



CITY OF
FORESTPARK

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

Monday, May 4, 2026, at 6:00 PM
Forest Park City Hall | Council Chambers
745 Forest Parkway, Forest Park, GA 30297

The Honorable Mayor Gwendolyn 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

Vanessa Holiday, City Clerk

Danielle Matricardi, City Attorney

SUMMARY MINUTES

VIRTUAL MEETING NOTICE

Council Meetings will be live-streamed and available on [Forest Park's YouTube Channel](#)

- I. **CALL TO ORDER/WELCOME** – The meeting was called to order by Mayor Ellison at 6:00 PM
- II. **ROLL CALL - CITY CLERK** – All members were present except Councilmember Mears.
- III. **ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA WITH ANY ADDITIONS / DELETIONS**
Motion to adopt the agenda as presented was made by Councilmember Gunn; seconded by Councilmember Gutierrez. The motion passed unanimously 4-0.
- IV. **NEW BUSINESS**

1. **Airport South Community Improvement District Expansion** – Presented by: Rochelle Dennis, Economic Development Director

Background/History: The ATL Airport Community Improvement Districts (AACIDs) respectfully request formal approval of the boundary expansion for the Airport South Community Improvement District (ASCID) by resolution, consistent with prior Forest Park expansion approvals, and the appointment of Steve Lackley as the City of Forest Park's representative to the Airport South CID Board.

Director Dennis noted the ATL Airport Community Improvement Districts (AACIDs) operate both the Airport South CID (ASCID) and Airport West CID (AWCID). These districts are Quasi-governmental entities funded by commercial property owners serving six cities across Clayton and Fulton Counties, are focused on infrastructure improvements, public

safety, and mobility enhancements, the South Metro Atlanta ecosystem, advancing connectivity through beautification, transit solutions, and coordinated public safety initiatives and are driven by the priorities of commercial property owners.

Director Dennis introduced Gerald McDowell, Executive Director, ATL Aerotropolis CID Danielle Bass, Community Outreach Director, ATL Airport Community Improvement Districts, and Steve Lackley, Commercial Operations Director, Estes Services, noting Mr. McDowell will present the 2026 Airport South CID plan and benefits for the City of Forest Park.

Mr. McDowell stated the Airport South CID (Community Improvement District) was formed in 2015, noting in 2014 the Fulton County CID West was formed, and later in 2016 CID was formed in Clayton County, they decided in 2016 to work together and form a new brand, the ATL Airport Community Improvement District, and that is how the plan is presented to the market and communicated. However, individually, there are two separate plans, Airport South in Clayton County, and Airport West in Fulton County, each with their own Board of Directors, and according to the State statute, anytime there is a CID within city limits, they are required to meet with the commercial property owners on their list to find out their needs and interests in working with the CID, and each city appoints an individual from a commercial business to represent their city on the Board of Directors. Mr. McDowell noted there has been a vacancy on the Board for Forest Park for one year, and they have been working with the city's Economic Development Department to encourage commercial business owners to join the CID, noting the reason for the expansion request is that there are a number of projects underway, with others coming online, and similar to cities, they cannot operate the CID outside of their district, and there are a number of businesses in Forest Park who have employees that rely on public transportation, and they can utilize the services that are coming online, but they cannot offer those services until the businesses are included in the CID; noting there have been over 250 businesses that have been identified where the services and benefits cannot be offered to benefit employers and employees in the area without the proposed CID expansion.

Mr. McDowell referenced the Micro Transit Project, where a grant was received from the Atlanta Region Link Transit Authority, in the amount of \$2.6 million dollars, with a CID 30% match and offers a free service, which covers most of Forest Park, and with this service, if you work within the district, similar to Uber and Lyft, you download the app and request service 24/7, a minivan will pick you up for free to transport you to the employers within the Forest Park CID area, noting public transportation services such as MARTA shut down at a certain time of day, and for those individuals who rely on public transportation, this service will be available, for free, 24 hours per day, 7 days per week to provide transportation to businesses within the CID.

Mr. McDowell requested approval to expand the CID into the City of Forest Park, noting a number of businesses have expressed interest to join, and they will continue to seek other businesses to join, noting there are other services to come such as public safety, working with police departments, and beautification projects, noting they cannot do projects outside of the approved district; and once the expansion is approved, the paperwork is submitted to the County, and a Resolution is submitted to the cities of Forest Park and College Park for approval from their respective city, and introduced Ms. Bass to continue with the presentation.

Ms. Bass noted much of the information has been covered by Mr. McDowell as it relates to the CID's ATL Airport South, and Airport West, and noted the Clarifying Roles where they were formerly Aerotropolis, and are now two separate entities, noting Airport South focuses on the South Metro Atlanta ecosystem, beautification, transit solutions and public safety, and is funded and driven by commercial property owners, and is not for profit, and noting Aerotropolis is a Public-Private Partnership focusing on Economic Development and Workforce Development and Education throughout the metro area; referenced the Agenda:

Expansion Overview, Why Now, Benefits for Forest Park, City Considerations (Funding & Role), Board Appointment, Action Requested, and Next Steps (Recruitment & Engagement).

Ms. Bass reviewed the Airport South CID 2026 Expansion Map, referencing the grey area on the map being Ft. Gillem, whose parcels are exempt, and are brought in to help connect with the property owners who have consented to join the CID, and are indicated by the green on the map and consenting, and noted that by Georgia State Statute, there are non-consenting parcels that can be brought in, and those are indicated in red on the map.

Ms. Bass noted there is increased growth and opportunity across the airport corridor, and that there is a need for coordinated infrastructure and mobility solutions, strategic opportunity to support Mountain View and Fort Gillem areas, and leveraging private investments to advance improvements alongside city funding.

Ms. Bass noted the expansion would strengthen Forest Park's commercial tax base, attract private investment in infrastructure, support redevelopment, and create new opportunities, with no financial burden for the city, no general fund request, no city financial obligation created, with AACID's funded through self-imposed commercial assessments by the commercial businesses who have agreed to join the CID.

Mr. Steve Lackley, Commercial Operations Director for Estes Services, stated he has been in commercial operations for the company for 20+ years, and stated the HVAC School, a 10-week program for Service Technicians, where the main criteria is that the student cannot have previously attended an HVAC school or program; and noted participants receive a \$600 tool & boots allowance, must maintain an A/B average, and the most of the graduates work their way up, with the company being able to hire from within, noting the program has an 88% graduation success rate, and is its 25th graduating class, and was pleased to announce that a plumbing and electrical program will start soon.

Ms. Bass requested formal approval of the boundary expansion of Airport South CID Resolution, consistent with prior Forest Park expansion approvals, and for support of the recommended appointment of Mr. Steve Lackley to the Airport South CID Board; noted the city will continue to see her as her focus will be on outreach throughout the city, including the Mountain View and Fort Gillem corridors as they identify property owners ambassadors to support peer engagement, hosts recurring small-group meetings to share CID values and opportunities, and target priority properties for consistent outreach and engagement, noting the Estes corporate office is located here and stated Estes will host recruitment meetings at their location to educate the business owners as part of the strategy.

Councilmember Gunn expressed enthusiasm for the career giveback and suggested a collaboration and partnership with the Estes program and the city's Elevate program and wants to continue the conversation.

Mr. Lackley responded that he would be honored to partner with the city, noting it is hard to find quality labor, and the classroom can hold one hundred participants.

Councilmember James thanked everyone for the presentation and noted her appreciation that there is no request for funding from the city.

Councilmember Gutierrez stated it is a great program, and did not want to take away from the primary request regarding the CID expansion into Forest Park, which he supports, and asked if the Estes program would consider Elevate as well as students attending Forest Park High School who would gain great exposure, and agreed that it is good to see there is no cost to the city.

Councilmember Akins-Wells stated it was a great presentation, agreeing with the sentiments already stated by her colleagues.

2. **Council Consideration to approve a policy governing security detail for elected officials from the city's police department.** – Presented by Danielle Matricardi, City Attorney.

Background/History: The request is to adopt a policy governing security detail for elected officials from the city's police department.

Attorney Matricardi noted the policy would address any threat of an elected official, as determined within the purview of the Polic Chief, and that the Mayor & Council would have to authorize an extension of the security detail beyond thirty (30) days.

Councilmember Akins-Wells stated she supports security detail for all officials whose life has been put into jeopardy, and until the investigation is complete; noted the city needs to update all policies and procedures that are outdated, some of which have been in place for more than fifty (50) years.

Attorney Matricardi noted the current detail is set to end June 1st and the Governing Body would need to approve the security detail to continue.

Councilmember James stated the security detail stems from an incident that occurred in November/December of last year where a rock was thrown at a Councilmember's home, and noted there was discussion from Attorney Matricardi, however, to her knowledge, it was still in limbo, and has since been made aware that the security detail has cost the taxpayers \$97,000, stating each member of the Governing Body needs to be able to answer questions from the public on how city funds are being spent, and that it is not fair for elected officials not to have that information; stated the city needs to look into equitable detail without placing financial burden on the taxpayer for an extended period of time. Councilmember James referenced a section of the policy: **INVESTIGATIONS AND CONFIDENTIALITY:** *Any active investigations related to threats, criminal trespass, criminal damage to property, or other security-related incidents shall be conducted in accordance with applicable law. Information related to such investigations may be withheld as necessary to protect investigative integrity, officer safety, and public safety.*

Councilmember James stated the policy needs to be in place, noting she had not been made aware that there was a 24-hour security detail in place for a Councilmember until it was recently brought to her attention by a resident; further noting transparency is important.

Councilmember Wells asked that the focus be placed on priority issues for the city; noting elected officials should not be involved with police investigations; and noted there is 24-hour surveillance being provided at Kroger at Ft. Gillem where the cost is \$200,000 - \$300,000; and that the city should focus on what is impacting residents; and noted she would have the contract regarding Kroger surveillance to present at the next meeting.

Councilmember Gutierrez asked if the Council must approve security details.

Attorney Matricardi responded yes, when the security detail is outside of normal meetings and exceeds (30) thirty days, and the ordinance allows the Police Chief to make the determination.

Councilmember Gunn noted that from November 2025 to current, \$97,000 has been paid by taxpayers for the security detail, noting all members of the governing body were included on the email regarding the security detail, and that she is definitely concerned about all her colleagues, noting the event in question not only impacted Councilmember Akins-Wells, but it impacted her household as well, and wants everyone to feel safe as they go to their homes, however, there are restrictions as to how we operate as a city, noting it was mentioned that \$200,000 was spent to secure Kroger, and that \$97,000 was paid out over a six-month period for security detail for a councilmember, stating she absolutely wants the Councilwoman to feel safe going in and out of her home, and that she knows exactly what it feels like having had a personal attack against her, where her home was shot up, prior to becoming a councilmember and not one police car was placed outside of her home.

Councilmember Gunn stated that she understands and sympathizes about the situation, having experienced first-hand an attack at her home and affecting her relatives, with someone having to be relocated, traumatizing her grandchildren who were affected and remain afraid, and that if anybody understands how it feels to be violated in the space of your home, she does, noting she has not received an update on the case after three years.

Councilmember Gunn stated that with that being said, as an elected official, she has to separate herself from personal incidents, and must make good, sound decisions for the city and be fiscally responsible and accountable on how money is being spent, and that everyone has to be good stewards as taxpayers.

Councilmember Gunn stated policies can always be amended, and likes that the proposed policy states that any credible threat that requires security detail must be determined by the Police Chief, again expressing empathy and understanding for the situation and stated this is not an attack, and encouraged the public to review the document and read it for themselves.

Councilmember Gutierrez asked Interim City Manager Clemons for an update regarding the investigation.

V. PUBLIC HEARING - COMMENTS WILL BE HEARD DURING THE REGULAR SESSION MEETING

3. **Council Consideration to approve Case # CUP-2026-02- Conditional Use Permit for 4959 and 4965 West St. to establish a childcare center within the Single-Family Residential District (RS).** Presented by: SaVaughn Irons-Kumassah, Interim Planning and Community Development Director.

Background/History: The applicant is requesting approval of a Conditional Use Permit to establish a childcare center within the Single Family Residential (RS) District in Ward 2.

Pursuant to Sec. 8-8-28 of the City of Forest Park Zoning Ordinance, pre-k facilities and daycare centers require a Conditional Use Permit to operate within the RS District.

On April 16, 2026, the Planning Commission reviewed the request and voted to recommend approval with conditions. The conditions are as follows:

Parking Compliance

The property owner and any operator shall comply with the City of Forest Park Zoning Ordinance parking standards as outlined in Section 8-8-90.

Consistency with Approval

This approval is based on the existing site layout and operational characteristics as presented. Any expansion, site modification, or intensification of use, including, but not limited to increased enrollment or extended hours of operation, shall require additional review and approval by the City.

General Compliance

The property owner shall ensure the use remains in compliance with all applicable local, state, and federal regulations, including licensing requirements for childcare facilities.

The subject property previously received approval for a daycare facility use under a prior tenant. This request has been submitted by the property owner to establish the Conditional Use Permit with the property rather than a specific tenant. Approval will allow the property owner to lease the space to future childcare operators without requiring each tenant to seek separate approval from Mayor and Council, provided the use remains consistent with the approved conditions.

Interim Director Irons-Kumassah noted the case was previously presented, and that the applicant has complied with the condition to stripe and pave the parking lot.

VI. NEW BUSINESS

4. **Consideration of an Ordinance Amending Title 9 (Licensing and Regulation) to Clarify Regulatory Standards, Improve Administrative Processes, and Address Ambiguities in Existing Provisions.** Presented by: SaVaughn Irons-Kumassah, Interim Planning and Community Development Director

Background/History: Staff has conducted a review of Title 9 (Licensing and Regulation) and identified several provisions that are outdated, unclear, or lack sufficient detail to ensure consistent interpretation and enforcement. These ambiguities have created

challenges for both staff administration and public-facing processes, particularly with respect to licensing requirements, application completeness, and regulatory compliance.

The proposed amendments are intended to streamline existing procedures, establish clearer standards for applicants and licensees, and align the City's Code with current operational practices and enforcement needs. Updates include clarifying application requirements, strengthening compliance and reporting obligations, and modernizing regulatory language across multiple chapters.

This ordinance represents the first phase of a broader effort to comprehensively update Title 9. Additional amendments are anticipated and will be presented to Mayor and Council in future phases to further enhance clarity, consistency, and effectiveness of the City's licensing and regulatory framework.

Councilmember Gunn inquired about ordinance updates coming forward following Phase I.

Interim Director Irons-Kumassah stated these are the city's current ordinances, noting Title 9 does not fall under Planning & Development, and this request is regarding Business and Licensing area where the ordinances have not been updated in a very long time.

VII. EXECUTIVE SESSION - Personnel, Litigation, Real Estate or Cyber Security OCGA § 50-14-1

Motion to convene Executive Session was made by Councilmember Akins-Wells; seconded by Councilmember James. The motion passed unanimously 4-0.

Motion to adjourn Executive Session and reconvene the Work Session meeting at 7:00 PM was made by Councilmember Gunn; seconded by Councilmember James. The motion passed unanimously 4-0.

VIII. ADJOURNMENT – With no further business, Mayor Ellison adjourned the meeting at 7:00 PM.

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

Respectfully submitted by:

Vanessa Holiday, City Clerk

Gwendolyn Ellison, Mayor