



CITY COUNCIL REGULAR SESSION

Monday, April 17, 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
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 by Mayor Butler @ 7:05pm and she read the Mission Statement.

INVOCATION/PLEDGE: The invocation and pledge of allegiance was led by Dr. Wanda Miller Curry.

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		✓

Joshua Cox, IT Director; Chiquita Barkley, Finance Director; Jeremi Patterson, Deputy Finance Director; LaShawn Gardiner, Director Planning & Community Development; Deputy Chief; Sandra Johnson, Director of Human Resources; Shalonda Brown, Diane Lewis, Deputy HR Director; Bobby Jinks, Director of Public Works; Nigel Wattley,

Deputy Public Works Director; Bruce Abrahams, Director Economic Development; Tarik Maxwell, Director Rec.& Leisure; Latosha Clemons, Fire Chief; David Halcome, Deputy Fire Chief; and Captain Kayla Gant, Police Department

PUBLIC COMMENTS: (All Speakers will have 3 Minutes)

There were four (4) Public Speakers:

LaWanda Folami – Thank the PD, for rising to the occasion of working under the deputy chief after losing the chief. She congratulated the candidate that was chosen to become the new chief and said they would aid him however it is needed. Glad to see the men in blue come to the city events, because they could be anywhere else. She is not coaching this year but is still active with her team and sitting on several committee boards this year. Wants them all to work collectively to help move the city and county forward.

Carl Evans – Concerned about the infrastructure and the roads that are in horrible shape. Some roads have 20 ft sections that need to be dug up and redone. Whomever designed Main Street did a horrible job. The median that was put into place is going to cause an accident, because the roads are so narrow. Near Phillips Road and the cemetery, the road floods because there is no drain in place. Also, nothing has been done about the speed bumps, they are still there with no markings on them, and they are still in the wrong place. An escalade came through our street doing double the speed, turn on another street and was speeding. We called the police around ten till seven, which was around shift change and it was about 20 minutes after 7 before anyone came. Every neighborhood has the same problem. We need to work on safety to protect the citizens.

Felicia Davis – First, I would like to say it is so great to see my city council working in such a professional manner. It is good to see you run through an agenda and get so much done. Each time I come; I always have an agenda item that can be an expense. I have to say that I agree wholeheartedly with my council member, we must take care of home first. Since I have been pushing the Sister's City, I want to step forward and say, I will support two city members to represent the city and travel this summer, to plan for future opportunities and commit to raising the funds. This is so the Sister's City account will have external contributions. That way it reframes what the city has to contribute to others. Then we can eventually plan for a future trip that the residents of Forest Park might also be able to participate in.

Jay Evans – Made the announcement that this Saturday, American Red Cross will be giving away Fire Detectors, for people who do not have one. They will also be checking the batteries for the ones that do have them and replacing the batteries if needed. There is no cost, I just want everyone to know.

ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA WITH ANY ADDITIONS / DELETIONS:

It was moved the approved the Council Agenda with the following additions: add Item No. 5 – Council authorization of the mayor to execute a settlement agreement for the Collection Center litigation.

Motion made by Councilmember Antoine, Seconded by Councilmember Gutierrez

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

Councilmember Antoine - Point of Order

Mayor Butler – Yes sir.

Councilmember Antoine – I make a motion to approve \$30k in the budget for fire equipment to be shipped to Haiti.

Comments from Governing Body:

Councilmember Gutierrez – Ms. Davis I know that you are familiar with this we donated some equipment to our Sister City in Haiti. At some point we had momentum from some of the non-profits that wanted to help us fund this. I do not know if you have a connection with that but just throwing that out there.

Felecia Davis – I am aware of the contribution of the trucks, and I am aware of the additional need of resources. What I am committing to do is raise the money in the event the city does not allocate it. That way the city remains true to the residents, and together we can seek, and identify funds. The trucks need to go, and I respect councilman Antoine desire to get it done.

Councilmember Akins-Wells – I am not against Sister City. I would like to know how you fight more for another country, and we know you are from one. We also appreciate you being here, but the citizens of Forest ark is who you work for. You can vote to turn down a couple of thousand dollars to have an event but ask the city to pay \$30,000 dollars to ship trucks to another country. Make this make sense. How do you fight harder for another country than you do for the residents that voted you in, the residents that you work for?

Councilmember Mears – We have compassion for these foreign countries and what he is doing is fine. Forest Park has needs of its own, and we represent Forest Park. Charity and hard work begin at home.

Councilmember Antoine – Forest Park is in partnership with Sister's City International, which was voted on in 2018. We have been sending book bags, helping kids go to school and making a difference. After that we voted for a fire and water buffalo truck to be shipped. The truck has been sitting back there for a few years collecting dust and needs to be shipped. It is not that I do not support Forest Park, I have done a lot and that is why this is my 3rd time getting elected. I will support these events, but you have to do the right thing and support what you donated and support the Sister's City initiative.

Mayor Butler – There is a way to go about getting things accomplished, and unfortunately the way you presented it may be counter to what you truly desire. I want to always be in the forefront of when we want to get something done and how we want to work together. There was not an issue supporting Sister City, there was not an issue per se with sending the equipment to Haiti. When we look at what it is that we are trying to accomplish we have to look at everything. Unfortunately, one of the things that were omitted was the cost associated with sending items to another country. Particularly, there was some issue with the conflict that was going on in Haiti before the delivery of the equipment. There were a lot of questions about where it was going. I do not want this to be one against the other when there is good in everything, but the way it is being brought forth, is counted against what it is you are trying to do. This is something we can continue to have a conversation on this. There is a motion and there was a second to vote, but we also do need to make sure we are being proactive in what we want and how to bring in funding, to accomplish what we want. Government is not the end-all-be-all. This is a community we all play a role in and if there is something that we want, like when the events were cancelled, funds were raised, so the events could continue. With this let us continue to seek ways to raise funds to get the items sent to Haiti.

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

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

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

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

It was moved to approve the Council Work Session and Regular Meeting Minutes from April 3, 2023.

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

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

NEW BUSINESS:

2. Discussion on an agreement between the City of Forest Park and Clayton County Public Schools on RedSpeed system revenue sharing – Executive Offices

It was moved to approve an agreement between the City of Forest Park and Clayton County Public Schools 5% revenue sharing of RedSpeed System.

Motion made by Councilmember Antoine, Seconded by Councilmember James.

Councilmember James - Point of Clarity. This is for the 5 percent.

Mayor Butler -Yes

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

3. Council Approval for Funding of Specified Events – Legislative

It was moved to approve funding of specified events.

100-20-1110-52-3913 - Special Events – Friday Nights (June 2023) for \$4,500

100-20-1110-52-3927 – Food Truck Friday (May and June 2023) for \$2,000

100-20-1110-52-3929 – Asian Heritage Month Event (May 2023) - \$8,000

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

Comments from Governing Body:

Councilmember James – I want to make sure we are following the guidelines as far as promotion of city funded events, so I do not get any more calls about the city promoting individuals.

Mayor Butler – Yes. This is noted.

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

4. Council Confirmation of the Police Chief Candidate – Executive Offices

It was moved to confirm Brandon Criss as the new Police Chief for City of Forest Park, and for the mayor to sign the employment contract for said candidate.

Motion made by Councilmember Antoine, Seconded by Councilmember Wells.

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

City Attorney – For full accuracy, can you announce the name of the nominee?

Mayor Butler – Brandon Criss

5. Council authorization of the Mayor to execute a settlement agreement for the Collection Center litigation – Legislative Offices

It was moved to give authorization of the Mayor to execute a settlement agreement for the Collection Center litigation.

Motion made by Councilmember Antoine, Seconded by Councilmember Wells

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

6. Council Approval to Move \$30k in budget for fire equipment to be shipped to Haiti – Legislative Offices

It was motioned to approve **\$30k in budget for fire equipment to be shipped to Haiti.**

Motion made by Councilmember Antoine. Motion failed for lack of a second.

CLOSING COMMENTS BY GOVERNING BODY:

Comments from Governing Body:

Councilmember James – Thanks to everyone for coming out. I would like to say congratulations to our new incoming chief. We had some great candidates, and we have a great person we selected. Thursday is my monthly ward meeting; it will be at 696 Main Street and streaming live on Zoom. There will be different directors talking about what is going on in the city. We will also have a couple of gentlemen there that are doing our development. The gentlemen building the new homes will be there to give renderings of the new townhomes that will be coming to Forest Park. I would like to address some of the things that are happening in our city. I know Main Street looks torn up right now, but we have cones out there to keep the streets narrower than they would be once the construction is done. With the design, we want our Main Street to be livable, and walkable. We want the entertainment district, the outdoor eating and walking. We do not want the big trucks coming down Main Street, so that is part of the process that we are going through and changing the look of Main Street. I am happy about the speed bumps we do have in place, and it is slowing down the traffic. Anytime there is change, there is always resistance, and we are not going to get everything right, but we are trying our best to serve the community. We are trying to make sure the community is safe, and the streets are safe for our kids. We want our speed bumps, and we are not going to remove them. We can look to see if there are reflectors for them, so people can see them. There are signs up, and if you are driving, the speed limit, you will not tear up your vehicle. They were placed where they are after having a traffic study done. Remember we are trying to improve our community. We appreciate you and hope that we are serving you well.

Councilmember Antoine – Huge shoutout to our new Chief Chris. Ward 2, it is all about you right now. I want to make sure we have a community meeting with the new chief, and we will be bringing back neighborhood watch. A big shoutout to Ms. Evans with the smoke detectors, I will be working with you too. We lost some lives a few years back because of this. I encourage all residents with an idea to bring it up. We do not know it all, it is you guys that make us better. Thank you for having patience, and my colleague's you guys are the best.

Councilmember Gutierrez – Thank you all for coming out and thank you Ms. William from our school board for coming. Dr. Anderson, thank you for coming out. Congratulations to Chief Chris, I love the smile and cannot wait to see that around our city. Shoutout to the new recruits, welcome, and the recruit that came with the recruits. Shoutout to the citizens, I really appreciate you all for coming up, holding people accountable and saying what we need and how we can change it. That is what we are here for. Selena Day was a success, thanks to the people that came out, the PD and fire. We are approved for Food Truck Friday, which is the 1st Friday of the month so out everybody, and remember your city does this for you so that you do not have to go to other places. Thank you, Mr. Rashmir, for your support and Tarik for making things happen. We have a Spring Festival coming up and we are partnering with Unidos School, and there is going to be a whole lot of fun stuff at the park. Then we will have a Wellness Fair, where we partner with Ms. Sabrina Hill, to provide wellness for the community. Shoutout to Forest Park, soccer team for making it to the playoffs.

Councilmember Akins-Wells – I know we have an election going on, but I want to send my condolences to Sheriff Allen and his family. I attended his dad's service on Saturday. The pastor said you do not beat a man when he down, let us put aside the campaign and the difference and lift him up. Thank you chief, we accept you and we appreciate you. The event I attended, you made me proud for speaking on community policing, because I am all about my community. I feel you can come in and get the job done. I am not going to say it will be easy, but we will pray for you and give you the tools to take the department where it needs to go. Felicia Davis, thank you for being the amazing person you are and for understanding we serve the citizens of Fores Park first. It does not mean that we do not support other things, we just want to make sure, or people here get what they need first. Mr. Rashmir of Rumors, I want to thank you for stepping up for the community, when the council took the events away. The events went on and Forest Park Day was the biggest since I have been in office. Elected people put their names on things all the time. I did it and, and things were taken away from the community and it was not fair, but it is all about the community. Fun Friday will be the 3rd Friday in June, May 20th is the Forest Park Reunion, for all the people that attended school here, but we are inviting the departments out also. Thank you all for coming out.

Councilmember Mears – I would like to congratulate the new Police Chief; I look forward to working with you. I apologize to everyone for not being at the last meeting, I do take my job seriously.

Mayor Butler – I echo the sentiments of my colleagues Chief Chris; I welcome you to the City of Forest Park. Everything prior to this part was easy. It is time to roll up your sleeves and do the job, I know you can do. You have the support of the mayor and council to fully execute your position. Thank you for being here.

Councilmember James – I would be remiss if I did not acknowledge Deputy Chief Johnson and being our interim, when we did not have a chief.

Dr. Alieka Anderson, Clayton County Commissioner – Thank you all for the job that you do. I know you say this is a hard job, but it is easy, because you all do it well. Thanks for allowing me to work with you all. You have a wonderful police chief that is coming, and he is going to step up to the plate. To the citizens and everyone here, like Mrs. Wells was saying; please continue to pray for everyone and lift everyone up. We are trying to move Clayton County forward, and I would like us all to start working together.

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 7:49 for Personnel, Litigation or Real Estate matters.

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

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

It was moved to reconvene back into the Council Regular Meeting at 8:04pm

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

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

It was moved to approve the termination of the City Manager pursuant to his contract.

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

Comments from Governing Body:

Councilmember Antoine – I think we have a great city manager, I did not vote for this, but I will support the transition.

Councilmember Gutierrez - As a leader we must make decisions in life that are hard. At first, I was not in support of this, but I had to separate my emotions from it. If the majority of the elected body do not want you in a space, then we will not succeed as a city. My job is to make sure we succeed as a city. Thank you, Dr. Cooper, I wish you the best and I will refer him to any city.

Councilmember Wells – We as leaders do have to make tough decisions, and I want what is best for the community. Just like the residents hold me accountable, we must hold our city manager accountable. It is not all bad, just because we must let someone go. We want to move in a different direction, the city has a lot of growing to do, we are growing, and the council is getting better. We need someone to hold our directors accountable, so we can give the residents and employees the best of the best. I appreciate you Dr. Cooper and thank you so much for what you have done. I supported this, it is no secret and I do not mind explaining why. I think things can be better and things will be better.

Councilmember Mears – I too would like to thank Dr. Cooper. I had mixed emotions about this but agreed with the council in general. You would think six heads is better than one. He has done an exceptional job up until this point. With the position that Forest Park is in and its new growth, the council decided we needed to make a change. I wish the best for Dr. Cooper, and I would recommend him anywhere, anytime.

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

Voting Nay: Councilmember Antoine

It was moved to appoint James Shelby as Interim City Manager and the Mayor to execute the contract.

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

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

It was moved to approve a Resolution naming Ricky Clark as Sole Finalist for the position of City Manager.

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

Comments from Governing Body:

Councilmember Wells- Just to support my vote, I support Ricky Clark. I know the things he has done for the City of Jonesboro. I know the vision we have for Forest Park, and I do not think we could choose a better candidate.

Councilmember Mears – I have known Ricky ever since I have been on council, eight or nine years and before that. He will do a good job, and I hope he is stern and will move us forward.

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

ADJOURNMENT:

It was moved to adjourn the Council Regular meeting at 8:11pm.

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

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

APPROVED