



CITY OF
FORESTPARK

**CITY OF FOREST PARK
DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY STRATEGIC BOARD RETREAT
MEETING**

Wednesday, June 24, 2026, at 9:00 AM
City Hall - Council Chambers

[City Website](#)

Phone (404) 363.2454

CITY HALL COUNCIL CHAMBERS

745 Forest Parkway
Forest Park, GA 30297

AGENDA

Hector Gutierrez, Chair
Rhonda Wright, Vice Chair
Daniel Ray Allen, Board Member
Felicia Davis, Board Member
Victoria Williams, Board Member
Lois Wright, Board Member
Kirby Glaze, Esq., Board Attorney

Rochelle Dennis, Economic Development Director

- I. **CALL TO ORDER/WELCOME:** Chairman Hector Gutierrez called the Development Authority Strategic Retreat to order on June 24, 2026, at 9:15 a.m.

II. **ROLL CALL**

PRESENT

Hector Gutierrez
Rhonda Wright
Daniel Ray Allen (arrived at 9:30 a.m.)
Felicia Davis
Victoria Williams
Lois Wright

ALSO PRESENT

Mayor Gwen Ellison
Kirby Glaze, Esq., DA General Counsel
Pauline Warrior, Chief of Staff
Rochelle B. Dennis, Economic Development Director
John Wiggins, Finance Director
Tony Lamar, Senior Accountant

Charise Clay, Main Street Manager
Dieuvalda Lamartiniere, Economic Development Staff Assistant

- III. **ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA WITH ANY ADDITIONS / DELETIONS:** Victoria Williams made a motion to adopt the agenda as submitted. Felicia Davis seconded the motion. The motion unanimously passed.

IV. **STRATEGIC RETREAT**

REVIEW OF GOALS AND WARM-UP – ROCHELLE B. DENNIS, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DIRECTOR

Chairman Hector Gutierrez called the Strategic Retreat to order and welcomed attendees. Director Rochelle B. Dennis provided an overview of the retreat's purpose, explaining that the session was designed to provide board members with a comprehensive understanding of the Development Authority's statutory powers, governance responsibilities, financial tools, current projects, and future opportunities. She noted that the retreat would also serve as an opportunity to discuss the Authority's strategic direction and priorities for FY 2026-2027 and beyond.

Director Dennis reviewed the key topics to be addressed during the retreat, including the Development Authority's structure, powers, and legal authority; board roles, responsibilities, and governance best practices; fiduciary duties, ethics, and compliance requirements; current Development Authority projects, properties, and initiatives; financial capabilities and economic development tools such as bond financing, PILOT agreements, and tax abatements; economic development trends and opportunities impacting Forest Park; and strategic priorities, board goals, and future initiatives.

Director Dennis then introduced Kathryn Lookofsky of the Carl Vinson Institute of Government, who facilitated discussions regarding Development Authority powers, governance, and board responsibilities. Staff and legal counsel also provided updates on current projects, financial tools, and strategic opportunities available to the Authority.

The retreat was conducted to strengthen the Board's understanding of its role and responsibilities, provide context for future decision-making, and establish priorities that will guide the Authority's work moving forward.

Following Board Member introductions, Director Dennis facilitated the Asset Auction Warm-Up Activity as an interactive exercise designed to encourage board members to think strategically about the community's strengths and opportunities. Participants were provided with a list of community, economic, and organizational assets and asked to "bid" on the assets they believed would have the greatest impact on future economic growth and community prosperity. Through discussion and prioritization, board members identified the assets they considered most valuable for advancing the City's economic development goals. The activity helped establish a shared understanding of key community resources, highlighted areas of

consensus, and provided insight into the board's priorities for future planning and investment decisions.

The Board's activity outcomes were:

- Downtown Revitalization
- Housing & Mixed-Use
- Arts, Culture & Community Identity
- Higher Ed & STEM
- Redevelopment of Underutilized Property

DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY STRUCTURE & POWERS – KATHRYN LOOKOFKSY, CARL VINSON INSTITUTE OF GOVERNMENT

Kathryn Lookofsky of the Carl Vinson Institute of Government provided an overview of the Development Authority's mission, statutory authority, powers, and responsibilities under Georgia law. The presentation highlighted the Authority's role in promoting economic development, job creation, private investment, and redevelopment opportunities within the City of Forest Park.

Discussion included board governance, member roles and responsibilities, fiduciary duties, ethics requirements, and best practices for effective board leadership. Board members reviewed their obligations related to stewardship of public assets, decision-making, transparency, and compliance with applicable laws and policies.

Special emphasis was given to the distinct statutory roles, powers, and responsibilities of the Development Authority and the Downtown Development Authority, including the separation of powers between the two entities and the importance of maintaining clear governance boundaries while coordinating efforts to achieve the City's economic development objectives.

Board members engaged in discussion regarding how these tools and authorities can be strategically utilized to advance economic development goals and support future growth opportunities within the community.

DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY PROJECTS AND PRIORITIES- ROCHELLE B. DENNIS, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DIRECTOR

Director Rochelle B. Dennis provided an overview of the Development Authority's current projects, initiatives, and strategic priorities. The presentation included a review of active economic development efforts, redevelopment initiatives, and projects intended to support investment, job creation, and long-term growth within the City of Forest Park.

Director Dennis also reviewed Development Authority-owned properties and assets, discussing their current status, potential redevelopment opportunities, and their role in advancing the Authority's economic development mission. Information was provided regarding existing agreements, incentive commitments, partnership

arrangements, and other obligations that support ongoing development activities and organizational objectives.

The Board received an update on future development opportunities and the Authority's project pipeline, including prospective projects, strategic partnerships, and emerging opportunities for investment and redevelopment. Discussion focused on aligning resources and priorities to maximize economic impact, support community goals, and position the Authority to respond to future development opportunities.

DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY FINANCIAL CAPABILITIES – KIRBY GLAZE, ESQ, BOARD ATTORNEY, TONY LAMAR, SENIOR ACCOUNTANT AND ROCHELLE B. DENNIS, DIRECTOR OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Senior Accountant, Tony Lamar provided an overview of budgeting, financial reporting, accountability, stewardship, and focus areas for continued improvement which included:

- Manage revenue and expenditure fluctuations proactively
- Improve financial reporting clarity and consistency
- Strengthen internal controls and documentation practices
- Leverage data and technology for better fiscal management

The session also included an overview of the economic development tools and incentives available to the Authority, including bond financing, tax abatements, PILOT agreements, property acquisition and disposition, and other mechanisms used to support business attraction, expansion, and redevelopment initiatives. Board members engaged in discussion regarding how these tools can be strategically utilized to advance economic development goals and support future growth opportunities within the community.

Director Dennis presented the amended FY26-27 Development Authority Budget reflecting the anticipated \$225,000 retainage from the annual PILOT payment revenue.

Daniel Ray Allen made a motion to approve the \$1,414,250 FY26-27 Development Authority Budget. Lois Wright seconded the motion. Victoria Williams abstained. The motion passed.

DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY FOWARD – ROCHELLE B. DENNIS, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DIRECTOR

The Board participated in a facilitated visioning discussion focused on identifying future priorities, potential projects, strategic partnerships, and initiatives that could advance economic development within the City of Forest Park. The discussion emphasized opportunities to strengthen the Development Authority's role in

supporting redevelopment, investment, and long-term community growth.

Board members identified downtown revitalization as a key priority and discussed opportunities related to the redevelopment of 842 Main Street, including the potential development of a container park concept.

Additional discussion focused on redevelopment opportunities at 850 Main Street, the potential future use of 1000 Main Street, the preservation and attraction of retail uses within the downtown district, and improvements to existing public gathering spaces and plazas. Members also discussed the importance of coordinating with the Planning and Community Development Department to streamline processes associated with container-based development projects.

The Board explored strategies to leverage downtown successes to attract additional housing, restaurant, and retail investment. Members discussed the concept of creating a local development and investment framework like those utilized by larger economic development organizations, with the goal of supporting catalytic redevelopment projects and encouraging private-sector investment.

Discussion also highlighted several community assets that members believe are currently underutilized, including parks and open spaces, public art, and workforce and job training resources. Board members noted the importance of incorporating these assets into future economic development and placemaking efforts.

The Board reviewed the importance of maintaining the Development Authority's financial stability over the next one- to five-year period while remaining focused on its statutory mission and redevelopment objectives. Priority redevelopment opportunities discussed included 890 Conley Road, 850 Main Street, and the identification of a collaborative project involving the Development Authority, Downtown Development Authority, Urban Redevelopment Agency, and the City of Forest Park, with 842 Main Street identified as a potential opportunity for joint action.

Board members expressed interest in making a strategic investment in a catalytic redevelopment project within the next 12 months. Chairman Hector Gutierrez proposed quarterly coordination meetings among the chairs of the Development Authority, Downtown Development Authority, and Urban Redevelopment Agency to improve communication, alignment, and collaboration among the City's economic development entities.

Additional discussion focused on strategies to address blighted commercial properties and encourage reinvestment, including exploring financial tools and redevelopment approaches that could support property improvements while preserving affordability and long-term economic viability for existing businesses.

The discussion concluded with the identification of action items and next steps to further evaluate redevelopment opportunities, strengthen interagency collaboration, and advance projects that support the City's long-term economic development

goals.

Felicia Davis made a motion directing staff and the Development Authority attorney to explore all options to transfer and or collaborate with the Downtown Development Authority for the development of 850 Main Street. Daniel Ray Allen seconded the motion. The motion unanimously passed.

The Board asked staff to provide the following items:

- A list of all current Development Authority bills amortized through the end of calendar year. Additionally, send it to John Wiggins and Tony Lamar.
- Send DA billboard location and lease agreements
- Send the City's current Comprehensive & LCI plan
- Send the current draft of the Digital Realty Community Benefits Agreement
- Send the approved expanded URA boundary
- Send URA concept for 330 Forest Parkway
- Explore with a consultant a comprehensive Economic Development Plan
- Installation of private property and no parking sign at 670 Main Street.
- Share DA & DDA property list.

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

VII. ADJOURNMENT: Chairman Hector Gutierrez adjourned the Development Authority Strategic Retreat at 3:56 p.m.

In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, those requiring accommodation for meetings should notify the City Clerk's Office at least 24 hours before the meeting at 404-366-1555.