item could be brought back before the council at a regular meeting to ensure the motion is clear and the use of funds is properly authorized.

**Councilmember Gunn-** inquired if there would be security cameras around the park. Mr. Clark Jr. responded by emphasizing an important distinction about the project: this park will be a county-owned facility located within the city limits of Forest Park, which means that liability will rest with the county. He then addressed Mr. Fox directly, asking whether the county plans to install security cameras at the site. He stressed the importance of allowing local law enforcement and public safety officials access the camera feeds since they will be responsible for patrolling the area. Mr. Clark Jr. also asked whether the county would be open to the city connecting its camera system to the park to support safety and coordinated monitoring. Mr. Fox stated that cameras are not currently budgeted for the project. However, he expressed openness to collaboration and stated that the county and city could collaborate to install cameras at the location. He noted that he would need to discuss the matter with the Deputy Chief Operating Officer and the Chief Operating Officer of Clayton County. He suggested that the connectivity and coordination regarding the camera system be handled directly between the Mayor, City Council, and the Chief Operating Officer of Clayton County to determine the best path forward.

**Councilmember Gutierrez-** noted for the record that it was not Jonesboro that had the skate park but Riverdale.

**Councilmember Mears-** inquired who would be responsible for the liability. Mr. Clark Jr. clarified that all liability will fall on Clayton County, as the park is being developed on county-owned land. He acknowledged that there are still some details to be worked out but emphasized that this arrangement is not uncommon. He noted that county parks are located within other municipalities successfully monitored and managed by the county. Over the past decade, these situations have typically involved full cooperation between county and city entities. If there is a need for additional public safety support or access, Mr. Clark Jr. expressed confidence that this park would follow the same collaborative model.

**Mr. Clark Jr.-** asked whether the monumental signage planned for the front of the skate park would include any mention of the City of Forest Park in recognition of the city's involvement in the project. Mr. Fox responded that he was unsure whether the City of Forest Park would be mentioned on the monumental signage. He explained that, since the park is Clayton County-owned, he would imagine the signage will primarily feature Clayton County verbiage, but he could not confirm the final details at this time.

**2. Council Discussion and Approval to End Services with ShotSpotter- Police Department****Background/History:**

During a City Council Work Session on September 6, 2022, at 6:00 PM, the Forest Park Police Department presented a proposal to implement ShotSpotter, a gunshot detection system. Following the presentation, the governing body unanimously approved the initiative. Since its implementation, however, the Forest Park Police Department has observed inconsistencies in the system's performance. As a result, the department recommends terminating the current agreement and exploring alternative solutions with other service providers. The project was initially funded through ARPA funds, and there are no remaining contractual obligations.

**Chief Criss-** noted that he wanted to provide an update on the Shot Spotter system, which had previously generated a lot of enthusiasm from the council. He shared that, unfortunately, Shot Spotter has not met the department's expectations, citing frequent false alerts and multiple critical incidents that the system failed to detect altogether. Due to these ongoing issues, the department is now looking to discontinue the use of Shot Spotter and is actively exploring a new vendor to present as an alternative. Chief Criss added that the staff's goal is to bring a new option forward at the start of the upcoming fiscal year.

**Comments/Discussion from Governing Body:**

**Mayor Butler-** inquired if there was a fee associated with terminating the contract early or if the contract would expire. Chief Criss noted the contract recently expired with no additional fees.

**3. Council Discussion and Approval to Decommission K-9 Krypto and to accept the Donation of another Bloodhound- Police Department****Background/History:**

Approximately one year ago, the Jimmy Ryce Foundation donated K-9 Crypto to the City of Forest Park. Since joining our department, efforts have been made to acclimate her to the demands of police work. Unfortunately, Crypto has continued to struggle with a fear of loud noises and unfamiliar people—two critical factors for a successful working K-9.

After careful consideration and in agreement with the Jimmy Ryce Foundation, the City of Forest Park will return the K-9 Crypto to Hurricane Creek. There, she will be placed in a loving home more suitable for her needs. In her place, the city will receive a new Bloodhound trained by Hurricane Creek at no additional cost.

The Forest Park Police Department will assume all costs associated with the new bloodhound's training, equipment, and healthcare.

**Chief Criss-** explained that to serve effectively as a police working dog, a canine must be able to operate in various challenging environments. Unfortunately, K9 Crypto was unable to adapt to some of those conditions. As a result, the department partnered with the Jimmy Ryce Foundation, which has generously agreed to donate a replacement canine to the City of Forest Park. Chief Criss requested the council's approval to formally decommission K9 Crypto and allow the dog to be adopted by a suitable family, ensuring that Crypto transitions into a safe and loving home. Chief Criss further explained that K9 Crypto exhibits extreme fearfulness around people and environmental noises, including loud sounds that can easily startle her and disrupt her focus. This poses a significant challenge, especially when

using her for tracking operations, where the canine must remain focused and on task to ensure effectiveness and safety during police work.

**.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 6:25 p.m. for Personnel, Litigation, or Real Estate matters.

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.

It was moved to reconvene the work session at 7:01 p.m.

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.

**ADJOURNMENT:**

Mayor Bulter adjourned the meeting at 7:01 p.m.

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