



## CITY COUNCIL REGULAR SESSION

Monday, September 18, 2023 at 7:00 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 Allan Mears

The Honorable Dabouze Antoine  
The Honorable Latresa Akins-Wells

Ricky L. Clark Jr, City Manager  
Michelle Hood, Interim City Clerk  
Mike Williams, City Attorney

### APPROVED MINUTES

**CALL TO ORDER/WELCOME:** The meeting was called to order at 7:06 p.m. by Mayor Butler.

**INVOCATION/PLEDGE:** The invocation and pledge were led by Councilmember Mears.

**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- <b>Zoom 6:33</b>		
Latresa Akins-Wells	Council Member, Ward 4		✓
Allan Mears	Council Member, Ward 5		✓

LaShawn Gardiner, Director Planning & Community Development; Javon Llyod, PIO, Shalonda Brown, HR Director, Diane Lewis, Deputy HR Director; Bobby Jinks, Public Works Director; Nigel Whatley, 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, James Shelby, Project Manager

**CITY MANAGER'S REPORT:**

City Manager Clark would like to amend the agenda for an emergency add-on item. It is for \$3.2 million due to a review of our budget and are additional revenues in the amount which will take our budget from \$38,000,000 dollars to \$41,900,000. He gave an overview of his first 100 days, noting that over \$600,000 had been collected in delinquent taxes, and unveiled the new city app called One Click, which will allow residents to report issues. Mr. Clark stated that One Light is a collaborative effort to repair and upgrade nearly 1,900 light fixtures throughout the city. Mr. Clark noted the development of a new incubator space to be located off the city's main thoroughfare that will feature a commissary kitchen, flex workspace, and food hall. He noted the progress being made throughout each department.

Tarik Maxwell, Director of Parks and Recreation, unveiled the new logo for the Recreation Service Department/Recreation and Leisure Department. They will serve as the brand and once you see it you will automatically know what it is.

**PRESENTATIONS:****1. SICKLE CELL AWARENESS PRESENTATION - Mapillar Dahn, Founder/CEO****Background/History:**

Sickle Cell Awareness Presentation by Mapillar Dahn, Founder/CEO of the MTS Sickle Cell Foundation.

Mapillar Dahn stated that Sickle Cell Awareness Month is in September. This subject is near and dear to her because her kids have the disease. It affects over 20 million people around the world, and nearly 100,000 Americans are living with this disease. Sickle Cell is a genetic blood disorder that produces abnormal hemoglobin. Some of the symptoms include chronic pain, infections, and anemia. It can be managed by regularly visiting a hematologist, through general care, maintaining a healthy diet, hydration, getting enough rest, pain management, and chronic blood transfusions. To help people with Sickle Cell, you can donate blood, check on them, learn more about it, share the information, and support the cause.

Lawanda Folami thanked the city of Forest Park for a great engagement, especially Chief Clemons. She became a part of this while coaching volleyball. A young girl approached her, wanted to play, and informed her that she had Sickle Cell. She had her come in to be an assistant coach so that she could be a part of it. She wanted the city to know there were at least 35 to 40 percent of employees that have the trait or have Sickle Cell, which she discovered while working at the health fair. She would like to have a blood drive and bring awareness to the community.

**Comments/Discussions from Governing Body:**

Councilmember Antione is looking to do an event. He states the information is not just for Forest Park. He is from another country and the kids there don't know their condition of Sickle Cell. Ms. Dahn states she is from Liberia, and they have a large Sickle Cell population. Councilmember Antione states maybe one day she can come to his country and educate the people. He intends to educate and encourage his students to get checked for the disease.

Councilmember Akins-Wells thanked her for the presentation. She had a family member pass away last year from the disease. Her prayers go out to her for being a mom of three daughters with the disease. She states more people in the community need to be informed and she may ask her to come speak in her community.

Councilmember Mears thanked her for the presentation and stated it was very educational to learn how it affects the body.

Councilmember Gutierrez thanked her for the presentation and thanked LaWanda Folami for speaking. He is glad the two are connected. He states that if there are any events being hosted in Forest Park, feel free to come out and get a table and let them know how they can help.

Mayor Butler states that she has a girlfriend whose child suffers from this, and she knows how chronic the pain can be. They are often at the hospital cheering him on and supporting him. It impacts everybody, and if there is anything they can do, let us know. She informed the city manager that it would be good to host a blood drive regularly to help in that effort.

## 2. **FUTURE FIREFIGHTER GIRLS CAMP - Fire Department**

### **Background/History:**

Forest Park Fire & EMS will host a Future Firefighter Girls camp on Wednesday, October 11, 2023, at the Gillem Public Safety Building (2090 Anvil Block Road). This free event will be for female youth ages 12-17 interested in exploring a future career in fire services. This camp will give young females a glimpse of the ins and outs of what it takes to become a certified firefighter. Successful female fire professionals will lead the one-day program and will cover a variety of topics.

Slots are limited and will be selected on a first-come, first-serve basis. Applications are available online.

Chief Clemons states they have more than 35 applications. There are more than 1,000,000 career volunteer firefighters throughout the United States, with 6200 of them being women. Women have been in this field for about 200 years and only represent less than 4 percent. If you can't see it, you can't be it. So, it is my obligation to give them something to strive to be.

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

There were five (5) Public Speakers:

Carolyn Franklin states there has been an ongoing problem on their street, Lookout Drive, with a dumpster sitting on the streets for the past six months and the placement with trash beside it instead of in it. Cars are parked on the streets, making it hard to access her driveway.

LaWanda Folami introduced the people she brought to support the MTS Sickle Cell Foundation. Thanked everyone and wanted them to know that Sickle Cell is very important. She talked about some blankets she received and how her granddaughter wanted to give them to the little girls with Sickle Cell because they were cold. She wanted everyone to know that there is a Sickle Cell crisis in the city and look forward to a cure being found.

Carl Evans would like to see if they could work out for the citizens to receive a response within 48 hours if there is not a resolution the day that they present their problems. He thanked Mr. Clark for streamlining things. He talked about someone he knew with Sickle Cell and how it affected him. The presentation today gave him more insight into how it affects people. He thinks everyone should get involved and work to help out, as One Forest Park.

Zack Parker stated he received an email from the City Clerk asking if he still wanted the records he requested over four months ago. He said yes, he did, and that he requested them for a reason, and if he had not said anything at the last meeting nothing would have become of this. He states that the city is taking a long time to produce the records

because they want him and other citizens to give up and go away. They don't want to be held accountable or want anyone to request information or do a report against the police.

He states he went to the police department for a piece of paper, but the officer called and talked to someone and, after about 5 minutes, called him up and asked about the complaint and had the papers in their hand and would not give them to him. He asked for the documents after a while and received them. He thinks the city withholds these documents to frustrate him and other citizens. He states that the police sat in front of and shone their lights on his home when no call had been made. This happened only after he complained to the captain about the same officer, whose behavior was often excused.

Mr. Parker stated that the City Attorney and City Clerk lied to him about being able to receive the test messages, so he sent them a copy of the First Amendment Clinic of Georgia. To this day, he still has not received anything he has requested. The Police, Government Officials, Code Enforcement, or the City Attorney never admit to any wrongdoing and stall every step of the way with a bit of retaliation sprinkled in. He thanked all who listened to him and would love to watch the meeting from home but felt the need to keep speaking on these topics.

Samuel Ibanez wanted the community to know that they pay taxes and that they are having problems with follow-ups. Businesses are having trouble with late licenses and do not know why there is retaliation with those businesses, and that is why there is no progress. He states they have hired more police, but their homes are being violated. He noticed that he had been seeing more blue lights on the streets and thanked them. He asked for lines in the streets and stated that some people on bicycles were receiving \$750.00 tickets. Mr. Ibanez states that when he is calling, it is for a reason. He noted he was receiving calls when people were running for their positions, and he was helping them. He would like to see something happen when there are issues.

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

It was moved to amend the Council Regular Agenda for September 18, 2023, with the addition of item 5, Approval of a Budget Amendment request for \$3.2 million dollars.

Motion made by Councilmember James, Seconded by Councilmember Antoine.

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

#### **APPROVAL OF MINUTES:**

**3. Council Approval of Council Work Session and Regular Meeting Minutes from Sept 5, 2023 - City Clerk**

It was moved to approve the Council Work Session and Regular Meeting Minutes from September 5, 2023.

Motion made by Councilmember James, Seconded by Councilmember Antoine.

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

#### **OLD BUSINESS:**

#### **NEW BUSINESS:**

**4. Council Approval of Resolution Terminating Authorization for Double-Time Overtime Pay for Public Works – Executive Offices**

**Background/History:**

At the August 7, 2023, Council meeting, the City Council temporarily authorized “double-time” pay for Public Works employees for a period of 90 days to assist with catching up with grass-cutting around the city. The city has since caught up with the grass cutting. Accordingly, it is proposed that the City Council now terminate the authorization for “double-time” overtime pay.

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

**Comments/Discussions from Governing Body:**

Councilmember James wanted to know if the apartments or townhouses on Astor Avenue are in the city because they are never cut. Mayor Butler asked if it was on the corner of Jonesboro Road. Councilwoman James responded that it is on the street before Jonesboro Road.

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

**5. Approval of the Budget Amendment Request of \$3,2,000,000.**

Motion made by Councilmember Mears, Seconded by Councilmember James.

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

**CLOSING COMMENTS BY GOVERNING BODY:**

Councilmember James apologized for being tardy. She reminded everyone that she hosts a monthly ward meeting every third Thursday of the month at the Senior Center at 5 p.m. For this month, the Mayor will host the ward meeting. She encouraged everyone to come to the Homecoming Parade, and local vendor Big Dave Cheese Steaks reached out to participate. Apologized to Mrs. Franklin for dropping the ball when it comes to Lookout Drive but stated they would get it taken care of. She gave a shoutout to the police department for supporting the fundraiser. She spoke on the public comments being regurgitated over and over again on past hurts and past experiences. She stated she is confident in the things that the department heads are doing to make an impact by getting the information to the citizens; she thanked the City Attorney as well.

Councilmember Antione thanked everyone for coming and those online. He gave a shoutout to the Seniors, the Chief, and his department. He stated he will start having Sickle Cell events and would like people to come out and participate. On October 17<sup>th</sup>, he will have his Community Block Party. God Bless you all.

Councilmember Gutierrez thanked them for highlighting the award for the 50 most influential Latinos. This is his second time getting this award, and he is honored to be able to represent Forest Park. He wanted to highlight events for Spanish Heritage Month. Food Truck Friday will be October 6<sup>th</sup> at Lee Park. On the 7<sup>th</sup>, there will be a festival, and his Block Party is coming up with Mr. Walker on September 26<sup>th</sup> from 5:30 p.m. to 7 p.m. In partnership with Unidos School, they are also having their Fall Festival at the park.

Citizen moved to Atlanta from New York. He is a Fashion Designer and would like to do a Fashion Show so that he can donate all the money to the Sickle Cell Foundation.

Councilmember Akins-Wells congratulated the Sassy Seniors and thanked them for being in the community. She thanked Director Walker for hosting the block parties and bringing the community out so that they are in the know. She congratulated Councilmember Gutierrez for the things he has been doing and his latest recognition. The City Manager states that Councilmember Gutierrez was designated as one of the 50 most Influential Spanish Hispanics in the State of Georgia. She thanked Chief Criss, his staff, and the fire department for being in the community and making a difference. Wanted to make sure the people know about the Willie Finch Community Garden in Ward 4 on Lee Circle, which is being revamped and will invite the community out to support this.

Councilmember Mears thanked Mr. Walker for putting on his block party. He stated it brought out people in his ward that he had never seen. He recognized Mr. Willie Finch, as the oldest person to attend the meeting.

**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 September 18, 2023, Council Regular Meeting at 8:24 p.m.

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

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

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