



CITY COUNCIL REGULAR SESSION

Monday, May 01, 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

James Shelby, Interim City Manager
S. Diane White, City Clerk
Mike Williams, City Attorney

APPROVED MINUTES

CALL TO ORDER/WELCOME: The meeting was called to order at 7:01pm by Mayor Butler and she read the Mission Statement.

INVOCATION/PLEDGE: The invocation and pledge were led by Minister Justin 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		✓

Joshua Cox, IT Director; Chiquita Barkley, Finance Director; Jeremi Patterson, Deputy Finance Director; LaShawn Gardiner, Director Planning & Community Development; Authur Geeter; Purchasing, Diane Lewis, Deputy HR Director; Nigel Wattley, Deputy Public Works Director; Bruce Abrahams, Director Economic Development; Latosha

Clemons, Fire Chief; David Halcome, Deputy Fire Chief; Brandon Criss; Deputy Police Chief, Sandra Johnson and Captain Kayla Gant, Police Department

Police Chief Criss introduced two new recruits, Ariel Brown, and Lesha Biffle.

PRESENTATIONS:

1. Proclamation for National Economic Development Week May 8-12 -ED Dept

Background/History:

National Economic Development Week is May 8-12 in which communities showcase their economic development successes. In celebration of this week, the City of Forest Park will co-host with Clayton County Economic Development an Economic Development Day at Gillem Logistics Center, the largest job hub in the county. The "Industrial Block Party" event will be on May 9, 2023, from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. in the Amazon parking lot.

Residents and businesses are invited to attend the event which will feature a barbecue, small business open house, MARTA virtual train, Workforce Development truck, games, and giveaways. The Urban Redevelopment Authority (URA) is co-sponsoring, along with support from the Forest Park Development Authority and the Forest Park Downtown Development Authority.

Approve the Proclamation for National Economic Development Week to be accepted by representatives of the City, the Urban Redevelopment Authority, the Downtown Development Authority, and the Development Authority.

Mayor Butler read the proclamation to be presented for Economic Development Week and she and the council took photos.

PUBLIC COMMENTS: (All Speakers will have 3 Minutes)

There were no public comments.

ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA WITH ANY ADDITIONS / DELETIONS:

It was moved to adopt the Council agenda by adding an Item # 9 The Executive Assistant Position.

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:

2. Council Approval of Council Work Session and Regular Meeting Minutes from April 17, 2023 - City Clerk

It was moved to approve the Council Work Session and Regular Meeting Minutes from April 17, 2023.

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

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

NEW BUSINESS:**3. Confirmation of the New City Manager, Ricky L. Clark Jr. – Executive Offices****Background/History:**

City Council confirmation of candidate for the position of City Manager.

It was moved to approve the confirmation of Ricky L. Clark Jr. as the new City Manager.

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

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

4. Council Discussion of a Change Order for the Main Street Streetscape Project - PCD

It was moved to approve the Change Order for the Main Street Streetscape Project.

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

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

5. Council Approval of Surplus items – Public Works Department

It was moved to approve the Surplus Items.

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

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

6. Council Approval of transferring funds from one line item to another – Public Works Department

It was moved to approve transferring funds from one line item to another.

Motion made by Councilmember James, Seconded by Councilmember Mears.

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

7. Council Adoption of Text Amendments Sec. 8-8-4 to the Zoning Ordinance – Planning & Community Development

It was moved to Open the Public Hearing to consider the Adoption for Text Amendments to the Zoning Ordinance.

Councilmember Antoine - Point of Order.

Mayor Butler - State your point.

Councilmember Antoine - We are missing Sister Cities Program on here?

Mayor Butler - It was not on the Regular Agenda.

Councilmember Antoine - Why is that?

Mayor Butler - It was not put on there, and I do not know if you made it clear you wanted it on the Regular Agenda. Let us get through this and if you want to amend the agenda, we can do that.

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

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

There were no speakers for or against the Text Amendments.

It was moved to close the Public Hearing.

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 Adopt the Text Amendment to the Zoning Ordinance.

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

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

Comments/Discussion form Governing Body:

Councilmember James - Is this the recommendation of staff?

City Manager – Yes, it is and the Planning Commission.

8. Council Approval of a Resolution for a Council Representative on Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee – Planning and Zoning

It was moved to approve a Resolution for the appointment of Councilmember Gutierrez to the Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee.

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

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

ADDENDUM ITEM:

9. Council Approval to Separate the City Clerk and Executive Assistant Position within the City Manager's Office

It was moved to approve the Executive Assistant Position.

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

Comments/Discussion from Governing Body:

Councilmember James – I would like to clarify there are two separate things, I want to make sure we are focusing on. To separate the Executive Assistant position from the City Clerk as it is now. Also, to reclassify the Deputy City Manager, so I want to make sure that is part of the motion.

It was moved to withdraw the original motion made by Councilmember Antoine.

It was moved to separate the Executive Assistant Position from the City Clerk Position and reclassify the Deputy City Manager Position to the Executive Assistant Position.

Motion made by Councilmember James, Seconded by Councilmember Antoine.

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

Councilmember Gutierrez – I would like to add that Ms. Hood and Ms. White do an excellent job. It is not like they cannot handle the work; it is just us needing an assistant for the city manager, because that is what he requested.

It was moved to amend the agenda to add the Sister Cities Program.

Motion made by Councilmember James, Seconded by Councilmember Antoine.

Voting Yea: Councilmember James, Councilmember Antoine, Councilmember Gutierrez

Voting Abstaining: Councilmember Akins-Wells, Councilmember Mears

10. Sister Cities Program

Comments/Discussion by Governing Body:

Councilmember Mears – I thought we had done all that, why do we have to revote on it again?

Councilmember Antoine – It is not clear and just for the record, I would like people to know we are bringing it back.

It was moved to vote on the Sister Cities Program.

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

Comments/Discussion by Governing Body:

Councilmember James – Because we only have two months left in this current budget year, I do not think we should approve these funds for Sister Cities in this budget year. However, I am in favor of Sister Cities, we have a budget hearing coming up and I would be apt to having it in the next budget year.

Councilmember Antoine – I disagree because it was already in the budget. All we are doing is bringing it back, like we are bringing back other things, so it is not right.

Councilmember Gutierrez – Are we voting to approve what Ms. Davis recommended?

Councilmember James – This is the Sister Cities budget item that allows us to partner with three countries. It is an item we removed from the budget along with our capital overlay funds along with other funds. We removed it because we were over budget when we got the building for the fire station at Gillem. We took

everything off the table. What Councilman is asking, is that we put it back on the agenda for this budget cycle.

Councilmember Gutierrez – Would we be able to do anything about this, we only have two months.

Mayor Butler - Based on Councilman Antoine's amending the agenda to do if, something came up between now and the end of the fiscal year them yes. As it stands if approved in our budget cycle it would begin July 1.

Chiquita Barkley – What I hear Councilman Dabouze, saying is we did not approve Sister Cities last council meeting, which was removed. For 2022-23 budget year it was also not approved. The goal is to bring it back for 23-24 which starts in less than 60 days.

Councilmember Gutierrez – We are voting on that for next year right now.

Chiquita Barkley – No you should not; you should vote on that during budget season.

Councilmember Gutierrez – You all shut us down like a month before, right.

Chiquita Barkley – Yes, mid- May.

Councilmember Akins-Wells – Is it something they need right now, that you are trying to do? If so, what is it we need to vote on today?

Councilmember Antoine – Yes. School supplies, cell phones and a swing set.

Councilmember Akins-Wells - So, it is not an emergency.

Councilmember Antoine – Yes, it is an emergency.

Mayor Butler called for the vote.

Voting Yea: Councilmember Antoine

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

CLOSING COMMENTS BY GOVERNING BODY:

Comments/Discussion by Governing Body:

Councilmember James – Thanks to everyone for coming out. I would like to congratulate Mr. Elijah Jones, the band director at Forest Park High School. He was the winner of the Fox 5 challenge. Thanks to all of you that voted. Some of the students nominated him, and because of the letters received about how he takes care of the students, the \$25,000.00 he received will go to the school.

The April monthly meeting has not been posted; I am having technical difficulties. Hopefully, by the end of the week you can go online and see the ward meeting. On May 20th, we will celebrate our Forest Park High School Seniors, they will caravan around the city and will end up at Kiwanis Stadium from 11-3p; and we will have Community Field Day. There will be spaces for vendors and those that want to give resources to the community, please speak with Ms. Dixon.

Councilmember Antoine – Thanks to everyone that came, I see some new faces. Thanks to our new chief and new city manager, welcome to the all-star team. Shoutout to the council and mayor. We all are different and view things differently; this will be going on and I will be bringing it back for next year's budget.

May 18th is Haiti's Flag Day and that is 219 years of independence, second to the United States. I mention this because Haiti is in a dire situation. We say the opposite of love is hate, it is not true. When you hate a person, you put energy into it. You write about them, lie about them, and usually get someone to believe in your lies. What is worse is you in your mind acting like that person does not exist, that is worse than hate.

Haiti was the richest country in the Western Hemisphere, now it is the poorest in the Western Hemisphere. The population is twelve million people, with five fire trucks. Eighty percent of the country has no access to clean water, and 80 percent of them are not in school right now. It is not a Forest Park thing. God is using me to let the world know that they rejected a country. We have two trucks that are collecting dust, and I applaud the mayor and council because in 2018 we voted to partner up with this country. We are turning our head to Haiti but going to Afghanistan and Ukraine. I am just asking you to be leaders and step things up.

Councilmember Gutierrez – Thank you Councilman, Haiti does have a rich history and they are the poorest country. I think a lot of it has to do with racial tension, because it was the first country ever to be freed by slaves. We need to talk about this and not ignore it. I appreciate what you are saying and would like to start the conversation on how to raise money and get these things over there. The reality of it is, we are right here, and we can put a swing set at Perkins Park. We are here for our people, and these are the taxpayer dollars. We need to find organizations to help us to try and match it and not take on the whole burden. We have a lot of homelessness here as well.

Welcome to the new recruits, the new police chief and the new city manager and thank you, Mr. Shelby, for holding things down. This past Saturday at the Wellness Fair, with Sabrina Hill, things went great, and the PTA also had a nice car show. I would like to give a shoutout to our employees, the police and fire department is rolling deep and always have a smile on their faces. Public Works and Parks and Rec is also rolling deep. Then Tenisha Dixon and Ms. Marsha Johnson, for putting it all together, thank you so much. I missed Big Dave's Cheesesteak Opening, which is a new business on Jonesboro Rd, where Debbie's Delight used to be.

With my trip to New York, I am part of the National Association of Latinos elected officials and I am on their board. It is a national organization, and I am the only representative from the south. I am excited to go up there and represent us, to people news about us. Starting in June, we will have bingo every second Friday night of the month. The seniors bought up the rental homeowner program about which we were talking. I want to bring that to the table, which is something else we approved and need to circle back on. Next Friday, we have the food trucks for our city, we are celebrating Mother's Day. We will be appreciating our teachers and having some nice community time. Saturday, we are having another beautification at Forest Park Middle, and we would love to have you out there if you are available. Forest Park High School invited Six Flags to play, and they are trying to raise money for the event. If you would like to support, we would appreciate it. It is the only Clayton County School that got invited. They were also invited to play in the Chi-fil-A Bowl. So, if you know anyone that would like to help support these causes, let us know. Thanks for coming out, everybody.

Councilmember Akins-Wells – Thanks to everyone for coming out. Welcome our new City Manager, Mr. Clark, and our Police Chief Criss, thank you so much for joining the Forest Park Team. May 20th from 2-8p we will have Forest Park Reunion in the park. There will be softball, kickball, vendors, and we are going to have a fun time in our community. If you know anyone that would like to be a vendor, please reach out to Ms. Dixon or Ms. Johnson. The first Fun Friday will be the 3rd Friday in June. We have a live band and vendors so come out and enjoy. Big Dave's Cheesesteak, welcome to the community. Councilmember Antoine, it is nothing against the initiative and what you are trying to do. I must vote on things that make sense, like Councilmember Gutierrez said, we have to take care of

home first. We were voted in to serve the people of Forest Park, and we must do that first. We did talk about Sister Cities, and I am in support of it, but it must make sense for me to vote on it. Thank you all for coming out.

Councilmember Mears – I want to thank our new city manager; he is fired up and ready to go. I wish you well and will help you any way I can, to help make sure you are successful. I also want to make a comment about the Sisters Cities. We have needy people here in Forest Park, and charity begins at home. We got in this to help them, but we are not in a position to take the lead even though we are economically sound too. There are other people involved, and we will do our part, but we must have input from other people. As Councilmember Wells said, we must take care of the home first. Forest Park is doing well, and there are people here that need help. Whatever we can do to help him with his Sisters' Cities, but we need to keep as much of the money as we can in the city, to help the city.

Mayor Butler – I will reserve my comments to our new city manager, Mr. Clark.

Ricky L. Clark, Jr – Mayor and Council good evening, it is indeed an honor to stand before you. On September 8, 2014, I started in the City of Jonesboro. I remember walking into the office saying what I had done. Eight years later, my legacy still remains in that community, from the work we were able to do both collectively, with our legislative body and different departments. It is indeed an honor to come before you as your next city manager. I am joining the forces of what I can already see a momentous organization. For those that know me, know I believe in the work and having fun while we do it. There is probably more pressure on me in this position because people have seen the work that I have been able to do, not just in Jonesboro, but around Clayton County.

When I joined church more than 2 years ago, after not going to church during COVID for a year and a half, nowhere would I ever think I would become to be the city manager of Forest Park. The work was so impactful that we were able to accomplish it there in the City of Jonesboro, but I recognized something on a Sunday. The work that you are able to do you have to go out and do in multiple places. I am honored to be here, I am honored to have my Pastor Jeremy Christopher Tuck, senior pastor of Living Faith Tabernacle, on Old Dixie Road.

My commitment to this city council is I will be the city manager that does the work. I do not believe in counterproductive work talking about it and not doing it. We have to roll out a plan, and in the first 100 days of my administration, we will roll out something called One Forest Park. The One Forest Park will encompass one unified voice over all our various departments, as well as understanding the needs of this elected body, the citizens, and stakeholders that it will take to make it happen.

I am looking forward to the opportunity, to these amazing department heads to my left and my right the new Chief, Chief Criss, who I have had the pleasure of working with, we are in good hands. I will always be fair, and I will always communicate. Your future is more important to me than it will ever be to yourself. Again, I am deeply honored to serve, and I am looking forward to rolling up my sleeve and getting the work done. I am equally grateful and look forward to working with each and every one of you. Thank you.

Mayor Butler – Join us May 4th at 7:30p for the swearing in of our Police Chief Criss and our City Manager Ricky Clark, Jr.

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 Council Regular meeting at 7:42pm

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

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

APPROVED