CITY OF FOREST PARK

CITY COUNCIL WORK SESSION MEETING

Monday, February 16, 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 Delores A. Gunn
The Honorable Hector Gutierrez
The Honorable Latresa Akins-Wells
The Honorable Allan Mears

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 by Mayor Ellison at 6:00 PM.

II. ROLL CALL - CITY CLERK

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

III. ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA WITH ANY ADDITIONS / DELETIONS

Councilmember James made a motion to adopt the agenda, seconded by Councilmember Mears. The vote was unanimously approved.

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

Councilmember James made a motion to adopt the consent agenda, seconded by Councilmember Mears. Mayor Ellison asked for a motion to adopt the following changes: tabling of Item #1, Purchase New Lifepacks & Lucus, and Renew Annual Maintenance services Contract with Stryker. Councilmember James made a motion to amend the consent agenda with the acceptance of changes, which was seconded by Councilmember Mears. The vote was unanimously approved.

V. CONSENT AGENDA

1. **Purchase New Lifepaks & Lucas and Renew Annual Maintenance Services Contract**

with Stryker - Fire/EMS

Background/History:
The Forest Park Fire & EMS Department relies on Lifepak cardiac monitors and LUCAS mechanical chest compression devices as critical; lifesaving equipment used in emergency medical responses. These devices require regular inspection, maintenance, software updates, battery replacement, and access to manufacturer-approved parts to ensure reliability, accuracy, and compliance with applicable safety standards.

The City currently maintains an annual maintenance and service agreement with Stryker, the sole authorized manufacturer and service provider for Lifepak and LUCAS equipment. Stryker offers this agreement through the Sourcewell cooperative contract #041823-STY, which provides comprehensive coverage, including parts and labor, annual preventative inspections, battery replacement, equipment servicing, and replacement of worn or failed components.

Renewal of the annual service contract ensures uninterrupted maintenance support, extends the useful life of the equipment, minimizes operational downtime, and supports the Fire & EMS Department's ability to deliver timely and effective emergency medical services to the community. Staff recommend approval to purchase new Lifepaks & Lucas equipment and renew the annual maintenance services contract with Stryker to ensure continued operational readiness and patient safety for up to five (5) annual terms totaling $370,193.43.

2. **Annual Renewal Contract for ERP Incode System with Tyler Technologies** - Finance

Background/History:
The City of Forest Park implemented the Tyler/Incode Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) System to support the centralized management of core financial and operational functions, including citywide budgeting, procurement and purchase orders, accounts payable, and accounts receivable. The ERP system serves as the City's primary financial platform and is used daily by multiple departments to ensure fiscal accountability, operational efficiency, and compliance with applicable policies and reporting requirements.

The City's continued use of the Tyler/Incode ERP System has provided system stability, vendor support, security updates, and ongoing enhancements necessary to maintain uninterrupted financial operations. The annual renewal ensures continued access to system maintenance, technical support, and software updates that are critical to supporting Finance, Information Technology, Procurement, and all user departments.

The proposed annual renewal with one (1) additional annual renewal is being completed through a piggyback agreement utilizing the Sourcewell Cooperative Contract No. 60624-TTI with Tyler Technologies, which was competitively solicited and awarded in compliance with procurement standards. Funding for the annual renewal is provided through various General Operating Accounts and is included in the adopted budget. Approval of this item will allow the City to continue utilizing the existing ERP system without disruption and maintain continuity in financial and operational services.

Talisa Adams, with the Finance Department, presented an overview of the background and history of the renewal contract for the ERP System. Ms. Adams informed the council that they are asking for the approval of the renewal to extend the contract for another year.

Councilmember Gutierrez asked what this software is specifically used for. Ms. Adams advised him that this is their financial system, in which they pay their invoices, create requisitions, and purchase orders, etc. Councilmember Gunn asked if this was already budgeted for. Ms. Adams advised her that it was.

VI. OLD BUSINESS

VII. NEW BUSINESS

3. **Council Discussion of Development Authority Board Appointment**

Background/History:
The City of Forest Park Development Authority was established to promote trade, commerce, industry, and employment opportunities within the City, as authorized by O.C.G.A. 36-62A-20. The Authority plays a key role in supporting economic growth and development initiatives that benefit the community. - Economic Development

Director Dennis requested a recommendation from the council for a board appointment to the Development Authority. Alvan Pattan, who has served on the Development Authority for several years, has submitted his resignation, creating an open position on the board. Councilmember James noted that the council was provided with a list of potential candidates at the previous meeting and inquired if the list was still available. The council will continue the discussion of this item in executive session.

4. **Council Discussion of a Resolution Appointing a City Representative to serve on the Clayton County Land Bank Authority Board; Authorizing the Mayor to Designate Such Representative; Confirming Compliance with the Georgia Land Bank Act; and for Other Lawful Purposes** - Planning and Community Development

Background/History:
Since the establishment of the County Land Bank in 2020, the City of Forest Park has historically designated the Planning Director to serve as the City's representative on the Land Bank Board. Since that time, the City's appointed representative has been the serving Planning Director, including James Shelby, followed by LaShawn Gardiner, and most recently Nicole Dozier.Following the departure of the former Planning Director and the transition of Planning & Community Development leadership, the Land Bank has requested clarification regarding the City's designated representative to the Land Bank Board. At this time, the Land Bank has temporarily listed the City's seat as vacant pending formal action by the Mayor and City Council.While it has been customary for the Planning Director to serve in this role, there is no formal policy, ordinance, or resolution requiring that the City's Land Bank representative be the Planning Director. Under the County Resolution establishing the Land Bank, board members serve at the pleasure of the appointing party, may be employees of the appointing jurisdiction, and must have at least five (5) years of experience or education in urban planning, community development, real estate, law, finance, or related fields. Additionally, the Georgia Land Bank Act (O.C.G.A. § 48-4-104(c)) authorizes both municipal employees and elected officials to serve as Land Bank board members without impairing their public office or employment.Accordingly, staff is bringing this item forward for Mayor and Council consideration to formally designate a representative to serve on the Land Bank Board on behalf of the City of Forest Park.

Interim Director SaVaughn Irons provided the council with an overview of the Landbank Board's background and history. Councilmember James inquired about the board's meeting schedule. Ms. Irons stated that meetings are held on the second Thursday of each month after work hours and noted she would provide the exact times. Mayor Ellison asked if there was a deadline for the appointment, and Ms. Irons indicated there is none at this time. She added that the Landbank contacted her regarding who would serve, and she advised that an appointment is required from the mayor and council.

Councilmember Gutierrez asked if the appointed member would complete the current term. Ms. Irons indicated they would, though the previous director had been serving on the board without a defined timeframe. Attorney Matricardi clarified that Ms. Dozier's term expires April 21, 2026, so the council would be filling the unexpired term, after which a reappointment would be necessary. She also noted that the board meetings occur on the fourth Thursday of each month at 6:00 p.m. Councilmember Gunn asked whether the term would roll over after April 2026, and Attorney Matricardi confirmed that a new appointment would be required.

This item will be discussed further in the executive session.

5. **Council Discussion of a Resolution approving the Reappointment and Swearing-In of Members of the Planning Commission for a New Term; Providing for Continuity of Operations; Authorizing the Mayor to Administer the Oath of Office; and for Other Lawful Purposes.** - Planning and Community Development

Background/History:
The current terms of the City of Forest Park Planning Commission members are set to expire in March 2026. Pursuant to Section 8-8-164 of the City Ordinance, the Planning Commission is established as a five-member body whose members are appointed and confirmed by the Mayor and City Council and serve terms as prescribed by ordinance.All current Planning Commission members have confirmed their willingness to continue serving for a new term. To ensure continuity of operations and maintain compliance with City Code and state law, the members must be reappointed, confirmed, and sworn in by the Mayor prior to the March 19, 2026, Planning Commission meeting. Following swearing-in, the Planning Commission will elect a Chair and Vice Chair.Failure to complete the reappointments and swearing-in prior to the March 19, 2026, meeting will result in the Planning Commission being unable to lawfully convene, requiring cancellation of the scheduled meeting.Should Mayor and Council approve the reappointment and confirmation of the current Planning Commission members, the Planning Commission will remain in compliance and able to continue conducting official business.

Interim Director SaVaughn Irons provided the council with an overview of the reappointment and swearing-in of members of the Planning Commission for a new term.

Councilmember James informed Attorney Matricardi that she listened to a recent Development Authority Board meeting where staggered terms were discussed to prevent all members' terms from expiring at the same time. She inquired whether staggered terms could be implemented legally.

Attorney Matricardi advised that the City Ordinance provides for initial four-year appointments, with subsequent appointments serving three-year terms. She stated that the ordinance would need to be amended to formally permit staggered terms. However, she noted that since members serve until their successors are appointed and qualified, the council could reappoint a portion of the board now and reappoint the remaining members at a later date.

Councilmember James restated the explanation for clarification, and Attorney Matricardi confirmed her understanding was correct. Councilmember James then asked Ms. Irons if a list of current board members was available. Ms. Irons stated she would provide the list.

The Mayor stated that this item would be discussed further in executive session once the names are provided.

6. **Council Discussion of a Resolution Approving a Revised Phased Development Approach for the City Center Project; to be known as the Forest Park Administrative Complex; acknowledging Project cost estimates and funding assumptions; Authorizing continued Planning and Implementation; and for other Lawful Purposes.** - Public Works

Background/History:
Revise the City Center to the Forest Park Administrative Complex with a phased completion approach:
• Phase 1 – Recreation building
• Phase 2 — City Hall
• Phase 3 – Police Headquarters
Total estimated construction cost of $81 million. This will be a substantial reduction from the initially estimated $118 million originally proposed.

Director Matthews provided the Mayor and Council with an overview and presentation regarding the background and history of the Revised Phased Development Approach for the City Center Project. He informed the Council that representatives from the design firms, along with the City's Financial Advisor, were present to address any questions related to project financing, design, and construction.

Councilmember James sought clarification regarding the sequencing of the Starr Park Project and confirmed that it must begin first. Director Matthews confirmed this and explained that two design firms are involved: Croft is leading the design for Star Park, and PPI is leading the City Center design. Both design teams presented an overview of their processes.

Councilmember Gunn asked for clarification on funding, noting that funding sources for Phases 1 and 2 were discussed, but not specifically for the Starr Park portion. Mr. Walls provided an update on project funding. Councilmember Gunn emphasized the importance of fiscal responsibility, referencing the original 2025 projection of $118.3 million and expressing appreciation that the revised plan reduced the projected cost to approximately $81 million. She commended staff for their efforts in reducing the overall cost. Mr. Walls provided an additional explanation regarding the cost reduction and clarified that FF&E stands for Furniture, Fixtures, and Equipment.

Councilmember Gunn also asked whether the recreation building and Starr Park would be constructed simultaneously. Director Matthews stated that, if approved, both projects would move forward concurrently, pending final approvals. Regarding the timeline, Director Matthews explained that due to the new phased approach, revisions to Starr Park drawings would take approximately five weeks, followed by a two-month permitting process with Clayton County Water Authority and the City. Bidding would occur afterward. He indicated the project could begin before July if all proceeds smoothly. Mr. Walls added that between now and July, he would return to the Council to seek authorization for a $50 million bond issuance.

Councilmember Gutierrez expressed appreciation for the cost adjustments and requested a comparison between the original and revised layouts, including clarification on when changes were made and who was involved. Mr. Kent explained that the project has been in progress since 2019 and that prior leadership directed relocating the City Center to a central downtown location near Main Street and the park. The project was paused and redesigned after the 2021 bond issuance.

Councilmember Gutierrez emphasized that Starr Park remains a priority and asked whether the City Center's redesign has delayed park completion. Staff explained that the amphitheater would be relocated, and an additional field would be added at Starr Park. The park itself is not losing amenities.

Councilmember Akins-Wells inquired about the amphitheater’s revenue-generating potential and whether enclosing it was still possible. Director Matthews explained that the previous rooftop balcony concept was removed due to cost. However, staff stated that future design enhancements could be considered to address revenue and crowd control.

Councilmember Mears asked about the new aquatic center and the existing pool leak. The team confirmed that the new aquatic center would replace the old facility, which would be demolished upon completion. An Aquatic Consultant has been retained to assist with the project.

Councilmember Gunn inquired whether the outdoor pool would remain, and Director Matthews confirmed that it would.

Councilmember James inquired about previous discussions with Clayton County Public Schools regarding potential upgrades to Corner Stadium at Starr Park. Director Matthews stated that the stadium is not included in the current scope but agreed to review past discussions. Attorney Matricardi noted prior conversations between the City and school leadership and suggested re-engaging the Superintendent.

Councilmember Gutierrez asked whether construction could begin by September if approved. Director Matthews responded that, pending redesigns, approvals, and pricing, the project could move forward accordingly.

Mr. Walls concluded by commending Director Matthews for his leadership and financial guidance throughout the process.

VIII. **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 Mears. The motion was unanimously approved. The Mayor and Council entered into executive session at 6:49 pm.

Councilmember James made a motion to adjourn the executive session at 7:02 pm and to reconvene the work session meeting, which was made by and seconded by Councilmember Gunn. The motion was unanimously approved.

IX. **ADJOURNMENT**

Councilmember James made a motion to adjourn the work session meeting, seconded by Councilmember Gunn. The meeting adjourned at 7:03 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.