



CITY OF
FORESTPARK

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

Monday, February 2, 2026 at 7:00 PM
Forest Park City Hall | Council Chambers
745 Forest Parkway, Forest Park, GA 30297

The Honorable Mayor Gwen W. 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
Elle Whigham, City Attorney

MINUTES

I. CALL TO ORDER/WELCOME

The meeting was called to order by Mayor Ellison at 7:00 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	
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; Talisa Adams, Procurement Manager; Shalonda Brown, HR Director; Diane Lewis, HR Deputy Director; Rochelle Dennis, Economic Development Director; SaVaughn Irons, Senior Planner; Dorthy Roper-Jackson, Municipal Court Director; Tarik Maxwell, Director of Rec and Leisure; Alton Matthews, Public Works Director; Geoff May, Deputy Fire Chief; Brandon Criss, Police Chief, and Elle Whigham, City Attorney.

IV. ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA WITH ANY ADDITIONS / DELETIONS

Councilmember Gunn moved to adopt the agenda with the addition of approving the City Manager's recommendation to terminate the appointment of Randy Rainey as City Clerk, effective immediately. The motion was seconded by Councilmember James. The motion carried unanimously.

The item was added as item #10 and the motion was made by Councilmember James, seconded by Councilmember Gunn. The motion carried unanimously.

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

Councilmember Gunn moved to accept the consent agenda, seconded by Councilmember James. The motion passed unanimously.

VI. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Mayor Ellison informed the Council that, since the minutes were not available, the approval would be tabled until the next meeting. Councilmember James made a motion, seconded by Councilmember Gunn. The motion was unanimously approved.

1. **Council Approval of Work Session and Regular Meeting Minutes from January 20, 2026**-City Clerk - 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 five (5) public comment speakers.

Zack Parker — He addressed the Council regarding the importance of transparency and accountability within the City of Forest Park. He also spoke to the Council about the email that citizens received concerning Blasting LLC and requested clarification on the matter.

Ann Pellegrini — She addressed concerns regarding the blasting activities at Fort Gilliam. She also spoke about the Data Center and expressed her concerns regarding the matter.

Clifford Pellegrini — He addressed the community's request for answers regarding the data center, noting that the request was made 32 weeks ago. He spoke on the importance of transparency and timely communication with the public. He also commended Director Maxwell and the Recreation Department cheerleaders for their outstanding performance and expressed appreciation for their hard work and dedication.

Lois Wright— She informed the Council that for the past three (3) years, she has been requesting that the roads on her street be fully paved. She asked that her street be added to the paving list. Councilmember Akins-Wells informed Mrs. Wight that her street is already on the list and that paving projects are completed according to the established order of the list.

Dr. Lawanda Folami - She would like to thank the Public Works Department, Fire Department, EMS, and Police Department for their hard work in keeping the citizens safe and the community clean during the storm. She informed the Council on January 5, 2026, that there was an issue concerning Robert's Rules, and she formally brought it before them. She noticed that during the Special Called Meeting, the matter was addressed. She would now like to see the governing body make a friendly motion to amend the Robert's Rules and applicable law to ensure everything is in proper order. She also stated that she agrees with her neighbors regarding the Data Center and believes it should never have been approved.

VIII. **CITY MANAGER'S REPORT**

Interim City Manager Clemons provided the Council with an update on city operations, governance, and organizational progress during the first six (6) months of her appointment. She stated that it has been her pleasure to serve in the role during this time and expressed her

appreciation to the Mayor and Council for the trust they placed in her.

IX. **PRESENTATIONS**

Director. Cox provided the Council with an overview of his professional background and presented an update on the Information Technology Department. His report included details on the IT footprint overhaul, a departmental overview, key projects that have been completed, the new IT position, and some of the fun things happening within the department.

2. **IT Department Updates** - Information Technology

X. **CONSENT AGENDA**

Councilmember Gunn made a motion to approve all items listed under the Consent Agenda. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Gutierrez and was unanimously approved by the Council.

3. **Annual Adobe Software License Renewal** - Information Technology

4. **Waste Management Contract Amendment for Signature** - Public Works

XI. **OLD BUSINESS**

XII. **NEW BUSINESS**

5. **Council Approval of Downtown Development Authority Board Appointments** - Economic Development

Councilmember James made a motion to appoint Councilmember Delores Gunn, Kenneth Gray, and Bambi Hayes-Brown to the Downtown Development Authority. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Gutierrez and was unanimously approved.

6. **Council Approval of Development Authority Board Appointments** - Economic Development

Councilmember James made a motion to reappoint Rhonda Wright, appoint Daniel Ray Allen, appoint Lois Wright, and reappoint Felicia Davis to the Development Authority Board. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Gutierrez and was unanimously approved.

Elle Whigham read the motion to approve the city manager's recommendation and to terminate the appointment of Randy Rainey as city clerk, effective immediately, which was made by Councilmember James and seconded by Councilmember Gunn. The vote was unanimously approved.

7. **Council Approval of Urban Redevelopment Agency Board Appointments** - Economic Development

Mayor Ellison informed the Council that this item would be discussed during the Executive Session to allow for proper confirmation. Councilmember Gunn made a motion to appoint Sherita Sutton and Taylor King to the Urban Redevelopment Agency of the City of Forest Park,

Georgia. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Akins-Wells and was unanimously approved.

8. **Council Approval of the Public Arts Review Board** - Planning and Community Development

Mayor Ellison informed the Council that this item would be discussed during the Executive Session to allow for proper confirmation. Councilmember James made a motion to appoint four members — Kaysie Lazzaro (Executive Director of Arts Clayton), Representative Courtney Hurst, Annika Jones, and Ann Keith, and to table the appointment of the DDA Representative. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Gutierrez and was unanimously approved.

9. **Council Approval of a Resolution to Establish the Development Impact Fee Advisory Committee and Appoint members thereto** - Planning and Community Development

Mayor Ellison informed the Council that this item would be discussed during the Executive Session to allow for proper confirmation. Councilmember James made a motion to appoint seven members: Latron Price, Kenyatta Johnson, Akenya Rock, Mandala Jones, Bernard Solomon, Derrick Bostic, and Ann Pellegrine to the Development Impact Fee Advisory Committee. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Gutierrez and was unanimously approved.

XIII. **CLOSING COMMENTS BY GOVERNING BODY**

Councilmember James addressed a concern regarding Robert's Rules of Order, confirming that the URA consulted with their attorney and acted legally, and noted that procedural deviations do not invalidate their actions. She provided an update on the Data Center, stating that utility impacts have been reviewed by Georgia Power and Clayton County Water Authority, and minimal effects on the community are expected. She apologized for unexpected blasting during construction due to the rocky property and assured residents that steps will be taken to prevent further disruption. Councilmember James emphasized that the city acted in the best interest of current and future residents and informed residents that they can research Digital Relater Company, the service provider for the Data Center in Gilliam. She also highlighted the March Teacher of the Year celebration across ten school clusters, including seven elementary schools, two middle schools, and Forest Park High School, and encouraged community participation. She reminded residents that January board meetings are listed on the city website and praised city directors for their work and updates.

Councilmember Gunn highlighted her partnership with Gateway Restoration, a local organization, which distributes perishable groceries, fruits, vegetables, and occasionally clothing to the community on the second Monday of each month from 3:00 PM to 5:00 PM. She encouraged residents to spread the word and expressed excitement about the ongoing collaboration. Councilmember Gunn also provided information about the 360 Black Health & Wellness Fair, open to all Forest Park residents, which will take place on Saturday, February 21, 2026, from 10:00 AM to 2:00 PM. The event will include free groceries for up to 200 people, free health screenings, informational resources, and vendor participation. She thanked Councilmember Allan Mears for his contributions to the community and encouraged everyone to attend and help promote the event.

Councilmember Gutierrez thanked Councilmember Mears and congratulated the newly appointed board members. He expressed excitement about ongoing city initiatives and thanked residents for their public comments, emphasizing that accountability is central to democracy. He apologized for missing last week's meeting and thanked Mrs. Ann for providing soup.

Councilmember Gutierrez shared that a new polity class has begun to bring diversity to the city's fitness programs; classes are held every other Wednesday, with the next session on February 4, 2026, and the schedule is available online. He also announced the start of a senior knitting class, "Homemade Hooks," on February 21, 2026, from 10:00 AM to 12:00 PM, with materials provided. In honor of Black History Month, he plans to organize a roundtable with local seniors and the high school to share knowledge and celebrate the community's history. He emphasized that public comments help ensure transparency and allow residents to receive accurate information.

Councilmember Akins-Wells provided an update on Wellness with Wells, which is held every Tuesday from November through February, sometimes extending beyond that. She noted that she has hosted the program for five years and expressed appreciation that Mayor Ellison has begun attending, describing it as a "breath of fresh air" to have her present and engaging with residents. She thanked the Mayor, Council aides, and local artists for their contributions. Councilmember Akins-Wells highlighted the community garden on Lee Circle, praising the work of the artist and Samaria McCoy for her ideas and efforts, noting that the garden could not have happened without her support. She also expressed gratitude to her colleagues for their teamwork and openness, noting the positive influence of Mayor Ellison in fostering a sense of peace within the council. Finally, she thanked all residents and city directors for their participation and support.

Councilmember Mears acknowledged the recent bad weather and thanked residents for attending the meeting. He addressed challenges facing the homeless shelter, noting that many individuals without housing place a significant burden on the facility. He shared that a group of women in his ward regularly visits the shelter once or twice a week, bringing hundreds of dollars' worth of supplies. Councilmember Mears encouraged anyone who can contribute to assist in keeping residents fed or sheltered, emphasizing that any support is appreciated. He also mentioned that he has been participating in fitness activities with Councilmember Akins-Wells for the past five to six months.

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)

Councilmember Gunn made a motion to enter executive session to discuss personnel, litigation, and real estate, which was seconded by Councilmember Mears. The motion was unanimously approved. Councilmember Gunn made a motion to close the executive session and reconvene the regular session, which was seconded by Councilmember James. The motion was unanimously approved.

XV. ADJOURNMENT

Councilmember Gunn made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Councilmember Akins-Wells. The vote was unanimously approved.

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.