



# CITY COUNCIL REGULAR SESSION

Monday, March 06, 2023, at 7:00 PM  
Council Chambers and YouTube Livestream

## MISSION STATEMENT

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

**Website:** [www.forestparkga.gov](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 Allan Mears

The Honorable Dabouze Antoine  
The Honorable Latresa Akins-Wells

Dr. Marc-Antonie Cooper, City Manager  
S. Diane White, City Clerk  
Mike Williams, City Attorney

## APPROVED MINUTES

**CALL TO ORDER/WELCOME:** The meeting was called to order at 7:00pm by Mayor Butler and she read the Mission Statement.

**INVOCATION/PLEDGE:** The invocation and pledge were led by Minister Cook.

**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		✓

Javon Lloyd, Public Information Officer; Joshua Cox, IT Director; Chiquita Barkley, Finance Director; Jeremi Patterson, Deputy Finance Director LaShawn Gardiner, Director Planning & Community Development; Shalonda Brown, Director of Human Resources; Diane Lewis, Deputy Director of Human Resources Bobby Jinks, Director of

Public Works; Latosha Clemons, Fire Chief, Bruce Abrahams, Director Economic Development, Sandra Johnson, Deputy Police Chief; Pam Stevenson, Management Analyst and Arthur Geeter, Purchasing Manager

## PRESENTATIONS:

**Councilmember James** - Wanted to thank the Forest Park Ministers Association, for supplying tonight's honorees with dinner. She also acknowledged the principals, parent liaison, school social workers and presented Teacher of the Year certificates.

### 1. Forest Park Fast Track Rental Assistance Quarterly Update – Executive Offices

#### Background/History:

This is the Quarterly update for the Mayor and City Council on the City of Forest Park's Fast Track Rental Assistance Program. This program is administered by the City Edge Initiative on behalf of the city.

**Ms. Beeler, City Edge** – Gave an update since starting the program in December 2021. The total amount of funds spent totaled around \$324,000. There were 476 responses, and we have approved only 174 families in Forest Park. There were 127 people denied and 129 incomplete applications. There is an issue with people sending in documentation.

One of the biggest concerns is the covid supporting documentation. There are at least 131 people that could have been approved, if they had sent in the documentation. Fifteen of those were non covid related. There are more that did not apply, but we talked about it on the phone. Some said they had accidents, others had issues with going to the doctors for other medical reasons, and some people are sending documents from 2020, 2021, 2022. I cannot accept anything from 2 to 3 years ago, because that has nothing to do with you being behind now.

Some of them are saying, I work part time, or I do not have the funds. The biggest concern is income. I do not know what to do about that, since it is a requirement to be able to pay your rent. I must deny them, and do not want to, but I do not know how to move forward. I just found out Clayton County Community Service Authority has opened back up, and I have sent some people over there.

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

**Councilmember James** – This is more so addressed to council and what we can do. If it is a requirement these funds be used for covid related and we cannot use them for that. Can we reallocate these funds to something else closely related? I do not want to just have the money there and we just approved a lot more money for this Covid is still here, but the reasons are not quote, "covid related." Maybe we can allocate the money to help with something else.

**City Manager** – Yes, it can be reallocated under what the Department of Treasury rules will allow us to do. That will be completely up to the council.

**Councilmember James** – Is there a way we can use that money to help with rent, if it is not covid related?

**City Manager** – The city attorney and I had that discussion and went back and looked. Everything we saw basically could only be used for the indirect or direct use of Covid- 19 for those funds.

**Councilmember James** – Indirectly we have inflation going on and prices are skyrocketing, and you must choose whether to buy food or pay your rent. Could that be an indirect cause or not?

**City Attorney** – When the funds were originally allocated, it was clear that they wanted them to be directly impacted. The indirect thing was it might not have been you but taking care of your brother or immediate family. That is the type of indirect and it makes it tough. My recommendation was to go to the original treasury guidance.

**Ms. Beeler** – Some of the indirect documents we have taken were provided by their job, stating their hours had been reduced, there was a pay cut or the business closed due to covid. If there is someone in the house, they have to take care of, I took that as well.

**Councilmember Antione** – People are asking can we take this out?

**City Manager** – We cannot, that is part of the U.S. Treasury Guidelines.

**Ms. Beeler** – I asked the same question.

**Councilmember Akins-Wells** – You stated, if it was 2021 or 2022, that we could not use those funds. When people get covid, it can take a while before they come back from that. Is that something we can change?

**City Manager** – Ms. Beeler, and I have discussed this. They were impacted, but not at this point. From the time they submitted and got everything caught up, it has lapsed again now. It is hard to go back and try and prove that it was directly or indirectly impacted by covid.

**Councilmember Akins-Wells** – People had lost their jobs and maybe got assistance for a long time. Is this a requirement? Does it say it has to be a certain year?

**City Manager** – The proof of covid impact is a U.S. Treasury requirement. It does not state a certain year, but a covid related impact.

**Ms. Beeler** – I have looked at the ledger, and they were keeping up their payments. Now they are sending in documents, because it is a requirement, but they are behind again after keeping up for a whole year and it has nothing to do with covid.

**Councilmember Akins-Wells** – So, there is nothing in the treasury stating that it has to be a certain time, that is something we are digging for. If someone is coming for help, they need it, and we do not need to make it hard for them. You can have covid in 2021, and it is still affecting you in 2023. What can we do to help instead of making it hard for them?

**City Manager** – City Edge, has been referring them to other programs and other areas that could possibly help. It is hard to justify that and one thing we do not want is to stretch things. We will get audited, and the government will say the money was not spent incorrectly, so you must pay this money back.

**Councilmember Akins-Wells** – I totally understand, we just got another 300,000 and have not used the money we have. If there is nothing there stating we cannot go back to 2021, why are we not helping the people that had covid issues in 2021. Do they have to go online to sign up, or can they come in the office and get help?

**Ms. Beeler** – At the moment it is just me, and I do not take walk ins. I try and help anyone that needs assistance. A lot of the property managers are stepping up to help people also. We do have paper copies and they can place them in the drop box.

**Councilmember Akins-Wells**- Customer service is everything to me. If you are here to assist me then assist me and have a nice attitude. I do not want to need assistance and be told to stand outside; I will be right back.

**Ms. Beeler** – I understand, and it is just me and the office working now. With me having a ton of files and doing this by myself, I do not have the time to keep going through these. I can find other resources for you and other ways, so I can continue to work.

**Councilwoman Akins- Wells** – Is there something we can do? Can we get some assistance, so they have somewhere to come?

**City Manager** – We they come to city hall we do try and help. We give them the application if they cannot get online. I have emailed certain things to Ms. Beeler, that residents have sent to me. We are trying our best to make sure the people that need service are serviced.

**Councilmember Akins- Wells** - With it being city money, someone from the city needs to assist with this.

**Councilmember Antione** – It is obvious that we need this program. We designed this program to particularly help the residents. I ask that we come together and vote on a separate budget, to assist people with this. This is something we should take seriously because we take the people of the city seriously.

**Councilmember Gutierrez** – I thought there were three people with City Edge. Is it just one, because there were some funded positions, that we had in the contract?

**City Manager** – I will let City Edge talk about that, we did have two people to leave.

**Ms. Beeler** - It was only two of us, Ms. Schoonmaker and me. She is now at Clayton County Health, as one of the Board of Directors. I did bring someone in to assist when I was out, and we paid them accordingly.

**Councilmember Gutierrez** – Are we paying for 2 positions?

**City Manager** – There is money allotted to hire for the additional positions. If the money is not being used for that, it is being used to help the residents, which is the administrative part.

**Councilmember Gutierrez** – Are you looking to hire someone? I understand bringing someone in and the funds run out.

**Ms. Beeler** – It is out of my hands, I cannot make that decision, the apostle is right here. Even at the end of the last phase, I cut my salary and put it towards rental assistance, when we were running low.

**Mayor Butler** – Under the incomplete application for missing items, you have a valid Forest Park I.D.

**Ms. Beeler** - They do not have anything, no identification, no passport or anything for Georgia.

**Mayor Butler** – Are you aware that they can get a voters identification card at no charge, at the election office. If so, are you directing people there, and if not maybe those that were missing I.D. you can send them notices letting them know. If you do not have proper identification, you can go get that identification card at no charge.

**Ms. Beeler** – I tell them how to get their driver's license at a free charge, but they do not do it.

**Mayor Butler**- The point is you saying it.

**Ms. Beeler** – I can tell them; I am just letting you know they do not do it.

**Councilmember Akins- Wells** – What about a social security card. If they are getting something from the landlord with their name on it and it match, can they not use that?

**Ms. Beeler** - That is not one of the things we talked about, but if you all approve of it, I will add that to the list.

**Councilmember Akins – Wells** – Can we add that to it. If they have a social security card and something from their landlord with their name on it, that should be something we accept as well.

**Mayor Butler** – At this point, I think we need to sit down and rethink this process, quickly.

## PUBLIC HEARINGS:

### 2. **Council Approval of Conditional Use Permit at 721 Morrow Road** - Planning & Community Development Department

It was moved at 7:34pm to open the Public Hearing for the Conditional Use Permit at 721 Morrow Road.

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

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

Speakers for were:

**Mareto Hylton** – I am pastor of New Covenant Faith and Miracle Arena, under Archbishop Joseph Alexander. We are inspired and have a heart for the community of Forest Park. I have been a resident here for about ten years, and even before we planted the church, we were operating an outreach from our home. We were giving out groceries and care packets to our neighbors. When we got the opportunity to purchase the property with our archbishop, the first thing we wanted to do was find a way to cater to the children in the community.

It is our desire to allow this early childcare center to be a beacon of hope, to equip the youth with what is needed to become professionals. I have seen some many families in this community with skills, but they do not know how to utilize them, to bring them from low income to entrepreneurs. I would like to start with the children and help to equip the family with the tools necessary.

**Latoya Hylton** – Our archbishop previously started school in New York, and his students with their system are phenomenal. The way they learn, the way they act is just intelligent. When you nurture a kid when they are young and help develop the love of learning; once they grow it stays with them. He goes from early childhood education up to high school and has 100 percent graduation rate.

From being in this county and talking to a lot of the students that come in, there are things they should know; but do not have any idea of how to do them. They do not feel they have what is necessary to produce or get these things out of them. We want to bring the same learning model used there to our community to give those students a chance. If you help them while they are young it stays with them when they are older.

**Joan Whyte** – I am here to support them, because I know their desire to help young people. They are passionate about what they are doing, and I hope what they are seeking will be approved.

**Genroy Hylton** – I know the people that are wanting to open the school, and I know their heart, because I have been with them my whole entire life. I am a product of these people, and they have been a blessing not just from a curriculum level, but on a character level also. School is a great place to get the kids in to get educated and evolve in a way that they can have a better future for their kids. That is what I want for my baby Eden and my family. I would really appreciate it if Forest Park would embrace that in the community.

**Tiarra Hylton** – I believe it would be beneficial for the city to allow them to open the school. It would give the children that has nowhere else to go for after school programs. They are looking to give back to the people in this area, and it would be great if they were approved for this school.

**Councilmember Antoine** – I hear that Cayton County is getting a Boys and Girls Club. There are some people that cannot afford to go there or get there. What will your school be offering the community for after school?

**Mareto Hylton** – Right now we are catering for six weeks to five years. Our after school program would eventually extend to the 12<sup>th</sup> grade. We want to eventually start offering what our New York campus offers as far as robotics program, focus on sciences and of course arts. We do have a basketball gymnasium and soccer field and want to expand into athletics.

**Councilmember Gutierrez** – I see it says this is a religious school, is it open to anyone? What is the number of students that will attend?

**Mareto Hylton** – Yes, it is open to everyone. There is a 10-classroom set up with a capacity of 110 students, presently, with room to expand.

There were no speakers against the permit.

It was moved to close the Public Hearing at 7:40pm.

Motion made by Councilmember Antoine, Seconded by Councilmember James.

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

It was moved to approve the Conditional Use Permit at 721 Morrow Road.

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

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

**3. 1st Public Hearing of the 2023 Comprehensive Plan Update – Planning & Community Development Department**

**The is the first of two Public Hearings to be held at Regularly Scheduled Council Meetings.**

It was moved at 7:40pm to open the 1st Public Hearing for the 2023 Comprehensive Plan Update

Motion made by Councilmember James, Seconded by Councilmember Antoine.

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

Speakers for were:

**Andrew Smith** – I am in the Community Development Department, with the Atlanta Regional Commission. We are an intergovernmental coordination and planning agency for the Metro Atlanta Region. We work to bring local governments, state agencies and communities together around things like water conservation, natural resources management, services for older adults, economic development, and community planning.

We assisted the city back in 2018 on the last comprehensive plan update, which is an important plan document that sets up a vision in a lot of different ways. We are here to accentuate the community and address different challenges. We will be working with the city and extension of staff over the next several months of 2023.

After 2012 there was a shift in the rules, that allow the local government to reach out to their Regional Commissions for direct assistance, to update their comprehensive plan. Our main goal is to provide you with help when you have a comprehensive plan coming due in the near future. Some of the requirements for comprehensive planning is to document your vision and a list of community goals. Needs and opportunity and strengths and assets you want to accentuate.

The community work program is short term. For the next five years it will look at specific program project initiative studies and things to help implement your plan. Broadband is a new element that is statewide around the importance of education and economic development. Land use, economic development and housing are core elements of comprehensive plans and for Forest Park, specifically those are all required to be part of your plan.

There were no speakers against the permit.

It was moved to close the Public Hearing at 7:50pm.

Motion made by Councilmember James, Seconded by Councilmember Gutierrez.

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

#### **PUBLIC COMMENTS: (All Speakers will have 3 Minutes)**

There were three (3) Public Comment Speakers:

**Katie Young, You Deserve Mentoring Service** – We are in the community, and we focus on people from age 13 to 23. We want them to have a place for them to go outside of them waiting on their parents. Our goal is to do youth entrepreneurship, and to keep them occupied until they get back home.

**Kenneth Gray, Sr** - The school zone cameras on Ash Street are a trap. I am a law-abiding citizen, and it has been about thirty years since I had a ticket. Can anything be done about the ticket that I received?

**LaWanda Folami** – Sent a referral to the city for rental assistance, and the person she referred felt like she was being treated harshly. After speaking with you Madam Chair, we agree to revisit the protocols for the corona rental assistant.

I apologize to City Edge, if anyone has offended you, we are only seeking answers. She expressed her hurt from seeing her basketball team get into a scuffle. My colleague Ms. Hall wants to partner with the city, because of the homeless population, to get mobile showers. This is a problem in our city.

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

It was moved to adopt the agenda as printed.

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

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

#### **4. Council Approval of Council Work Session and Regular Meeting Minutes from February 20, 2023, and Special Called Meeting Minutes from March 1, 2023 - City Clerk**

It was moved to approve the Council Work Session and Regular Meeting Minutes from February 20, 2023 and Special Called Meeting Minutes from March 1, 2023.

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

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

Voting Abstaining: Councilmember James

#### **NEW BUSINESS:**

#### **5. Council Approval of Arborist Services and Tree Removal – Public Works Department**

It was moved to approve the Arborist Services and Tree Removal.

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

**Councilmember James** – City attorney, since we do not own this yet is it something we can do?

**City Attorney** – Yes, the law allows the city to incur expenses for abandoned cemeteries.

**Councilmember James** – One of the trees lean on to the Mausoleum of Forest Hill. Do they have insurance?

**City Attorney** – We are not required to do this; the problem is there is liability if you do not own the property.

**Councilmember Antoine** – Who ever saw this did a great job. I support not waiting until the problem comes to us.

**Councilmember Akins Wells** – We do not own the property, and I do not feel comfortable voting for this.

Motion made by Councilmember Antoine, Seconded by Councilmember Gutierrez.

Voting Yea: Councilmember James, Councilmember Antoine, Councilmember Gutierrez, Councilmember Mears

Voting Abstaining: Councilmember Akins-Wells



**6. Council Approve the Net2Atlanta Contract for new Public Safety Building – IT Department**

It was moved to approve the Net2Atlanta Contract for new Public Safety Building

**Comments/Discussion from Governing Body:**

**Councilmember Gutierrez** – I forwarded a grant to you, Mr. Cox. I would like to see us apply for some of these things, because there is federal funding out there.

**City Manager** – We did get that, and we do have our new grant analyst and Ms. Stevenson is working hard on getting that information to start applying for the federal grants.

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

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

**CLOSING COMMENTS BY GOVERNING BODY:**

**Councilmember James** – Thanks to everyone for coming. I am excited about our honored guest that is having dinner right now at 696 Main Street. I would like to remind everyone of the Hunger Walk this Sunday. We have raised over \$1,000.00 and we have a \$1,000.00 match. One hundred percent of the donations that were made to Atlanta Community Food Bank will go directly to the Forest Park High School team. This means the community will be able to utilize that.

I have been talking to developers in the city, and I am researching Restrictive zoning. I will be getting with the city manager and Mrs. Gardiner to look more into it. As for the requirements that we have for our LCI Plan, I plan to get into more details about that as well.

Adopt a Road, Councilmember Gutierrez, I am proud to say I have an application for Hendricks Drive. The name of the group is Teen Coalition. I would also like to remind you about early voting at the senior center. You get to vote for your sheriff, but the main thing on the ballot is SPLOST. I cannot tell you how to vote, but I can tell you that SPLOST will give Clayton County School, a convention center at Southlake Mall if the one penny continues.

**Councilmember Antoine** – I would like to give a shoutout to the new employee, welcome to the All-Star team. I would like to give a shoutout to the teachers of the year, and principals that came together here. Thanks to the educators that are educating our kids. We have a pandemic, and our young children are dying. We all have seen what just happened in Douglas County. These 15-year-old kids with guns and some of them died. It is easier to get a gun than a license and something needs to be done. We do not need to be looking the other way like this is not happening. Shoutout to the new school that is coming, maybe that will help. I will be working to make sure the rental assistant program is back, so that we can continue to do things to help our community.

**Councilmember Gutierrez** – It is nice to see everyone here, we have a full house. I want to thank Councilwoman James, for putting together the presentation to celebrate our educators. Councilmember Antoine spoke truth about the young people with guns. We need to hold our elected officials at the capitol accountable. The NRA is a big company, and they fund a lot of campaigns. We need to make sure that we are calling our people, and asking them how they are voting, but the people hold the ultimate power.

Thanks to everyone that came out for our beautification project. Thanks to the new school, we look forward to you opening here, that is exciting. One of the things our community asks for is after-school activities for the youth and it

is very heartwarming that you chose Forest Park for these things. Dr. Folami, that is unfortunate about your team, but I am sure you gave them some good coaching after that.

To the gentlemen with the ticket, I understand what you are saying. I received a ticket as well, and I put my car on cruise control when in that area. Again, I want to thank the people that came out for the community clean-up. Rock Church of Atlanta came out and there were plenty of them. Minister Cook can not only pray, but he can paint and clean. Several businesses, community members and city employees were there, and I would like to say thanks. Food Truck Friday was cancelled last week because of the rain, but we are going to try again this Friday. To the citizens applying for help at City Edge, I can help assist with that. Thank you, Mr. Wells and Mr. Niguel, for helping the community volunteer with installing some goals.

**Councilmember Akins- Wells** – The cameras on Ash Street by Fountain Elementary need to be moved, because it is a speed trap. They need to be down the road by West Street where there are a lot of activities and children being picked up. This is something that I have spoken to the city manager about, and I think it is a speed trap. The city is not looking to rich off speeders. If we are going to have them, put them where they are needed.

Great job Councilwoman James, for a great presentation; and thanks to our teachers and principals, out here being great leaders. When it comes to City Edge, I think we need to look at changing some things, so our people can get some assistance. I do not think people not having identification should be turned away. They should be able to use their voters registration card or social security card.

Attitude and customer service is everything, and I do not feel like the attitude here to us was appropriate. I do not want to imagine what the people that need help deal with. The city needs to place someone in that extra position to make sure our people are being helped and treated fairly. I thank you for what you are doing, but I think it is too much for one person. Thank you all for coming.

**Councilmember Mears** – Thank you to everyone that came tonight, this is where your business is taken care of. So, come back and help us help you, keep us informed and call us if you need us.

**Mayor Butler** – I want to thank everyone for coming out and I echo the sentiments of my colleagues. Particularly, too, City Edge, we will revisit this to make sure we are providing the best services to our residents. I had the opportunity to go to Unidos and Fountain Elementary School, over the last couple of weeks. My heart was so full, the intellect of the kids made me proud. Every time I go to these schools, I leave more optimistic than before. Thank you, Councilwoman James, and thank you to our educators.

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

There was no Executive Session

#### **ADJOURNMENT:**

It was moved to adjourn the Regular Meeting at 8:20pm

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

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