



CITY OF
FORESTPARK

**CITY OF FOREST PARK
CITY COUNCIL WORK SESSION MEETING**

Tuesday, January 20, 2026 at 6:00 PM
Forest Park City Hall | Council Chambers
745 Forest Parkway, Forest Park, GA 30297

The Honorable Mayor Gwendolyn Ellison
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
Shalonda Brown, Interim City Clerk
Danielle Matricardi, City Attorney

MINUTES

I. CALL TO ORDER/WELCOME

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 P.M. by Mayor Gwen Ellison.

II. ROLL CALL - CITY CLERK

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

III. ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA WITH ANY ADDITIONS / DELETIONS

Mayor Ellison asked for a Motion to adopt the following changes: Council Discussion of a Resolution Revise the Incentive Policies for Item #1 and removal of Item #5. Councilmember James made the motion to accept the changes, it was seconded by Councilmember Akins-Wells. The vote was unanimous.

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

A motion to allow the following changes to the agenda, cancel the discussions of resolutions, approve the revised incentive policies for item number one, and remove item number five.

V. CONSENT AGENDA

VI. NEW BUSINESS

1. Council Discussion and Approval of a Resolution to Approve a Revised Public

Safety Incentive Policy- Human Resources Department

Background/History:

Human Resources has conducted a review of the City's existing incentive structures and identified the need for updates to ensure alignment with the wage framework previously presented. As the City continues to evaluate its compensation practices, it is essential that incentive programs are structured to effectively support recruitment and retention objectives, reinforce internal equity, and promote workforce stability across all departments.

The review determined that the current incentive approach is not consistently aligned with the established wage structure and, in some instances, may result in unintended pay disparities or inconsistent application across roles. In response, Human Resources is advancing a more standardized, citywide incentive framework designed to ensure incentives are clearly defined, equitably administered, and appropriately aligned with job classifications and compensation objectives. This effort enhances transparency, supports market competitiveness, and strengthens the City's long-term, sustainable compensation strategy. - Human Resources

Beverly Moultrie, with the Human Resources Department, presented an overview of the background and history to the council. Ms. Moultrie explained the current need to visit the incentive program because it is not aligned with the established wage structure causing pay disparities or inconsistent application across roles. This effort will enhance transparency, competitiveness, employee retention, the city's long-term compensation strategy.

Councilmember James, thanked Ms. Moultrie for the work that was put in, and she wanted everyone to know that they wanted to make things right from the wage and compensation study, realizing that some employees were expecting some incentives and this makes it equitable.

Councilmember Gunn had no comments.

Councilmember Gutierrez, thanked Ms. Moultrie and stated the information is very thorough and detailed. He stated his question was regarding tuition reimbursement about the grade requirements for undergraduate/graduate and Can an employee major in anything or does it have to be job-relevant? Ms. Moultrie replied all of them are job-relevant. His recommendation was maybe that language should be added in there, so someone would not sign up for a class expecting reimbursement. Councilmember Gutierrez also asked if this incentive was just for public safety, and Ms. Moultrie responded that this is citywide.

Councilmember Akins-Wells and Councilmember Mears had no comments.

2. **Council Discussion to approve Case #TA-2025-04 Text Amendment for Title 8. – Planning and Development, Chapter 8. Zoning, Article A. – General Provisions Text Amendment for Title 8. – Planning and Development, Chapter 8. Zoning, Article F. – Boards and Commissions, section 8-8-160 Rules and Procedures, of the City of Forest Park Code of Ordinances to amend such section, adding subsection (d) Exemption for Single Family Home Alterations-** Planning and Community Development Department

Background/History:

During prior Council discussions, concerns were raised regarding the requirement for homeowners to pay application fees and undergo Urban Design Review Board (UDRB) review for minor exterior improvements intended for routine maintenance or residential beautification. In response, staff initiated a text amendment to Title 8 – Planning and

Development to establish an exemption for certain single-family residential alterations that do not impact the overall architectural character or visual quality of the community.

The proposed amendment is intended to streamline the review process, reduce unnecessary procedural and financial barriers for homeowners, improve administrative efficiency, and allow the UDRB to focus on projects with meaningful urban design impacts.

The text amendment was reviewed by the Planning Commission on January 15, 2026, and is now before Mayor and Council for final consideration and action. If approved, qualifying single-family home improvements, such as exterior painting, would no longer require UDRB review or associated application fees, encouraging residential reinvestment and neighborhood beautification while maintaining the City's design standards. - Planning and Community Development

Interim Director Savaughn Irons-Kumussah with the Planning and Community Development Department provided the council with an overview of the background and history of their initiatives as follows: During prior Council discussions, concerns were raised regarding the requirement for homeowners to pay application fees and undergo Urban Design Review Board (UDRB) review for minor exterior improvements intended for routine maintenance or residential beautification. In response, staff initiated a text amendment to Title 8 – Planning and Development to establish an exemption for certain single-family residential alterations that do not impact the overall architectural character or visual quality of the community.

The proposed amendment is intended to streamline the review process, reduce unnecessary procedural and financial barriers for homeowners, improve administrative efficiency, and allow the UDRB to focus on projects with meaningful urban design impacts. The text amendment was reviewed by the Planning Commission on January 15, 2026, and is now before Mayor and Council for final consideration and action. If approved, qualifying single-family home improvements, such as exterior painting, would no longer require UDRB review or associated application fees, encouraging residential reinvestment and neighborhood beautification while maintaining the City's design standards. The department addressed several questions from council members and provided detailed information in response. The council expressed their appreciation to the department and staff for their efforts and contributions.

Councilmember James: no comments

Councilmember Gunn: thanked Interim Director Irons-Kumussah for bringing that to their attention because she had constituents that had concerns about fees. She stated that she had 2 questions 1. In the first paragraph last sentence states: to establish an exemption for certain single-family residential alterations that do not impact the overall architectural character or visual quality of the community how do you determine who would be exempt and who would not be exempt. Interim Director Irons-Kumussah stated there will still be an internal review process by staff and based on what the applicant is requesting they still may have to go before the Urban Design Review Board. This just protects the homeowner that just wants to make minor changes, like refresh the paint etc. Councilmember Gunn asked how will this information be pushed out to the residents because it needs to get out the residents for example, emails, flyers etc. Interim Director Irons-Kumussah stated that when applicants call in staff provides them with updates, however she likes the idea of formal communication be sent out through the city's news releases.

Councilmember Gutierrez thanked Interim Director Irons-Kumussah for the presentation and stated he agrees that the citizens should be made aware of changes now and in the future and

utilize city staff.

Councilmember Akins-Wells stated she agree with her colleague and thanked Interim Director Irons-Kumussah for listening to them and making things happen to make sure things get done. She also thanked her staff.

Councilmember Mears stated no comments.

3. **Council Discussion to Consider Appointments of the Development Impact Fee Advisory Committee-**
Planning Community Development Department

Background/History:

At the November 17, 2025, City Council meeting, Council discussed the appointment of a Development Impact Fee Advisory Committee but elected to defer action until after the newly elected Mayor was sworn into office, allowing her to participate in the appointment process. The mayor has since assumed office, and staff is now bringing this item forward for Council's consideration in accordance with prior direction.

Under the Georgia Development Impact Fee Act, the city is required to appoint a Development Impact Fee Advisory Committee prior to the adoption of a development impact fee ordinance. The committee serves in an advisory capacity and is responsible for providing input on a proposed development impact fee ordinance and fee schedule, which are anticipated to be presented to City Council for consideration in 2026 as part of establishing a Development Impact Fee Program.

State law requires the committee to consist of five to ten members, with at least fifty percent of the membership representing the development, building, or real estate industries. Members are not required to be City residents. The law also allows City Council, at its discretion, to designate an existing body, such as the Planning Commission or Development Authority, to serve in this advisory role, provided the statutory composition requirements are met.

This agenda item advances the next procedural step necessary to ensure compliance with state law and to support future Council consideration of a Development Impact Fee Program. - Planning and Community Development

Interim Director Savaughn Irons-Kumussah with the Planning and Community Development Department provided the council with an overview of the background and history. The department presented this information to facilitate the council's consideration of the Development Impact Fee Ordinance.

Councilmember James asked if staff had any recommendations on whom they would like to sit on the board, and she also wanted to know if there were any applications submitted. Interim Director Savaughn Irons-Kumussah stated back in November that they provided examples of names of which staff who could be selected, so they could utilize those names or wait for the direction of the council. No other council members had questions. Mayor Ellison stated this matter will be discussed further in the executive session.

4. **Council Discussion to consider Appointments of the Public Arts Review Board-**
Planning and Community Development Department

Background/History:

At the February 3, 2025, City Council meeting, Council approved a text amendment to Title 8 of the City of Forest Park Code of Ordinances establishing the Public Arts Review Board (PARB). This action formally created a governing body responsible for administering the City's public art program, Forest Park Arts, and overseeing the review and approval of public art installations throughout the City.

Pursuant to Sections 8-8-169 and 8-8-170 of the Code of Ordinances, the Public Arts Review Board is charged with reviewing and rendering decisions on proposed Public Art Displays, including murals, sculptures, statues, and other artwork located in public spaces, to ensure compliance with adopted guidelines and consistency with the aesthetic and cultural values of the City of Forest Park. The Board also provides feedback to applicants, maintains an official record of approved public art and their locations, elects officers, and conducts meetings in accordance with open meeting requirements.

Section 8-8-171 establishes the composition and terms of the Public Arts Review Board. The Board consists of five (5) members, including one (1) representative from the Downtown Development Authority, one (1) representative from Arts Clayton, Inc., two (2) local artists, and one (1) member of the Forest Park community. All members must be at least eighteen (18) years of age, must be residents of the City of Forest Park, and may not serve as members of the City's governing authority. Board members serve two-year terms and may be reappointed.

With the enabling ordinance now adopted, this agenda item is presented to advance implementation of the Public Arts Review Board through City Council's consideration of appointments, allowing the Board to begin fulfilling its responsibilities as outlined in the Code of Ordinances. - Planning and Community Development

Interim Director Savaughn Irons-Kumussah with the Planning and Community Development Department provided the council with an overview of the background and history for the Public Arts Review Board. She invited the Economic Development Director Rochelle Dennis to provide more context on why this was brought before the governing body. Director Dennis stated the LCI plan which is their guiding principle for downtown development and Public Art has always been a strong consideration for the downtown area. There are two opportunities for murals within downtown main street and to move that forward a Public Arts Review Board needs to be established.

Councilmember Gutierrez asked could someone from the beautification committee be considered? Director Dennis stated that her and Interim Director Irons-Kumussah had that discussion. Councilmember Gutierrez stated he recommends selecting someone from the Beautification committee and someone from the DA. He states he is very passionate about art. Councilmember Gunn stated that she is excited and agrees with Councilmember Gutierrez about selecting someone from the boards.

Councilmember James posed a question for clarification to Attorney Matricardi, Section 8-8-171 states that it consists of 5 members. Her question was are they able to increase that number.

Attorney Matricardi states that it is 5, and it does allow for a member of the public, and she recommends that person a member from the beautification committee, otherwise to change the composition it will have to be advertised and go through a public hearing.

5. **Consideration of a Resolution to adopt the Personnel & Policies Manual-Human Resources Department**

Background/History:

The City of Forest Park originally adopted its Personnel and Policies Manual to establish

consistent standards of conduct, governance, and employment practices across all departments. This item represents an amendment to the current policy, updating the Manual as approved by the governing body and continuing to supersede all prior versions, with the City Manager authorized to interpret and amend provisions as needed for City operations. - Attorney

Item Five was removed from the agenda.

VII. 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)

Councilmember James made a motion to recess the work session meeting and to enter into executive session for real estate and personnel, seconded by Councilmember Akins-Wells. The motion was unanimously approved. Mayor and Council entered into executive session at 6:37 pm.

Councilmember Gunn made a motion to adjourn the executive session @ 7:12 pm and to reconvene the work session meeting was made by and seconded by Councilmember Gunn. The motion was unanimously approved.

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

Mayor Ellison adjourned the work session meeting at 7:13 P.M.

In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, those requiring accommodation for Council meetings should notify the City Clerk's Office at least 24 hours prior to the meeting at 404-366-4720.