



CITY OF
FORESTPARK

CITY OF FOREST PARK
CITY COUNCIL WORK SESSION MEETING

Monday, October 6, 2025, at 6:00 p.m.
Forest Park City Hall | Council Chambers
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 Delores A. Gunn
The Honorable Latresa Akins-Wells

Latosha Clemons, Interim City Manager
Randi Rainey, City Clerk
Danielle Matricardi, City Attorney

MINUTES

I. CALL TO ORDER/WELCOME

Mayor Butler called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

II. ROLL CALL - CITY CLERK

Present	Absent
Mayor Angelyne Butler	
Councilmember Kimberly James	
Councilmember Delores Gunn	
Councilmember Hector Gutierrez	
Councilmember Latresa Akins-Wells	
Councilmember Allan Mears	

Others in attendance: Pauline Warrior, Chief of Staff; Josh Cox, IT Director; Rodney Virgil, Level 2 Support Engineer; Javon Lloyd, PIO; John Wiggins, Finance Director; Jeremi Patterson, Deputy Finance Director; Nicole Dozier, PCD Director; Rochelle Dennis, Economic Development Director; Dorthy Roper-Jackson, Municipal Court Director; Tarik Maxwell, Director of Rec and Leisure; Alton Matthews, Public Works Director; Nigel Whatley, Deputy Public Works Director; David Halcome, Deputy Fire Chief; Derry Walker, Code Compliance Director; Brandon Criss, Police Chief, and Danielle Matricardi, City Attorney.

III. ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA WITH ANY ADDITIONS / DELETIONS

It was moved to adopt the agenda as printed.
The motion was made by Councilmember James and seconded by Councilmember Gunn.
Voting Yea: Councilmember James, Councilmember Gunn, Councilmember Gutierrez, Councilmember Akins-Wells, Councilmember Mears.

IV. ADOPTION OF THE CONSENT AGENDA WITH ANY ADDITIONS / DELETIONS

It was moved to adopt the consent agenda as printed.

The motion was made by Councilmember James and seconded by Councilmember Gunn.
Voting Yea: Councilmember Gunn, Councilmember Gutierrez, Councilmember Akins-Wells.

V. **CONSENT AGENDA**

There was no discussion on the consent agenda items.

1. **Council Discussion of Annual Renewal for Server Virtualization Software and Support Agreement for Core Host Servers-** Information Technology

Background/History:

This is our annual renewal for our server virtualization software for our core host servers. This software/support agreement renews on an annual basis and is a requirement for our host servers to function.

2. **Council Discussion on the Fee Proposal for Waldrop Drive Sidewalk & Drainage Improvement Project from Colliers Engineering & Design-**Procurement/Public Works Departments

Background/History:

In continuation with our sidewalk improvement projects, the City needs to secure Sixteen(16) temporary construction easements for the right-of-way on Waldrop Drive. These easements are necessary to facilitate construction activities, access, and other project-related requirements. These easements will enable the City to perform the required work without permanently acquiring the land, thereby reducing costs while achieving the desired improvements. Staff is seeking the Council's approval of a fee proposal from Colliers Engineering & Design, as specified in the attached documents, for the temporary easement on 16 parcels of land needed for this project.

VI. **NEW BUSINESS**

3. **Council Discussion of the Urban Design Review Board (UDRB) Application Fee for Homeowners-** Planning and Community Development

Background/History:

In January 2025, the Planning and Community Development fees were updated. The Planning and Community Development fees had not been updated since 1959. To ensure that the fees cover the cost of service while remaining competitive with neighboring cities, the fees have been updated. The fee comparisons were made between Clayton County, the cities of Jonesboro, Riverdale, and Morrow. Petition fees range between \$400 and \$800. Cities' petition fees prior to the 1/25 fee schedule update were \$250 for all petition applications.

Director Dozier stated that concerns had been raised regarding the fees charged to homeowners for applications before the Urban Design Review Board. To address the matter, she presented three options for consideration.

She explained that the first option would establish two separate fee categories: one for commercial entities and one for residents, with the resident fee reduced to \$250 if chosen by the Council. The second option would establish specific development standards, allowing certain residential improvements to be reviewed internally by staff based on code, rather than requiring review by the Urban Design Review Board for every improvement. The third option suggested eliminating the fee for residents altogether, though she noted that this would require confirmation from the City Attorney to determine if it is legally permissible, since services are provided for both commercial and

residential uses.

Comments/Discussion from Governing Body:

Councilmember James inquired about the role of the Urban Design Review Board and the types of projects that would require its review.

Director Dozier explained that the Urban Design Review Board was established initially to review all development, both residential and commercial, within the city, ensuring compliance with design standards. She stated that any exterior changes to a home or structure are required to be approved by the Board. Examples include changing windows, painting, installing new siding, or replacing a roof.

She further noted that the review process intends to maintain consistency and compatibility within the community. While individual preferences for colors or styles may vary, the Board helps ensure that improvements complement the surrounding area. Director Dozier added that the Board is comprised of individuals familiar with design, construction, and related fields, which is why they review exterior changes to both commercial and residential properties.

Councilmember James asked what the process would look like if the City were to establish standards that could exempt specific residential improvements from review by the Urban Design Review Board.

Attorney Matricardi clarified that while the City could establish different fees for residential and commercial applications due to the greater administrative services required for commercial projects, it could not waive all residential fees entirely. She explained that doing so would constitute a gratuity, which is prohibited under state law.

Councilmember Gunn thanked the Planning Department and the Planning Committee for their attentiveness in addressing residents' concerns in North Forest Park. She noted that some homeowners had made significant improvements to their homes beginning in 2021 without going through the required application process, largely because they were unaware of the requirements. While acknowledging that the work was beautifully done, she explained that residents questioned why they were being charged two separate fees.

Councilmember Gunn stated that planning staff had provided a thorough explanation and shared a comparison of Forest Park's fees with those of surrounding jurisdictions, including Riverdale, Jonesboro, Morrow, and Clayton County, showing that Forest Park's fees are the lowest. She added that, personally, she did not agree that a homeowner should have to apply to repaint a house, especially when they are already paying for materials and labor. However, she recognized the necessity of rules and regulations. She then asked Director Dozier to repeat the three options presented for addressing the fee concerns and emphasized that these fees help support the City's budget.

Councilmember Gunn pointed out that the Urban Design Review Board exists to ensure aesthetic consistency in the community, using the example of a homeowner potentially painting their house gray with polka dots, which could disrupt neighborhood appearance.

Councilmember Gunn requested that the Planning Department make fee information and comparison charts more readily available to residents at the front office. She explained that some residents had contacted her feeling frustrated and misled after investing in home improvements, only to face additional application and compliance fees. She stressed the importance of providing clarity and transparency to avoid such situations.

Councilmember Gutierrez expressed his preference regarding the fee options. He stated to Director Dozier that he supported the option presented prior to the no-fee proposal and asked her to repeat that option for clarification. Director Dozier explained that this option would establish development standards for minor residential improvements. She noted that the standards would clearly define which types of projects could be reviewed internally by staff without requiring Urban Design Review Board approval. Under this approach, minor improvements would not carry a fee, while larger or more significant changes would still need to go before the Board. She added that this process would require drafting clear distinctions between minor and major improvements and amending the Urban Design Review Board ordinance through a text change.

Councilmember Gutierrez stated that he supported the option of establishing development standards for minor residential improvements and highlighted the importance of transparency in the process. He expressed concern with situations where residents were charged a “miscellaneous” or undefined fee, noting that he did not agree with that practice.

He acknowledged the comparison of Forest Park’s fees to those of surrounding cities but requested clarification on when those jurisdictions last updated their fee schedules. He remarked that while Forest Park may appear modern and up to date, its own fees might not have been revised in many years. He emphasized that the City should not simply follow neighboring cities but instead set its own fair standards.

Councilmember Gutierrez further stated that if a homeowner wants to improve their property, it should not cost them an unreasonable amount in fees. He pointed out that it does not make sense for a resident to pay more for a permit fee than for the paint itself. He added that adopting this option could also help address issues in neighborhoods with frequent home improvements. He concluded by reiterating his support for the option that allows staff to assess and approve minor residential projects under clearly defined development standards.

Councilmember Akins-Wells stated that she agreed Forest Park should not compare itself to other cities, emphasizing that the City should establish its own standards. She noted that while it is essential to maintain a beautiful community, residents working to improve their homes should be supported rather than penalized.

She reiterated that she did not agree with waiving all residential fees, referencing the legal concerns raised by the City Attorney. However, she emphasized that the City should establish clear standards so that minor improvements, such as changes in color or other small enhancements, would not require review by the Urban Design Review Board.

Councilmember Akins-Wells also emphasized the need for increased outreach to residents. She explained that many homeowners are unaware of the process and begin work without realizing an application is required, only to be told by Code Enforcement to stop. She emphasized the importance of providing residents with the necessary information in advance, so they are not deterred from improving their homes and living spaces.

Director Dozier explained that the City would be creating a Homeowner’s Guide to Permitting to help residents better understand the permitting process. She stated that the guide would clearly outline which types of projects require permits, which do not, and when a homeowner must appear before the Urban Design Review Board versus when staff can review a project internally.

She noted that the purpose of the guide is to educate residents on the process from start to finish, including inspections. The guide would also provide instructions on how to use the City’s new permitting system, which she acknowledged is not yet 100 percent functional but is important for both

citizens and developers to begin learning.

Director Dozier added that the City plans to distribute the guide in booklet or pamphlet form and also host training sessions where residents can meet with staff, walk through the permitting process, and ask questions directly. She said the first training session would be launched as a trial to evaluate how often such sessions should be held in the future.

Councilmember Akins-Wells thanked Director Dozier for the explanation and added that the City should focus on being proactive rather than reactive. She explained that when she previously received complaints about trash cans being left on the street for several days, she took the initiative to review the ordinance, work with Code Enforcement and the Council Aide, and have a letter sent to residents informing them of the requirements.

She suggested that the Planning and Zoning Department adopt a similar approach by issuing a newsletter or memo directly from the City of Forest Park Planning and Zoning Department. She noted that not all residents would be able to attend training sessions, and written communication would help ensure that more people are informed about the rules and processes.

Interim City Manager, Chief Clemons, added that the fees were updated in February 2025. Chief Clemons stated that she agreed with reviewing the options presented and recommended that staff return to Council with further updates. She also emphasized the importance of ongoing communication from the Planning and Design Department to ensure that residents are fully informed and have access to the necessary information regarding the permitting and design review process.

4. Council Discussion of an Amendment to the Intergovernmental Agreements (IGAs) for Animal Control Services with the Cities of Lake City and Riverdale- Police

Background/History:

The City of Forest Park currently provides animal control services to Lake City under an intergovernmental agreement (IGA) last updated in 2011. Additionally, Forest Park entered into an IGA with the City of Riverdale in 2023, designating Forest Park as a primary provider of animal control services.

The current IGA created conflict between Clayton County Animal Control and the City of Forest Park Police Department. The proposed Amendment will correct this conflict by allowing Clayton County Animal Control to serve as the primary response unit for animal control services within the City of Riverdale, with the City of Forest Park serving as the secondary response unit as needed.

This amendment ensures alignment of service responsibilities with county resources while maintaining Forest Park's capacity to provide supplemental support when requested.

Chief Criss explained that the City had entered into an Intergovernmental Agreement (IGA) in 2023. He noted that this agreement conflicted with Riverdale's IGA with Clayton County. He stated that the purpose of the current item was to address that conflict by designating Forest Park as a backup in the event Clayton County was unavailable to respond.

Comments/Discussion from Governing Body:

Councilmember Akins-Wells stated that she had recently contacted Chief Criss regarding an issue with animals in the community. She noted that the call took place after regular hours and involved a lifelong resident who was afraid. She thanked Chief Criss for his immediate response and for reaching out directly to assist the resident.

She added that this type of support helps the City stay focused on its own community while allowing the County to concentrate more on other cities. Councilmember Akins-Wells concluded by expressing her appreciation to Chief Criss and his department for all that they do.

5. Council Discussion for Replacement of Aging Equipment- Public Works

Background/History:

As part of the City's aging equipment replacement initiative, the Public Works Department, in collaboration with the Procurement Division, is requesting approval to purchase a new Track Loader from Ag-Pro for the Public Works fleet. This equipment was approved in our Capital Expense Budget for 2025-26. It will be added to our Public Works fleet and eventually replace the 2010 Bobcat T300, an older machine that requires multiple repairs for our daily operations.

Director Matthews noted that some equipment needs replacement and is continually undergoing repairs and maintenance. He explained that if the equipment were to fail, the associated duties would stop, resulting in a halt to production.

III. EXECUTIVE SESSION

(When an Executive Session is required, one will be called for the following issues: Personnel, Litigation or Real Estate) OCGA is §50-14-1 (A) (2)

It was moved to recess into Executive Session at 6:21 pm. for Personnel, Litigation, or Real Estate. The motion was made by Councilmember James and seconded by Councilmember Gunn. Voting Yea: Councilmember James, Councilmember Gunn, Councilmember Gutierrez, Councilmember Akins-Wells, Councilmember Mears.

It was moved to reconvene in the regular session meeting at 7:07 pm.

The motion was made by Councilmember James and seconded by Councilmember Akins-Wells. Voting Yea: Councilmember James, Councilmember Gunn, Councilmember Gutierrez, Councilmember Akins-Wells, Councilmember Mear

IV. ADJOURNMENT

Mayor Butler adjourned the meeting at 7:07 p.m.

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