



CITY OF
FORESTPARK

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

Monday, February 16, 2026 at 7:00 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 7:03 PM.

II. INVOCATION/PLEDGE

Elder Cook provided the Invocation, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance

III. 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	

IV. 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.

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

Councilmember James made a motion to adopt the consent agenda with the removal of the New Lifepaks & Lucus and Renew Annual Maintenance Services Contract with Stryker item, seconded by Councilmember Gunn. The vote was unanimously approved.

VI. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Mayor Ellison informed the council that, under public comments, the number of speakers should be changed from five to three. Councilmember James made a motion to approve the minutes of January 20, 2026, and February 2, 2026, with the recommended changes, seconded by

Councilmember Gutierrez. The vote was unanimously approved.

1. Council Approval of Work Session and Regular Meeting Minutes from January 20, 2026, and February 2, 2026 - Executive

VII. PUBLIC COMMENTS

(All Speakers will have 3 Minutes)

The Interim Clerk read the decorum statement. (All speakers will have 3 minutes)

There were four (4) public comment speakers.

Lois Wright addressed the Council and stated that this issue has concerned her for several years. She explained that in 2012, the State required the City to establish a Development Authority, and she served as its first Chairperson, as well as Chair of the Urban Redevelopment Agency (URA). She stated that the purpose was for the Board to operate independently of the City. Ms. Wright expressed concern that two Council members are currently serving on shared boards, which she believes compromises the independence required by the State and raises ethical concerns. She stated that she discussed the matter with a Council member who agreed with her position. She further stated that Council members or the Mayor should not serve as directors of the boards if they are intended to be independent. She also raised concerns regarding a major developer serving as Chairman of the Development Authority and later receiving multiple City contracts related to projects on the base after stepping down, which she believes was unethical. Additionally, Ms. Wright referenced property located on the "diamond," stating it was intended to be part of the park plan as a veterans memorial and not sold to a private individual. She stated the property was appraised at \$150,000 during her tenure, but was later sold by the Mayor at that time for \$40,000. She requested that the Council address these matters.

Clifford Pellegrine addressed the Council and referenced the enthusiasm expressed at the recent URA meeting regarding the Great Vine project, noting the strong support shown. He stated that he is interested in seeing how the project will ultimately function to serve the community. Mr. Pellegrine recalled that the former Rite Aid building was initially proposed to become a plasma collection facility; however, the governing body adopted Resolution 22-23, placing a moratorium on such uses to protect the community's well-being. He stated that at the time, residents believed their concerns were being heard and protected. He questioned whether the City's subsequent acquisition of the Great Vine property may have diverted attention from other real estate matters. He expressed concerns regarding economic development projects involving non-disclosure agreements, stating that such agreements protect corporations rather than the community. He further stated that a large data center project was introduced without sufficient public awareness. Mr. Pellegrine also referenced concerns raised at the URA meeting related to the development of Fort Gillem, including a dam breach at Stevens Lake as presented by Oasis Consulting, and potential City liability associated with former base housing units that require significant repairs, including asbestos and mold remediation. Additionally, he noted that the URA is considering expanding its boundaries to include additional areas of Forest Park. He questioned how the City can promote transparency while operating through multiple development boards.

Ann Pellegrine addressed the Council and stated that after learning a data center was being constructed at Fort Gillem and being unable to obtain records related to the agreement between

the URA and Digital Realty, she became concerned about a lack of transparency. She stated that non-disclosure agreements (NDAs) create what she described as a “veil of secrecy,” noting that terms such as “Project Splash” or “economic development opportunities” are used instead of “data center.” She expressed concern that NDAs may discourage public officials or staff from speaking publicly due to potential penalties or project termination. Mrs. Pellegrine stated that, in her view, information related to water usage, electricity consumption, land use, and tax implications has not been clearly disclosed. She also expressed concerns regarding public safety, including blasting activities that she believes were more extensive than originally anticipated. She stated that she does not believe the project reflects transparency and questioned whether it serves the best interests of the community. Additionally, she expressed concern about the financial reports presented at the most recent URA meeting, stating that she observed what she believed to be a limited understanding of certain accounting matters, including duplicate payment patterns. She also commented on meeting logistics, noting that multiple board members were sharing a single microphone, which she felt reflected a lack of professionalism. Mrs. Pellegrine encouraged greater community participation at meetings and urged elected officials to prioritize residents’ interests. She stated that residents deserve clear communication, strong leadership, and a quality of life that makes them proud to live in the City of Forest Park.

Pamela Felder addressed the Council and stated that she purchased her home in 2022, which backs up to a large parcel formerly owned by Fort Gillem. She reported that since excavation began on the property, her home has developed multiple cracks on both the upper and lower levels, including a crack across her front porch. She stated that the ongoing blasting, drilling, and heavy excavation have caused significant stress and anxiety, and she is concerned that her home’s foundation may have been compromised. Ms. Felder stated that despite the scale of the project, she did not receive formal notification regarding the construction of the data center. She questioned why nearby homeowners were not directly notified, whether the long-term structural impact on surrounding homes was considered, and why residents have not received clear and consistent updates. She stated that residents deserve transparency and accountability and feel they were not adequately protected or informed. Ms. Felder formally requested a clear explanation of the project approval and notification process, copies of any mailed notices or public communications, information regarding vibration monitoring and structural impact assessments, and guidance for affected homeowners. She stated that residents are seeking immediate answers and action.

VIII. CITY MANAGER'S REPORT

Chief of Staff Pauline provided the Council with a high-level overview of the progress and ongoing initiatives within each department, highlighting the momentum that has already been established.

IX. PRESENTATIONS

2. FY2025-2026 MONTHLY FINANCIAL REPORT - Finance

Background/History:

The Finance Department is presenting the FY2025-2026 Monthly Financial Review of the City’s financials. The purpose of the monthly financial review is to help us know how

healthy the City's cash flow is and help evaluate department performance to see if the executive office needs to reallocate resources to achieve the financial goals for the City.

Director Wiggins presented the FY 2025–2026 Monthly Financial Report to the Council.

Councilmember Gunn referenced the recent Mauldin & Jenkins audit report discussed two to three meetings prior, and stated she expected it to be on the agenda due to concerns about the fund balance decreasing from \$14 million to \$10 million. Director Wiggins confirmed the reduction and stated that Mauldin & Jenkins will present the audit at the March 2nd meeting. He further advised that the audit has been submitted to the State and to GFOA.

Councilmember James asked for clarification regarding the reduction in the fund balance. Director Wiggins explained that revenues, particularly tax collections, did not meet budgeted projections. Additionally, approximately \$1 million in capital expenses was paid from the General Fund, funds were transferred to support E-911, and unbudgeted salary increases were covered. As a result, the fund balance was used to close out the fiscal year. He reported that the fund balance has since increased to approximately \$12.4 million, reflecting a recovery of about \$2.5 million.

Councilmember James asked Attorney Matricardi whether expenditures from the fund balance require Council approval. Attorney Matricardi confirmed that expenditures not included in the original budget must be approved by the Council. Councilmember James questioned how reserve funds were depleted without clear Council action, noting that certain salary adjustments had been presented as coming from ARPA funds rather than reserves. Director Wiggins stated that some items came before the Council through budget amendments and explained that at year-end, if revenues and expenditures are not balanced, fund balance must be used to reconcile the audit.

Councilmember Gunn stated that during the budget retreat, Council reviewed departmental allocations, and she did not recall discussion of \$4 million being moved from reserves. She expressed concern that the Council did not have the opportunity to review or discuss those expenditures beforehand. Director Wiggins offered to provide a timeline and a detailed explanation. Councilmember Gunn also asked whether the \$4 million would be restored. Director Wiggins stated that the fund balance is currently being replenished and has already increased to \$12.4 million.

Councilmember Gutierrez requested a detailed list of transactions reflecting where the funds were allocated. Mayor Ellison stated that significant expenditures from reserves should come before the Mayor and Council for approval. Director Wiggins reiterated that year-end audit adjustments require balancing to meet State requirements.

Councilmember Akins-Wells stated that year-end adjustments are not unusual due to the timing of tax collections, but also requested a breakdown of expenditures, specifically regarding approximately \$400,000 spent on the Forest Park Way median project, as residents have inquired about the improvements.

Councilmember James clarified that the audit covers the fiscal year July 2024 through June 2025 and expressed concern about reserve spending during that period. She further noted that current fiscal year revenue collections, particularly licenses and permits, appear lower than expected at this stage of the year. She stated she looks forward to reviewing the audit for clarity regarding the \$4 million expenditure.

Director Wiggins stated he would distribute the finalized audit to the Council the following day and provide a detailed breakdown of the \$4 million and its reconciliation to the audit.

Councilmember Gutierrez asked whether the Tyler Software referenced in the discussion was the same system used for Planning and Zoning fee collections. Director Wiggins explained that a portion of the collections runs through Tyler's "Intergov" system. Attorney Matricardi clarified that separate contracts exist: one for the financial system and another related to Planning Commission fees and business licenses.

X. CONSENT AGENDA

3. 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.

Councilmember James made a motion to approve the Annual Renewal Contract for the ERP Incode system with Tyler Technologies, seconded by Councilmember Gutierrez. The vote was unanimously approved.

XI. OLD BUSINESS

XII. NEW BUSINESS

4. Council Discussion of Development Authority Board Appointment - Economic Development

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. This Board shall consist of up to seven (7) members, and Board members must be taxpayers residing in the City of Forest Park or taxpayers residing in Clayton County.

Councilmember James made a motion to table the Development Authority Board Appointment, seconded by Councilmember Gutierrez. The vote was unanimously approved.

5. **Council Approval 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.

Councilmember James stated that although the matter was not discussed during the executive session, she would move forward with a motion to appoint Ms. SaVaughn Irons to serve on the Planning Commission through April 2026. She noted that Ms. Irons is currently serving as Interim Planning Commission and recommended her appointment to the Board.

Councilmember James made a motion to appoint SaVaughn Irons to the Planning Commission, seconded by Councilmember Gunn. The vote was unanimously approved.

Councilmember Gutierrez requested that the Council receive reports from those meetings on a quarterly or semiannual basis to ensure the Council remains informed. He suggested implementing this reporting process with the newly appointed member.

6. **Council Approval 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.

Councilmember James made a motion to appoint Michael Clinkscales, Azfar Haque, and Roderick Jackson to serve as members of the Planning Commission for the term of March 8, 2026, through March 8, 2029, seconded by Councilmember Gunn. The vote was unanimously approved.

7. **Council Approval 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.

Councilmember James made a motion to approve the Resolution Approving a Revised Phased Development Approach for the City Center Project, seconded by Councilmember Akins-Wells. The vote was unanimously approved.

XIII. CLOSING COMMENTS BY GOVERNING BODY

Councilmember James responded to several comments made during public comment. She stated that the City Attorney is present at Council meetings to ensure compliance with city and state laws and advised that nothing prohibits elected officials from serving on Boards. While she could not speak to past circumstances involving state intervention, she affirmed that she follows the law and regularly seeks guidance from the City Attorney to ensure compliance.

Councilmember James acknowledged the concern regarding microphones and agreed that additional microphones are needed, particularly since the URA Board has expanded from five to seven members. She stated that the City will look into purchasing additional equipment. In

response to comments regarding transparency, Councilmember James stated that the URA Board meets on the second Thursday of each month, and those meetings are open to the public and available online. She emphasized that there is no intent to withhold information. She noted that while nondisclosure agreements may be required in certain matters, the Board has expanded to seven members and no decisions are made by one individual. Although she serves as Chair, she stated that she holds no more authority than any other Board member, and all members have an equal vote. Councilmember James expressed her willingness to meet with Ms. Felder to further discuss and better understand her concerns. She also addressed comments regarding a parcel of land sold by the URA, noting that the property contained large rocks and that she wants to ensure any related issues are properly mitigated. Additionally, Councilmember James reminded the public that she hosts ward meetings on the third Thursday of each month. She stated that these meetings provide residents with the opportunity to engage directly with subject-matter experts and City staff, and the meetings are recorded live. She announced that next month they will honor Teachers of the Year from the City's ten school clusters and will also recognize principals, school social workers, and parent liaisons, followed by a dinner in their honor. Councilmember James also announced that she will host a Hunger Walk on March 15, 2026, at 9:30 a.m. She encouraged participation and stated that individuals may sponsor a student's T-shirt with a \$25 donation to the Atlanta Community Food Bank. She noted that 100% of the proceeds will support food giveaways hosted at Forest Park High School. Contributions must be received by February 24, 2026, to ensure T-shirts are available for participants. She concluded by thanking everyone for attending.

Councilmember Gunn thanked everyone for attending and participating in the meeting. She recognized the efforts of the Code Enforcement Department and Chief Chris for overseeing recent inspections of senior apartment communities, ages 55 and older. She stated that inspections identified several code discrepancies, many of which have since been addressed, although some issues remain ongoing. Councilmember Gunn noted that property managers are now aware that the City of Forest Park is committed to enforcing compliance with applicable codes. She expressed appreciation for the team's thorough work, including the reports that were prepared, and shared that she received numerous calls from residents stating they had not seen that level of enforcement previously. Councilmember Gunn also invited the community to attend the 365 Black Health & Wellness Fair on February 21, 2026, from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m., to be held at Gateway Restoration Church, located at 4981 Phillips Drive. She stated that the event is being held in partnership with Ward 5, which allocated funds to help provide meals for more than 200 families. The event will include health screenings and informational resources related to cholesterol, blood pressure, and diabetes, followed by a Black History Workshop. Councilmember Gunn encouraged everyone to attend, thanked them again for their presence, and wished everyone a safe and pleasant evening.

Councilmember Gutierrez thanked everyone for coming out and stated that he appreciates the passion expressed during public comments. He informed Ms. Felder that she resides in Ward 3 and advised that he would be reaching out to her directly. He stated that, as mentioned by Councilmember James regarding the blasting concerns, he does not want her to have that experience in the City. He noted that he reviewed the property location and commented that she has a beautiful home and would like it to remain so. In response to Ms. Lois Wright's comments regarding elected officials serving on boards, Councilmember Gutierrez stated that he understands her perspective; however, he shared that Councilmember James' transparency has positively influenced his view on the matter. He further stated that the park at Gillem is also located in Ward 3. He explained that a property management company holds a 25-year contract for the former Fort Gillem housing apartments, where rents have remained at affordable, locked-in rates. He stated that the URA met with residents and worked to identify solutions to improve the property without increasing rent. He expressed appreciation for the empathy shown by

Councilmember James and the URA Board, noting that many residents are on fixed incomes and that rent increases are among the most frequent concerns he hears from constituents. While the City cannot intervene in private rental increases, he stated that he is grateful the URA was able to assist in this instance to help support residents in Forest Park. Regarding the proposed data center, Councilmember Gutierrez stated that no one is celebrating the situation, but noted that due to the large rock formation on the property, blasting would likely have been required for any development. He stated that communications were reportedly sent to residents and that the City will verify that information. He further stated that efforts will be made to ensure that any activity does not negatively impact Ms. Felder's home and that any damages, if they occur, will be addressed appropriately. He also stated that studies related to the data center were conducted in coordination with Georgia Power and the Clayton County Water Authority to ensure sufficient utilities are available and that services to residents would not be negatively affected. He noted that these studies were completed prior to the matter being presented to the URA. He added that the value generated by the project is expected to benefit the City and help fund future initiatives. Councilmember Gutierrez concluded by providing updates on his Crochet and ongoing Pilates classes. He expressed enthusiasm about Black History Month and Councilmember Gunn's upcoming event, noting positive feedback from the community. He also informed Mayor Ellison that residents have expressed excitement about meeting her and commended her on the job she is doing. Mayor Ellison responded that she maintains an open-door policy and encouraged individuals to schedule time on her calendar.

Councilmember Mears stated that he had a two-part question. Addressing Director Matthews, he noted that he did not intend to put him on the spot but wanted to mention an ongoing issue in his ward. He explained that approximately six weeks ago, the County performed repairs; however, after completing the work, the area was filled with gravel, which has since worn away. He asked whether Director Matthews was aware of the matter and stated that he would follow up with him to determine how long it would take for the repair to be properly completed. Councilmember Mears also stated that he was glad to see everyone in attendance and doing well. He shared that he recently visited the high school to view the two new athletic fields and noted that the improvements were long overdue. He remarked that his children played ball there many years ago and that it had been a long time since the fields were repaired. He stated that the new fields look great and that the community should be proud to provide students with a quality place to play.

Councilmember Akins-Wells thanked everyone for coming out and expressed appreciation for the information presented to the Council. She announced that the mirror installation at the Ward 4 Community Garden has been completed and commended the artist, Ms. Sarah, for her outstanding work. She stated that the project has received positive attention, with others inquiring about the artist, and shared her excitement for Phase II of the project. She also thanked Ms. Samaria and the Council Aides for their contributions. Councilmember Akins-Wells extended her appreciation to Parks and Recreation Director Maxwell. She explained that Forest Park was once well known for its baseball programs, which had been inactive for some time. After reaching out and collaborating with Director Maxwell and coaches from Clayton County Schools, efforts are underway to reestablish youth baseball. She announced that registration for ages 14–17 begins today and noted that additional volunteer coaches are still needed. She stated that plans are underway for a large opening day event to inform residents and the broader Clayton County community that Forest Park baseball is returning. She also referenced the City's past history of hosting the Little League World Series and expressed hope of restoring that legacy. She announced that the Ward 4 Code Compliance and Police Forum would be held soon and encouraged residents to inform their neighbors. She thanked Chief Chris for his service and contributions to the City. Councilmember Akins-Wells emphasized that residents are the Council's "bosses" and stated that elected officials are accountable to them. She

acknowledged concerns regarding transparency and expressed her commitment to sharing information as it becomes available. She stated that while she strives to be transparent, she can only share information that she has received. She reiterated the importance of improving communication with residents and ensuring they are kept informed about City matters. She commended the City's Public Information Office (PIO) for its efforts but noted that not all residents utilize social media or the City's website, particularly seniors who may not have access. She stated that she would like to explore additional ways to communicate important information to the community. Councilmember Akins-Wells also reminded everyone that the Community Closet is open every third Friday from 12:00 p.m. to 2:00 p.m. She expressed gratitude to those who contribute to its success. Lastly, she reminded residents about "Wellness with Wells," held every Tuesday from 6:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m., noting that this month will be the final month until November. She thanked everyone who had participated.

Councilmember Gunn also gave special recognition to the Fire Department for assisting with inspections and helping ensure that properties were brought into compliance. She expressed appreciation for their support and collaboration in addressing the identified issues.

XIV. 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)

Councilwoman James motioned to enter into executive session to discuss personnel, litigation, and real estate, seconded by Councilwoman Gunn. The vote was unanimously approved. The Mayor and Council entered into executive session at 8:13 pm.

Councilwoman Gunn made a motion to exit the executive session and reconvene the regular meeting at 10:29 pm, seconded by Councilwoman James. The vote was unanimously approved.

Councilmember Gunn asked Attorney Matricardi to provide clarification regarding the governing laws related to elected officials serving on boards within the City of Forest Park. Attorney Matricardi responded that the information is included in the packets previously provided to Council, but stated that she would resend the chart she prepared for the Economic Development Director and believes she also previously shared it with the Mayor. She explained that the chart outlines the various boards, the number of members permitted, and the qualifications for service. Attorney Matricardi further clarified that the law allows for one member of the Council or governing authority to serve on the Downtown Development Authority (DDA) Board, the Development Authority Board, and the Urban Redevelopment Agency (URA) Board. She noted that in some instances, the entire City Council may serve as the URA, as is done in some municipalities. She also stated that, in the past, the DDA has served in the capacity of the URA.

Councilmember Gutierrez asked whether an elected official is permitted to serve as the chairperson of a board. Attorney Matricardi responded that yes, an elected official may serve in that capacity.

The Council and Attorney Matricardi engaged in further discussion regarding the governing laws related to board appointments and service by elected officials.

Councilmember Gutierrez asked where members of the public should go to request information about the data center. Attorney Matricardi responded that documents may be requested through the Open Records Act by submitting a formal request via email or telephone. She clarified that the City can only provide documents that are in its possession. Attorney Matricardi further stated that it may be beneficial for the City to create an informational webpage featuring a common questions and answers (Q&A) fact sheet to help address public inquiries.

Councilmember Mears stated that he worked with data centers for approximately 20 years and explained that companies do not construct these facilities without extensive research and planning. He noted that before investing millions of dollars, developers conduct thorough evaluations to ensure adequate infrastructure and resources are available. He emphasized that such projects are not undertaken without confirming that all requirements have been addressed in advance.

Councilmember Gutierrez stated to Ms. Warrior that the City will work on creating a landing page on the website to provide available information regarding the data center. He explained that this would allow residents to easily access relevant documents and information and help address concerns or allegations that information is being withheld. Ms. Warrior responded that she believes this is an appropriate step and expressed appreciation for the discussion. She stated that she will work to expedite the process.

Councilmember Gunn expressed concerns regarding the residential impact of blasting activity in the area. She shared her personal experience of previously living near a mining operation and the damage it caused, including foundation cracks. She questioned what the City's response would be if residents began reporting property damage allegedly resulting from the blasting.

Attorney Matricardi advised that any concerns related to damages from blasting would need to be directed to the private company conducting the activity, as the City would not be liable. She stated that notices were distributed via email blast; however, she was uncertain whether written notices were mailed and indicated that notification in that manner would likely be the responsibility of the private company.

Ms. Pauline stated that, to her knowledge, notices were sent out as soon as they were received and noted that the electronic mail timestamps could verify that distribution. She added that once Chief Clemons received the notification, a request was immediately made to the Public Information Office to disseminate the information the same day.

Councilmember Gutierrez informed Councilmember Gunn that he was advised by Allen that Ms. Felder's home is not located within the city limits. However, he noted that the property falls within the same district as the County Commissioner, and he plans to reach out accordingly. He further stated that he will still visit the area, as he previously committed to Ms. Felder, in order to assess the situation and advocate on behalf of her and neighboring residents if necessary.

XV. ADJOURNMENT

Councilmember Akins-Wells made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Councilmember Mears. The vote was unanimously approved. The meeting adjourned at 10:39 pm.

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.