



CITY OF
FORESTPARK

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

Monday, June 1, 2026 at 6:00 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
Vanessa Holiday, City Clerk
Danielle Matricardi, City Attorney

SUMMARY MINUTES

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 6:00p.m.
- II. **ROLL CALL - CITY CLERK** – All members were present.
- III. **ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA WITH ANY ADDITIONS / DELETIONS**
Motion to adopt the agenda as presented was made by Councilmember James; seconded by Councilmember Akins-Wells. The motion passed unanimously 5-0.
- IV. **NEW BUSINESS**
 1. **Council Consideration to approve a Mental Health Awareness Policy.** Presented by: Councilmember Gunn. **Background/History:** Mental Health Awareness Policy at no additional cost to the city, similar to the Volunteer Day Policy.

Councilmember Gunn presented the request for (3) three annual Mental Health Days for staff, and sought support of a Resolution for a Mental Health Awareness Policy for City of Forest Park employees, noting the timing is fitting and in alignment for our city employees in the season that we are in right now; and noted the month of May was Mental Health Awareness Month.

Councilmember Gunn stated this policy reflects a forward-thinking approach to workforce management by recognizing that mental health is essential to employee performance and service delivery. By investing in employee well-being, the city strengthens its ability to effectively serve the community while fostering a supportive and sustainable workplace environment; noted the policy does not create “extra compensation”. It creates an additional category of paid leave time, similar to vacation or personal leave, intended to support employee wellness and organizational effectiveness.

Councilmember Gunn noted it is important to note that the policy is structured with operational safeguards to help mitigate excessive costs, including:

- Advance approval requirements
- Restricting usage adjacent to holidays or other leave types
- Limiting use to stand-alone days
- “Use-it-or-lose-it” provisions that prevent accrual or payout liability

Mayor Ellison asked if the employee would be required to exhaust sick days before the Mental Health Days can be used.

Councilmember Gunn’s response was no, stating the policy would be the first of its kind in City Government in Clayton County.

Councilmember Gutierrez asked if the policy was vetted by HR, Legal and Finance.

Councilmember Gunn’s response was yes, noting there would be no financial burden to the city.

Mayor Ellison stated she wants to see how the program will be administered.

Councilmember James noted the policy was submitted to the governing body for review, noting the mental health days can be used once per quarter.

Councilmember Mears supports the policy as a good idea as long as it is properly implemented.

Attorney Matricardi noted as it relates to the Fair Labor Standard Act, each employee would receive 24 hours; police would receive 36 hours, and fire employees would receive 72 hours based on their shift work.

Councilmember Guterrez asked that HR make sure employees are aware of the policy, noting there are many who are not aware of the Volunteer Day Policy.

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

2. **Council Consideration to approve a proposed Urban Redevelopment Plan pursuant to the Urban Redevelopment Law, O.C.G.A. § 36-62.1** – Presented by: Rochelle Dennis Economic Development Director. Background/History: URA Boundary Expansion
Director Dennis noted the request is to promote revitalization and sustainable economic growth, the City of Forest Park’s Urban Redevelopment Agency (URA) engaged TSW to prepare a strategic plan for the City’s Urban Redevelopment Area. The planning process began with an evaluation of the existing URA boundaries and included recommendations for expansion informed by development pattern analysis and URA staff input. Within the expanded study area, four potential sites were identified as candidates for future redevelopment. Following a comprehensive review, the URA and TSW collaboratively selected one site for detailed concept planning to establish a clear and actionable vision for catalytic development. During the planning process, the consultant team (TSW) met

with City staff in January for an initial consultation to outline the project scope and schedule, which spans from January through the end of 2025.

Sources of data and information used in preparing this plan included: Forest Park and Clayton County GIS data; Clayton County Board of Assessors records; Field observations; Input from URA members and City staff.

The existing Urban Redevelopment Area (URA) in Forest Park is centered along Forest Parkway, extending from Old Dixie Road (US 41) to Ash Street. It encompasses the downtown area between Forest Parkway and Main Street/ Hill Street to the north, as well as the City Hall blocks and Starr Park to the south. In total, the existing URA covers approximately 122 acres.

To address blighted properties and support revitalization more effectively along the Jonesboro Road corridor—a major commercial spine within the City—the URA initiated an evaluation of potential boundary expansions. This process began with a windshield survey and mapping analysis to assess current development patterns and land uses along both the Forest Parkway and Jonesboro Road corridors. Blighted properties were identified by City staff and the consultant team and mapped within the context of these two primary corridors.

The expanded area encompasses properties fronting Forest Parkway and Main Street—from the City's western limits to Jonesboro Road—and includes commercial parcels along Jonesboro Road extending north to the city limits. In total, the expanded URA area covers approximately 512 acres.

3. **First Reading of the FY26-27 Operating Budget and Capital Improvement Plan – Finance.** Presented by: John Wiggins, Finance Director
Background/History: Director Wiggins noted the Proposed Funded dollar amount of the FY26-27 Budget is \$46,439,729.00; noted this budget allocates resources across various city priorities and programs. These allocations are made with the intent to enhance public safety, improve infrastructure, promote economic development, and provide essential services. From maintaining our parks and recreational facilities to supporting educational programs and ensuring the upkeep of our streets and utilities, the budget is designed to meet the diverse needs of our community.

Director Wiggins noted this is the First Reading, with the Second Reading taking place on June 15th; and a Budget Town Hall will take place on Wednesday, June 3, 2026 here in the Chamber at 7pm.

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

Motion to convene Executive Session for Personnel, Litigation, Real Estate CyberSecurity was made by Councilmember Akins-Wells; seconded by Councilmember James. The motion passed unanimously 5-0.

Motion to adjourn Executive Session at 7:03 p.m. and sign Affidavit with No Action was made by Councilmember Akins-Wells; seconded by Councilmember James. The motion passed unanimously 5-0.

VII. **ADJOURNMENT** – With no further business Mayor Ellison adjourned the meeting at 7:03 p.m.

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Respectfully submitted by:

Vanessa Holiday, City Clerk

Gwendolyn Ellison, Mayor