



CITY COUNCIL REGULAR SESSION

Monday, October 03, 2022, 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 at 7:07pm 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		✓

Javon Lloyd, Public Information Officer, LaShawn Gardiner, Director Planning & Community Development, Shalonda Brown, HR Director, Letasha Clemmons, Fire Chief, David Halcome, Deputy Fire Chief, Bruce Abrahams, Economic

Development Director, Bobby Jinks, Director Public Works, Nathaniel Clark, Police Chief, and Arthur Geeter, Purchasing Manager

PRESENTATIONS:

1. Presentation Ward 4 Yard of the Quarter Award – Legislative Offices

Background/History:

Presentation of the Ward 4 Yard of the Quarter Award

Comment/Discussion from Governing Body:

Councilmember Wells – I Initiated the keep Ward 4 Beautiful program, about 5 or 6 years ago, it was about beautifying the community and the city. Mr. Homero Arredondo has a beautiful home with an immaculate yard. She wanted to thank him and his family for helping to keep Ward 4 beautiful and presented him with a Yard of the month sign and a \$25.00 gift certificate. She also thanked Ms. Wright for helping to choose the yard.

PUBLIC HEARINGS:

2. Council Approval to De-Annexation Request of Parcel# 13014D A002Z – Department of Planning & Community Development - PUBLIC HEARING

It was moved to open the Public Hearing for De-Annexation of Parcel #13014D A002Z-PU

Motion made by Councilmember Mears, 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 de-annexation

It was moved to close the Public Hearing for De-Annexation of Parcel #13014D A002Z-PU

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 table this item until the next Council meeting.

Motion made by Councilmember James, Seconded by Councilmember Antoine.

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:

Trudy Smith - The mayor read Mrs. Smith's comments - Is against the proposed rates for mayor and council because they are part-time positions and do not merit these raises. There are citizens working 2 and 3 jobs and do not receive this level of compensation. Also, this is not sustainable a fiscal action, the bonuses the employees received were

appropriate and were part of the Covid response money. Setting this type of increase in expenditure for years to come on an annual basis is inappropriate and you should be ashamed of yourselves as public servants for considering this.

Carl Evans - Wanted to thank the governing body and city employees for what they did on behalf of Mrs. Sandra passing. They went above and beyond, and he is thankful. All the disagreements over all the years, is because they all have a different vision for the city, but all love the city and want to see it move forward. Again, he appreciates all that attended the service and for sending such beautiful flowers.

LaWanda Folami - First off is the Edge project, the budget is supposed to be 350k, but the governing body has not had a conversation about the first fund of 400k that has been allocated, which is a disappointment, because no one is at the table talking. Second the De- Annex for property 110 should be a conversation, because if it is turned over to the county we could end up with another landfill. Lastly, there are the raises for the city council, I think consideration of what you are deciding on is the answer. No one is saying that you cannot get a raise, but the amount that you want is outrageous. 38k for council and 50k for the mayor, you know when you got out there and campaigned this is what you signed up for.

You all did not go to the table; you all went to the city manager and got some numbers. One thing for sure is the chain of command for this city is out of order. The mayor, council, city manager, this whole administration is out of order. When you cannot sit at the table to produce a solution, then you are out of order. You can say what you want about the citizens out here, but at the end of the day, veto power does not override the taxpayers. There are a lot of people here today because they were invited. Some people here just want money, and not here because they are passionate. We send you to be training, and pay for it, so it is not like you are not being compensated.

Laverne Mitchell - Is a regular walker in the park and notice people not picking up after their dog. There was poop on the walking track, and she thought that dogs were not allowed on the track. She also wants to know why nothing is being done about people popping fireworks, anytime they want to. If people are paying taxes it seems like this should be able to be minimized, it is not good and makes her angry, because there is nothing she can do. It seems like no one around here wants to do anything. It is disturbing, she does not like it, and something needs to be done about it.

ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA WITH ANY ADDITIONS / DELETIONS:

It was moved to adopt the Council agenda with adding an Item #9 - Approval to give the Police Department a \$5,000 pay increase.

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

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

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

3. Council Approval of Council Work Session from September 5, 2022, and Work Session and Regular Meeting Minutes from September 19, 2022 - City Clerk

It was moved to approve the Council Work Session Minutes from Sept. 5, 2022, and the Work Session/Regular Meeting Minutes from Sept. 19, 2022

Motion made by Councilmember Mears, Seconded by Councilmember Antoine.

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

NEW BUSINESS:

4. **Council Approval of Emergency Light & Siren Package for Fire Training Chief Vehicle** – Fire & EMS Department

It was moved to approve the Emergency Light & Siren Package for Fire Training Chief's Vehicle

Motion made by Councilmember Antoine, Seconded by Councilmember James.

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

5. **Council Approval of an Intergovernmental Agreement with the DDA** - Legal

There was no action taken on the IGA with the Downtown Development Authority

6. **Council Approval of an Intergovernmental Agreement with the URA** - Legal

It was moved to approve the IGA with the Urban Redevelopment Authority.

Comment/Discussion from Governing Body:

Councilmember James - The item 2b, what is the amount going to be for the funding and the appropriations?

City Attorney - For the URA 24,673.00

Councilmember James - We can always come back if we choose to go higher.

Motion made by Councilmember James, Seconded by Councilmember Antoine.

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

Voting Abstaining: Councilmember Mears

7. **Council Approval of the 2nd Round of ARPA Funding** – Chief Executive Offices

Mayor Butler- Is there a motion to direct staff to prepare a budget amendment to the priorities established by council?

Motion made by Councilmember Antione, Seconded by Councilmember James.

Comment/Discussion from Governing Body:

Councilmember James - Are we talking about the priorities that are already outlined, are we going to continue and just add to it?

Mayor Butler - The ones in the agenda?

Councilmember James – Yes, the ones in the agenda.

Mayor Butler - That could be a part of it in the work session.

City Manager - That can be a part of it, or it can be added to it.

Councilmember James - We will come back?

City Manager - Yes, we will bring it back.

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

8. Council Consideration of Pay Increase for Council - Legal

It was moved by Councilmember Antoine to approve the pay increase for Council.

The motion failed for lack of a second.

9. Council Consideration of \$5,000 Increase for Police Department - Legislative

It was moved to approve the \$5,000 increase for Police Department.

Motion made by Councilmember James, Seconded by Councilmember Mears.

Comment/Discussion from Governing Body:

Councilmember James - If you recall, I am working to increase both police and fire. I had put it on the table to give public safety, a 15% increase and a 10 percent increase for fire. In doing research it was found that there is such a difference in the lowest paid \$33,000 to the highest paid which is \$119,000 and that does not include the chief and deputy chief.

To do an across the board 15% increase will be disproportionate, \$5,000 to lowest paid employee and \$17,000 for the highest paid employee. Knowing the money is there to give a 15% increase across the board, I went to the 15% for the lowest paid which is \$5,000, and we can let that be the across-the-board amount. So, I propose a 5,000 increase to the members of the police department, and I will be coming back with fire. Just know there are others around the state that is giving an increase to the public safety department. This is something we need to do to remain competitive; we have great recruits coming in and we want them to stay.

Councilmember Antione - I am for it, but I will go with it if it is across the board.

Mayor Butler - Across the board for all employees.

Councilmember Antione - Yes mam.

Councilmember Gutierrez - Did you say the lowest paid employee is 33,000 and we are voting on a potential of 17.00, to put us at 38,000. How is that possible Dr. Cooper, I would like to know the numbers, how is someone getting 33,000 in our city.

City Manager – That was the last pay scale, they all have been bumped up to 35k, but 33,000 was the lowest.

Councilmember Gutierrez - But they are not anymore, right.

City Manager – No, they are at 35k now, all city employees are at 17.00.

Councilmember Gutierrez - I am not opposed to giving the public safety department raises, but like Councilmember James investigation, we are also working on some other stuff. I do not feel now is the time for that.

Councilmember Wells - I agree, if it was across the board, then yes. The fire and the police department are no better than each other, I say across the board for all employees. We must get out of doing it for one department like one is better than the other. I would like to see all our employees successful and making enough to not have to go out and get 2 and 3 jobs. Then 33,000 a year and we want 38 and 55, I do not agree with that.

Councilmember Mears - I agree with the numbers, but we must understand we are in good times right now. To bring wages up to livable or better. You must want to do this job from the heart, because we may not always have the money to give. So, you really want to pick the employees that really want to do the job and reward them.

Councilmember Wells - What happened with the merit system we spoke about this about years ago. Some employees do not deserve raises, and we keep giving the same amount to everyone. There are people that are really working and putting their all into it and we are putting them on the same level as people that do absolutely nothing or the bare minimum. Is there an update on the merit system?

City Manager – When you say merit system what do you mean? Well got the evaluation and HR and I are working to get the plan. This year was to get the evaluation. Next year in the budget we were talking about a pool of money, we will come to the council and discuss pay increases across the board and how they would come about. We are not at that point yet and keep producing ways of wanting to give more money throughout the year.

Councilmember Wells -That is what we need to put a stop to by putting the merit system in place. When they do the evaluations, are the employees deserving the raises getting them?

City Manager – The evaluations were done this year, and we gave an across the board pay increase this year, but next year when we talk about budget that is one of the things we will talk about at the retreat, the merit system that will be put in place. That is what H.R. and I have been working on since we discussed this

last year. That is why we proposed an across-the-board increase instead of implementing a merit system that was not there.

Councilmember Wells - Do an across the board raise for everyone and then implement the merit system in place.

Voting Yea: Councilmember James, Councilmember Mears

Voting Nay: Councilmember Antoine, Councilmember Gutierrez, Councilmember Akins-Wells

Motion failed

10. Council Consideration of a Moratorium on Blood & Plasma Collection Centers - Legal

This item was discussed in Executive Session

CLOSING COMMENTS BY GOVERNING BODY:

Councilmember James – I wanted to say I had the pleasure to attend the Arnold Fountain Road naming ceremony. I learned so much history and was impressed by the information. The Clayton County Public School had a listing when you walk into the room, of the African American schools named by people of color; William Alfred Fountain Elementary, John William Arnold Elementary, M. D. Roberts Middle School, Roberta T. Smith Elementary, Alfretta A. Harper Elementary, James A. Jackson Elementary, Eula Ponds Perry Career Academy, Eddie J. White Middle Academy and Kay R. Pace Elementary School of the Arts. I learned the William Alfred Fountain High School, was built in 1952, located in Forest Park, Georgia, located near the Forest Park Chapel Elementary School, and Susie Perkins was the principal. Fountain High School started with grades 1-12 with approximately 1200 students attending. Mr. M.D. Roberts was appointed the first principal in June 1952 and retired in 1983.

I was able to take a picture of Mr. Eddie White, one of the speakers. He started working at 12 years old and worked at Hapeville Colored Elementary School. In 1961 he was 25 years old when he became a teacher with Clayton County Public School. I was blown away to know this was the colored school that Black people had to attend, until they integrated. The largest class was in 1965, with 100 students and one of our senators, Gail Davenport was a student there. The last class held at Fountain High School was in 1969.

Councilmember Antoine – Thank you all for coming out and thank you for all the birthday emails. I wish you all a safe ride home and God Bless you all.

Councilmember Gutierrez – Thank you all for coming out, it is nice to see everybody. We have had a few successful events and I would like to shout out Economic Development, for the business breakfast, I was able to meet a lot of people. It is not only bringing businesses but connecting the current businesses here that we have with one another. It was a great networking opportunity.

We have a few events coming up, and I am excited our Atlanta teams are doing good. We have tailgate at the Starr Park coming up at our Fall Festival, for the Georgia vs Florida game. This Friday, our Food Truck Friday theme will be Spanish Heritage Month and we will be showing a movie at Leigh Park. Bring the family so you all can enjoy some of the local vendors. This Saturday we will have Hispanic Heritage Month, hosted by the city, to celebrate the cultures that we have here.

Councilmember Wells – Mr. Evans, again my deepest condolences to you on your loss of Councilwoman Bagley, thank you for being here. We as a council never agree on everything, and we are all different and that is why we are here. I stand firm on what I said the hitting of the gavel or being threatened to be put out do not bother me. How I feel, you know what you signed up for when you signed up for it. We serve the community, which is what we were elected to do, at the pay that we get.

Some people may agree that they need raises, I am one of those that do not. When I wanted to do better and I wanted better, I went out and got me a job. That is what I think others should do, even Councilmember Mears is working. Some people have made this their job and do nothing but the city business, but I am not one of those people. So, I will not vote for myself a raise, in the past yes, I did, because I felt like and still feel like I am one of the hardest working councilmembers up here. However, I had to look in the mirror and ask myself what did you sign up for? Who is your commitment to, is it about the community or is it about you?

There have been times when I have spent nights crying from having to argue with people up here, about giving back to my community; and I do not feel like that is something that I should do, when I am serving my community. Some people are selfish, all about themselves and all about money. Everyone knows that I am transparent, I am going to say what I have to say, get a job. You want more money to get a job, yes, I will say you are not from here and you do not have to be to serve the people. That is why you do not come into the community, and that is why you do not fellowship with the people, but I said what I said.

To our employees, I do not want you to feel like Councilwoman Wells do not care, I want you to have more money. I would rather give you the money they are trying to give themselves. That is something we should consider, give the 5,000 raises to everyone and I will support it. Again, this is not our full-time job and we do not deserve full-time pay. We were voted in to do a job, so do what the people elected you to do. Thank you all for coming out.

Councilmember Mears – I appreciate you all for coming and remember this is where you take care of your business. It is sometimes like live Atlanta Wrestling, sometimes it gets hot, sometimes it does not. You all come on out and see the show. Thank you for coming and we expect to see more of you this year.

Mayor Butler – it was Denzel Washington, who said “you will never be criticized by someone who is doing more than you, you will always be criticized by someone doing less.” The very nature of Economic Development is the creation of wealth in which a community can benefit and that is what we have been doing. Whether you choose to see it or not is your prerogative, but as I said before the momentum that this administration has generated over the last 4 years will not stop. A party is not economic development, anyone can throw a party. Talk to me when you are sitting at a table making multi-million-dollar deals.

Councilmember James - The name of the highway is Arnold Fountain Professional Club Highway. This Wednesday, coming up the Forest Park High School softball team will have their senior night and they will have their home game on the field here, so come out and cheer our team on. We are celebrating Hispanic Heritage at the High School all week and then Friday, there will be a dance.

As far as the fireworks that were being talked about, there is a noise ordinance, so we need to crack down on that. Don't we also have signs that say no dogs allowed in the park? We will find out and make sure that is enforced. Even if you are walking your dog in the neighborhood, please clean up after them. Check out the website, make sure you go to Ward 1, the neighborhood meetings are recorded, that I host every month. They are posted online, and you can go there and get information.

City Manager – I would like to ask everyone to keep our city clerk in your thoughts and prayers. She experienced the loss of her mom and brother, within weeks of each other.

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 for Personnel, Litigation or Real Estate matters at 7:48pm

Motion made by Councilmember James, Seconded by Councilmember Antoine.

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

It was moved to reconvene back into Regular session at 9:21pm

Motion made by Councilmember James, Seconded by Councilmember Gutierrez.

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

It was moved to approve the terms of agreement with Clear Channel as discussed in Executive Session

Motion made by Councilmember James, Seconded by Councilmember Gutierrez.

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

It was moved to amend the agenda to add Item #10 "Consideration of a Moratorium of Blood & Plasma Centers collection".

Motion made by Councilmember Mears, Seconded by Councilmember James.

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

It was motion to adopt a Moratorium on the Collection of Blood & Plasma Centers Collection as discussed in Executive Session.

Motion made by Councilmember James, Seconded by Councilmember Gutierrez.

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

ADJOURNMENT:

It was moved to adjourn the Council Regular meeting at 9:22pm

Motion made by Councilmember James, Seconded by Councilmember Gutierrez.

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