



CITY OF
FORESTPARK

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

Monday, August 3, 2026, at 7:00 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
Carl Geffken, 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 7:00 p.m.
- II. **INVOCATION/PLEDGE**
- III. **ROLL CALL - CITY CLERK** All members were present except Councilmember Gunn.
- IV. **ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA WITH ANY ADDITIONS / DELETIONS**
Motion to adopt the Agenda was made by Councilmember James; seconded by Councilmember Gutierrez. The motion passed unanimously 4-0.
- V. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**
 1. **Council Approval of the Work Session Meeting Minutes from July 20, 2026**
Council Approval of the Regular Session Meeting Minutes from July 20, 2026
Motion to approve the Minutes was made by Councilmember Akins-Wells; seconded by Councilmember Gutierrez. The motion passed unanimously 4-0.
- VI. **CEREMONIAL - Mayor's Presentation**
Mayor Ellison recognized Council Aides Tenisha Dixon and Andre Henry for their service and presented them with awards of appreciation.
- VII. **CITY CLERK'S REPORT**
Ms. Holiday referenced the upcoming runoff election for Congressional District 13, and presented the map to clear up confusion, noting voters contacted the city last week, and visited

the Senior Center in an attempt to vote; however, the City of Forest Park, while in Clayton County, is not included in the 13th District area.

VIII. CITY MANAGER'S REPORT

Mr. Geffken noted it has been a very busy week, and he has hit the ground running, meeting with Department Directors and other employees; noted he was tasked by the Mayor & Council to review the city's organizational structure and has recommended the City Clerk and Code Enforcement to operate as separate stand-alone departments; noted the Grants Administrator item will be placed on the next Agenda for consideration; referenced meetings with the Economic Development Department and gaining insight on Boards and Committees; meetings with the Community Development and Planning & Zoning Departments and gaining insight on Business License and OpenGov; attended the Downtown Development Authority Retreat, and met the city's Financial Advisor, Ed Wall; reviewed the City Center Project and will bring an update to the Mayor & Council during the 2nd meeting in September, and will include Phase I of Starr Park.

IX. PUBLIC COMMENTS (All Speakers will have 3 Minutes)

Ms. Michelle Copeland commented that the decision to have alcohol served and sold at city events should be based on a consensus of the public; noted residents are not receiving the city newsletter and are not informed about city events and information and requested the newsletter return to distribution.

Ms. Beverly Ector complained about the smell, noise and trash coming from trucks entering and exiting the transfer station, noting the trucks leave debris, smell and block the entrance to their driveway; noted this has been going on for years and has greatly affected the quality of life for her family, making it unsafe for kids to come out and play; and asked for help from the city.

Councilmember Wells noted she has spoken with the homeowner on numerous occasions and stated that while she cares about the Waste Management Representative, she cares more for the residents; noted she has also complained and visited Ms. Ector's home and has seen where the ceiling was falling in and cracks, noting the concerns were made known to the previous City Manager (Clark); noted no one would want to leave there in these conditions and while it is not in her Ward, she is not ignoring that impact that this is having on the residents, and asked Mr. Geffen to look into this issue and try to come up with a solution, noting something as simple as washing down the streets will help Mr. Duane Thomas, founder of the Change Center Mentoring Group, spoke about making an investment in the youth, noting he has been speaking with Mr. Maxwell, Director of Parks and Recreation and stated that he will bring forward a request to the City Council during the August 17th meeting to enter into a partnership to provide mentoring, tutoring and other year-round services; also referenced a TurnAround Toolkit proposal as discussed with Councilman Gutierrez.

X. OLD BUSINESS

2. **Council Consideration of Ordinance Amending Title 9, Chapter 6 (Peddlers and Solicitors) of the City of Forest Park Code of Ordinances. (Citywide)** – Presented by: SaVaughn Irons-Kumassah, Planning and Community Development
Background/History: The proposed ordinance revises Title 9, Chapter 6 of the City of Forest Park Code of Ordinances governing commercial solicitors, peddlers, transient

merchants, charitable solicitations, and mobile food vendors to modernize existing regulations, improve administrative procedures, and provide greater clarity for applicants, City staff, and the public.

The ordinance was originally presented to the Mayor and Council at the July 20, 2026, Council Meeting but was tabled to allow for additional revisions regarding constitutionally protected religious activities. The ordinance has been revised to clarify exemptions for certain religious solicitation activities and to expressly provide that its provisions shall be applied in a manner consistent with applicable constitutional protections. The ordinance is being resubmitted for the Mayor and Council's consideration.

Motion to approve was made by Councilmember James; seconded by Councilmember Gutierrez. The motion passed unanimously 4-0.

XI. NEW BUSINESS

3. **Presentation: Mayor's Reading Club** – Presented by Samaria Wilkins, Executive Assistant to Mayor & City Manager and Mayor Ellison
Background/History: Staff will provide an overview of the Mayor's Reading Club: Little ROOTS, a literacy initiative established under Mayor Ellison's youth engagement efforts and aligned with the national Mayor's Reading Club program. The presentation will highlight planned reading and family engagement activities for the upcoming school year, including reading events, a bookmark contest, virtual reading opportunities, and a summer reading program.

Ms. Wilkins presented the coloring book (ROOTS) *Reading Opens Opportunities To Succeed*, advocating for early childhood literacy, focusing on reading on level by third grade; noted the Mayor's Reading Club as a national civic initiative that empowers local leaders to champion childhood literacy. Its goals are to promote a culture of reading, engage families in literacy activities, and connect local government with youth development initiatives; noting childhood literacy is one of the strongest predictors of future academic success. Third grade represents a critical transformation from learning to *read* to *reading* to learn; identified youth development and literacy as one of her key priorities, through Little Roots, which stands for Reading Opens Opportunities to Succeed. Mayor Ellison sets out to encourage reading among Forest Park youth, create opportunities for family engagement, celebrate our community through literacy. Develop literacy programs that are both impactful and sustainable. This initiative reflects Mayor Ellison's commitment to investing in our youngest residents and creating meaningful learning opportunities. This school year is full of new programming for our little readers, including classroom events, a bookmark design contest, virtual reading opportunities, and summer reading in the park. Mayor Ellison's original goal was to provide a book to every participating third-grade child, so we found a way to turn a challenge into an opportunity. After evaluating costs, we sought more sustainable solutions that would reach more children, reflect our community, and encourage creativity and learning. The result became a labor of love and an opportunity to create something uniquely for Forest Park. Introducing Greetings from Forest Park, our landmarks. Greetings from Forest Park is a fun and educational coloring book created for the children and families of Forest Park. The book invites young readers to discover iconic landmarks, beautiful parks, and community

gathering spaces that make Forest Park unique. Each page encourages children to explore their city while expressing their creativity and imagination. The book also promotes a love for reading, learning, and community. Above all, the book celebrates the pride, history, and spirit of Forest Park. It reminds children that great adventures can begin in their own hometown, and that they are an important part of Forest Park's story.

Mayor Ellison thanked Samaria McCoy Wilkins for the illustrations, along with Forest Park photos; and announced that everyone present will receive a coloring book as they leave the meeting; noting this is Volume 1 and looks forward to Volume 2 and Volume 3, with so much to share about Forest Park.

4. **Council Consideration of an Ordinance Amending Title 9 (Licensing and Regulation), Chapter 1 (General Provisions), Chapter 3 (Pawnbrokers), Chapter 7 (Massage Establishments), and Chapter 12 (Adult Entertainment Establishments) of the City of Forest Park Code of Ordinances. (Citywide) - Planning and Community Development**

Background/History: As part of the Planning & Community Development Department's ongoing efforts to evaluate and improve the City's regulatory framework, staff, in coordination with the City Attorney, conducted a comprehensive review of Title 9 (Licensing and Regulation) to identify opportunities for modernization, clarification, and improved administrative efficiency. The proposed ordinance amends Chapter 1 (General Provisions), Chapter 3 (Pawnbrokers), Chapter 7 (Massage Establishments), and Chapter 12 (Adult Entertainment Establishments) to modernize and clarify the City's licensing and regulatory requirements. The amendments update licensing standards, application requirements, administrative procedures, and enforcement provisions to improve consistency, enhance operational efficiency, and ensure the City's regulations remain responsive to current business practices and applicable state law. As part of this effort, the City's business license application has also been revised to align with the ordinance amendments and provide a more efficient application process for both applicants and staff.

Motion to approve was made by Councilmember James; seconded by Councilmember Gutierrez. The motion passed unanimously 4-0.

5. **Council Consideration of an Ordinance Amending Title 9 (Licensing and Regulation), Chapter 2 (Alcoholic Beverages) of the City of Forest Park Code of Ordinances. (Citywide) - Planning and Community Development**

Background/History:

As part of the Planning & Community Development Department's ongoing efforts to evaluate and improve the City's regulatory framework, staff, in coordination with the City Attorney, conducted a comprehensive review of Title 9, Chapter 2 (Alcoholic Beverages) to identify opportunities for modernization, clarification, and improved administrative efficiency. The proposed ordinance amends Chapter 2 of Title 9 of the City of Forest Park Code of Ordinances to modernize and clarify the City's alcoholic beverage regulations. The amendments update licensing classifications, application and operational requirements, enforcement provisions, and other regulatory standards to improve administrative efficiency, promote consistency with state law, and support responsible business operations while protecting the public health, safety, and welfare. The alcohol

license application and related administrative forms are currently being updated to align with the proposed ordinance amendments.

Motion to approve was made by Councilmember James; seconded by Councilmember Gutierrez: Motion passed unanimously 4-0.

XII. PUBLIC HEARING – Rules Read by the City Clerk

Motion to open the Public Hearing was made by Councilmember James; seconded by Councilmember Gutierrez. The motion passed unanimously 4-0.

6. Council and Decision on Case # RZ-2026-02- Rezoning Request for 0 Conrad Ave from Planned Industrial (PI) District to General Commercial (GC) District. (Ward 1) - Planning and Community Development

Background/History: The Applicant is requesting to rezone approximately 1.17+/- acres located at 0 Conrad Avenue from Planned Industrial (PI) to General Commercial (GC) to allow for the development of a proposed four-story mixed-use commercial building consisting of hospitality, retail, restaurant, and office uses. The subject property is currently vacant and undeveloped and is proposed to be developed with approximately 43,500 square feet of commercial space, including associated parking, internal circulation, and stormwater management facilities.

The Applicant purchased the property in 2021 when it was zoned for commercial use. During the City's subsequent zoning ordinance and official zoning map update, the property was rezoned to the Planned Industrial (PI) District, creating the need for the current rezoning request to accommodate the proposed development. The property is bordered by General Commercial (GC) zoning to the west, Planned Industrial (PI) zoning to the east and south, and property located outside the municipal limits to the north. Because the property directly adjoins commercially zoned property, the proposed rezoning would not create an isolated commercial zoning district and would facilitate the redevelopment of a vacant property while promoting additional commercial investment within the City.

After reviewing the request and the applicable zoning and development standards, staff recommended approval of the rezoning subject to conditions intended to address transportation, site design, parking, circulation, buffering, and compliance with the City's development standards. The Planning Commission conducted a public hearing on July 16, 2026, and recommended approval of the rezoning request, subject to the following conditions:

1. Traffic Impact Study
2. Site Plan Review
3. Parking Compliance
4. Loading, Circulation, and Access
5. Landscaping, Buffering, and Screening
6. Urban Design Review Board (UDRB) Approval
7. General Compliance

Speakers in Favor: Mr. Barry Dunlap (Applicant), and Mr. Carl Evans

Speakers Opposed: None

Motion to close the Public Hearing was made by Councilmember Akins-Wells; seconded by Councilmember James. The motion passed unanimously 4-0.

Motion to approve RZ-2026-02 was made by Councilmember Wells; seconded by Councilmember Gutierrez. The motion passed unanimously 4-0.

7. **Council Discussion to approve Case # CUP-2026-03 - Conditional Use Permit for 957 Astor Ave to establish a childcare center within the Single-Family Residential District (RS) (Ward 2).** - Planning and Community Development

Background/History:

The applicant is requesting approval of a Conditional Use Permit to establish a childcare center at 957 Astor Avenue, located within the Single-Family Residential (RS) District in Ward 2. The site was previously used as a childcare facility but has been vacant for approximately four years. The property formerly operated as a daycare center under prior ownership, and the request represents the continuation of a long-standing community-serving use rather than the introduction of a new land use.

The applicant is currently under contract to purchase the property and is seeking approval from the Mayor and Council to operate the facility as Little Blossoms Learning Academy. The applicant also plans to improve the site through cosmetic renovations, interior updates, routine maintenance, educational equipment upgrades, and other minor enhancements intended to improve the appearance and functionality of the existing facility. No additions to the building or significant site modifications are proposed. Pursuant to Section 8-8-28 of the City of Forest Park Zoning Ordinance, pre-kindergarten facilities and daycare centers require a Conditional Use Permit to operate within the Single-Family Residential (RS) District.

On July 16, 2026, the Planning Commission reviewed the request and voted to recommend approval, subject to the following conditions:

1. Development in Accordance with Approved Site Plan
2. Parking and Circulation Compliance
3. No Expansion of Use Without Approval
4. Licensing and Regulatory Compliance
5. Property Maintenance

Speakers in Favor: Ms. Atiya Harris (Applicant)

Speakers Opposed: None

Motion to close the Public Hearing was made by Councilmember Akins-Wells; seconded by Councilmember James. The motion passed unanimously 4-0.

Motion to approve CUP-2026-03 was made by Councilmember Wells; seconded by Councilmember James. The motion passed unanimously 4-0.

8. **Council Discussion to approve Case #TA-2026-02 Text Amendment for Title 8. Planning and Development, Chapter 7. Subdivisions, Article G. – Planning & Community Development Department Fee Schedule, Section 8-7-81. Fee Schedule. (Citywide) - Planning and Community Development**

Background/History: Following the adoption of the Public Arts Review Board by the Mayor and City Council, the Planning & Community Development Department is requesting an amendment to Section 8-7-81 to recognize the Public Arts Review Application within the City's Planning & Community Development Fee Schedule. The proposed amendment establishes a \$75.00 application fee to assist with the administrative costs associated with processing applications and facilitating the public art review process. The Planning Commission held a public hearing and recommended approval of the proposed text amendment on July 16, 2026.

Motion to approve \$75 Fee was made by Councilmember Akins-Wells; seconded by Councilmember James. The motion passed unanimously 4-0.

XIII. CLOSING COMMENTS BY GOVERNING BODY

Ward 3 – Councilmember Gutierrez commented as follows: Thank you, everybody, for coming tonight. I just wanted to speak on some of the public comments. As far as the you know the, I think the transfer station, that's something that I don't want you to feel like we're ignoring you. That's something that we just haven't found a solution for. I think moving it out of there was going to cost us a lot of money and something we couldn't afford at the time when that option was presented to us. I think another option was buying out like a certain proximity as a city and relocating people. That was another option presented. I honestly don't have the answer for you right now, but it's something that I wouldn't want to live there, and I don't want you. I don't think that's fair that you should live there either with everything that you have mentioned. So, I know that's a task that we're going to task our new city manager with, and our city attorney to see what we can do. Definitely bring you all the residents in and see what it is that you want to do, because ultimately you live there. But not in defense of waste management, but that's that was there I think before Alan came. That was a decision that was made a long time ago, and that was placed there. I'm not justifying it. I think they can maybe do better, but I think we just need to communicate more with what the expectations are of him, any time that I've asked him for anything, he's been there supporting. So, thank you for being vocal. Those things that you brought up-the noise, the smells-those are all things that I'm going to have a conversation with him to see how we can, you know, at least until we find a solution for that address, ma'am. So, thank you for coming and bringing that to our attention. And then, Mr. Duane Thomas, thank you for coming up and bringing that potential partnership. I've seen you work in our community, and you know you changed a lot of lives at the school I work at, and I know at the neighboring school with the Change Center Mentoring Group, you put money out of your own pocket to build that space up on Main Street when you had it. So, just thank you for investing in our city, and you know I look forward to seeing what you and Director Maxwell will come up with. I know you have a good group of young men already that you're mentoring here, so I'm thankful for that. So, thank you for continuing to believe in them because in life you just sometimes it just takes one person to believe in you, and it makes a huge difference. Other than that, I turned 40 years old July 14th, and I'm just.... thank you. Yeah, so I'm just grateful, honestly. Grateful with so many things in my life, my family, my community, and just excited. I started watching a new show, Watch Dogs on YouTube, keeping Forest Park accountable. I think you know I don't agree 100% with everything they're saying. I would love to fill in any gaps they have, but when

people take charge and they you know hold elected officials accountable and they ask questions, that's what we need more of. So, you know when you look at our numbers, our voting numbers are very low in Forest Park. That's something that I'm not proud of in our community. I'm very proud of many things. I'm not proud of how we come out and vote. I think we need to come out in greater numbers, and because that's going to lead to having people that align with the values of the community. So that's something we can do better on. Hopefully, you know we have an upcoming election. I don't think we vote on this one, right? Clerk Holiday, that one's out of our region.

Clerk Holiday confirmed Forest Park is not in Congressional District 13.

Councilman Gutierrez continued with his comments: We have a back-to-school events, and today was the first day of school. Very energetic. Our babies came into the building, and I was not ready. I'm going to be honest. Sixth graders always just have that little elementary school vibe. Had a few in trouble already. I don't even know how that happened. How fast that was. Might have broken the record, but you know, it's just an adjustment period. Our beautiful school. If y'all haven't gotten a tour yet at Forest Park Middle School. It is a state-of-the-art building, over \$90 million dollars invested here in our community, so our students can learn. They have many STEM things. All of our district is certified in STEM, so they're learning some state-of-the-art, you know, education. So, if anybody ever wants a tour, please let me know. I don't mind showing you around and what we have there in our building. So, with that being said, we are having a back-to-school event this Friday. Of course, we're having our food truck Friday event, but at the end of the month, with my colleague, our school board member Victoria Williams, aka my boss, we're hosting an event in Ward Three on Jonesboro Road, the spot with the it's known as a vignette spot. It's got some good vignettes and some good omelets, but it's a breakfast spot over there in Ward Three on Jonesboro Road. We're going to be hosting that event there. So, with that being said, I think yep, that's our flyer. We're on the whole Spider-Man vibe. If you haven't watched the old one, you haven't seen the new one. You can come and watch this one, so then you're up to date with what we got going on. So that's everything for me. Thank you all so much. Of course, feel free to adopt a road we're still going on, going strong with that. Next time, I'm going to add some actual pictures. Tenisha and Andre, let's put some pictures of some actual signs we already got, and then shout out to them, yo! Like I just want to give it up for Tenisha and Andre. I really love those two. I don't even I wouldn't even function as an elected official without them. I'm going to be 100% with them. They are so well deserving of that. I call them all the time with all these ideas. Some people call me the idea fairy because I just dump all these ideas on them, and then they execute everything. So, I'm just so thankful that we have people that care about our city and are genuinely executing everything that we do. So, shout out to them. Shout out to our staff. Thank you for everything we do. We're still mourning the loss of Ms. Tonya, which was a very big blow to our city. So, you know our condolences again to her family, and you know just y'all, we got a lot of things going on. Make sure you hug people, tell them you love them. Don't hesitate to do things like that because you never know when it could be someone's last day. Thank you

Ward 4 – Councilmember Akins-Wells commented as follows: Thank you, Councilman. I was going to hold your finger up in the Baptist Church to walk out. Oh, I thought I was about to do that to Hector, but it's a little joke. But thank you so much for everything that you said, Councilman. That last part is so crazy that you said that because I actually took a screenshot today on Facebook and because I have a thing like no matter what I'm going through and we all

go through things but no matter what I'm going through I always take time to compliment someone or like hey you cute today, or I like your hair, I like those shoes, everybody know I love my tennis shoes, but you just never know what you can do to brighten someone's day and that's part of me working on me and being a better individual is to help someone else be feel better about themselves as well. So, thank you for that. I do want to piggyback off of a lot of things you said as far as Tenisha and Andre. Lord Jesus, we have our own text message thread. Like that's how much I know I get on their nerves. Like I don't even have time to send an email. I'm just going to shoot y'all a text, and but they are so deserving. And a lot of times, people look at titles. I don't. I don't believe in respecting people, treating people like people based on their titles. And I always tell my friends that I grew up with, like I don't care about the council. Call me Shantay. That's what all my friends call me. My family, I don't care about the title. A title does not make me. I believe in treating the CEO and the janitor the same way because we're all human, and a lot of times they get put down here because people don't see the work that they're that they do. And just like Councilmember Gutierrez said, "We just give them the idea, and they bring it into fruition. And so, I just want to say thank you so much, Andre and Tenisha, for everything that you all do. You are very deserving of the award, and thank you, Mayor, for recognizing that we have a real mayor. Thank you, thank you so much for that, and Ms. Ector, I want to speak again about the Waste Management issue. I again want to make sure that the city is being held accountable. So, if Waste Management says that they're not going to do it or they can't do it, the least we can do is get some company or someone to come in and scrub these streets because it's embarrassing. It's nasty, and we need to be held accountable for, and as well as look at the other issues. And I know at one point we were talking about doing the land swap. There's something we can do. You have to have people that has the have the same vision that actually want to get it done. So, it's not such a thing as oh we can't do anything. We can't yet. Just got to have the people that want to make it happen, and so hopefully with Mr. Geffken, he can help us make that happen. It's a blessing to actually have you here, and I just want to speak on the back-to-school event. So, you know, I do my back-to-school event every year. Couldn't have done it again without Tenisha and Andre, the Public Works employees, who come out there and work so hard to make sure these events are successful. We were able to supply 100 - 160 book bags, and I still have supplies. If you know of a kid that needs some supplies, please let me know. I was delivering at 9o'clock last night, so please let me know if you all need anything or know anyone that needs them, and just to say about Ms. Copeland, to your response to the people, I always say we're a voice for the people. It's not about what we want, but it's about what you want because at the end of the day, you all are our bosses. So, when Councilwoman James says I'm getting complaints, where are these complaints coming from? Tell the people to come because we work for them. At these events, I know events that I've done, and I know the city events Ms. Rochelle's department has done, they do the event on Main Street, these are successful events. I have never ever heard a resident complain about them. So, when you say complaining and you are getting these issues, please just let us know so that we can address them because none of them have had any issues. These are peaceful events that the community love. I don't see how anyone could want to change that. So, thank you so much, Ms. Copeland, for your comments and being a concerned resident and actually knowing that we are you all's voice. You know, so thank you so much, and I think that is oh, Officer Thomas. Thank you, thank you so much for everything that you do, and I hope Director Maxwell and you all can come together. And please let me know if

it's anything that I can do to assist because I would like to see young ladies to be a part of that as well. I remember when I was elected, and I'm going to close it because I don't want nobody to hold their finger up on me, and this is a transparent moment because when I got in office, so you have kids, both sexes, male and females, who go through things, who have been molested as kids, and I was one of those kids from five to nine, and so when I first got in office, I was I never forget. I was speaking to one of the councilmembers who sat up here, and she asked me what was one of the things that I wanted to do when I got in office. And I said I want to work with young girls who went through some of the things that I went through, so that I can help them because I wish I had that help and I didn't have it. And she told me that I wasn't a doctor, I wasn't a therapist, and so I need to go towards something else, and so it kind of discouraged me a little bit. So, if there is anything that I can do to assist you with you all's initiative, please let me know. I would love to help. Thank you and God bless you for everything that you do. Oh, sorry, got caught up in the moment, the Job Fair. So, the Annual Job Fair. It's been such a pleasure working with Ms. Rochelle Dennis and team, this is our second time. Last year was absolutely amazing. Like it turned out so good. And so, the next job fair we are hosting will be Thursday, August the 13th, from 9 a.m. to 12, and it's going to be in the gym. So, if you know someone that is in need of a job, if employees want to participate, please, please, please let us know. It's going to be a successful event. The last one was a successful event. And Ms. Michelle Dennis, thank you so much for everything that you and your department do to make our initiative successful as well. And Forest Park Day, another event, Councilwoman James, that the people love. The people love it. Forest Park Day is one of the biggest events where thousands of people come out. And again, I've been doing Forest Park Day, I think, for 12 or 13 years. It gets bigger and bigger every year. Attorney Danny Nagel is one of the huge sponsors. He pays for almost everything. Like he does an amazing job. He's and I are both from Forest Park. Well, we grew up in Forest Park, went to elementary, middle school, and high school. And this is just two young kids from Forest Park that want to give back to our community in a positive way, and it brings everybody to together. And so, please join us on August 15th. It's an all-day event. Free things for the kids. It's just amazing. A lot of entertainment. Wrestling match. The kids love wrestling matches. But make sure you all tell a neighbor. You can set up your tents. It's like a big Forest Park reunion. That's what Forest Park Day is. Make sure you all come out. And last, well, is Fun Friday, August 21st. What we have is kind of like a Wind Down Wednesday. I think they do that in East Point, but it's just we have the live band out there. We have drinks. One of our businesses come out there and they set up and they're licensed, and we've never had any issues. And I've been doing this, I think for ten years maybe without one incident, without one complaint, and so again, if you let your neighbors know, y'all come out and just fellowship with your community. This is your community. These are events for you all. It's not for me. So, Chat Chew and Connect with Councilwoman Wells, August 28th. This is just you know, like I said, residents, we work for you all. You all are our bosses, and everyone can't make it to the council meetings. Everyone is not on social media. Everyone you know is not tech savvy, and so I want to make sure that you know that I am available to you, and so I will be out on August 28th in the Willie Finch Community. Garden, and we'll just fellowship, chat, chew, and connect. You let me know what your issues are so that we can get them addressed and know that Councilwoman Wells is here and I am accessible. Thank you all so much, and have a blessed night.

Ward 5 – Councilmember Mears commented as follows: Well, I make mine short and sweet. We always have to keep in the back of our minds our public safety people, our fire, and police people. We had a breakfast brunch Saturday with the fire department over on Station Three. It was very informative. We had a lot of good information about the rescues, numbers, ambulance upgrades, and everything. So, always keep it in the back of your mind. I've been here like Wells in Forest Park a long time, and we have come a long way as far as our public safety, and we need to be thankful for that. And we had a good time, and it was really informational too. And always remember, right here's where your money is. So, come help us, and thank you.

Ward 4 - Councilmember Akins-Wells continued with comments as follows: So, I just want to say one more thing. So, I was sitting up here, and I'm honored, like I'm very honored. And received this message, "Good morning, Ms. Latresa. Happy Wednesday." This was sent last week. "I watch you work. I watch your work and the improvements you have brought to the city at Forest Park, and I have nominated you for an Honorary Doctorate, and it was approved. If you're interested in receiving this, please contact me. Send me your information." So, I just want to announce that. So, some people may have an issue with the work that you do, but God sits high and looks low, and people see what others don't. So, thank you so much. I am honored, and I will accept that doctrine.

Ward 1 – Councilmember James commented as follows: All right. So, I want to remind everyone that every third Thursday of the month, this month will be August 20th. We will have our Ward meeting at 5 o'clock. It will be at 696 Main Street, which is the Hartsfield Community Center. We will also have Ms. Victoria Williams, our school board member, that will be present to give out awards to those city employees who have helped with events, included I believe some elected officials that helped. So, she will be recognizing some members of the recreation and leisure department, our council aides, as well as some of our public works Employees. Also, I am soliciting for surveys for those that participated in the Gifts at the Park. I've gotten 41 residents that have participated response so far. So, I'm looking for more. You should have received an email if you were a volunteer. You should have received an email or a text message asking you to respond. We just want to know how we can get better and do more. And I want to thank once again all of the departments that came by for Gifts at the Park. There were a lot people there. I saw Economic Development. I believe I saw some Finance people. Of course, Police was there in force. Firefighters were there in force. So, if I forget anybody, I'm sorry, charge it to my head, not my heart. Thank you all so much for your support of that event. Also, Mr. Geffken, I have got to say that you know when I'm at school, I work with adults, so I always introduce myself as Kimberly James. You know, a lot of our teachers say Ms. Last Name, Carl has kind of changed the bar a little bit when he came in, kind of making us more personable with each other. And I appreciate that. So, now I got to remember everyone's first names because you know we've been grafted to call you by your last name, but I think I do think it's more personal to call you by your first name if you're okay with that, and you can call me that too. Also, one of the things I want to say first, let me go to the Fire Department and echo what Councilmember Mears said. We had a wonderful pancake breakfast put on by the Fire Department, and it was wonderful. All the information I liked the way Chief Clemens pulled out the leaders in her leaders, and all of the leaders participated and talked about the things that they are doing in our community, and the money is. Well spent in the fire department, so we are grateful for that. But there was one particular story that one of the chiefs told, and I'm probably going to bosh it all up. But he talked about a farm hand wanting to hire someone, and he wanted to hire this person, and he asked this person, "Well, why should I hire you? And this person said, "Well, I can sleep through the storm. And so, you know, he decided to go ahead

and hire this person, and then a storm came. The wife got up. It's a storm going on. What's going on? What's going on? So he went to this hired help, and he was sleeping, and what he found out was the animals were put away. Right, everything was boarded up. You know everything was put in place, so he didn't have to worry. The storm was coming, but he was already prepared, and so that story really touched me. It just lets me know where we are as a community, as far as our departments and what we're doing for our city, we are preparing for the storm. We are getting things in order. We're getting things right so that when things happen, we're okay. And so, I took that to heart when he said that to us. I also want to mention something. So, my husband has this thing. I don't know if you all do this, but he watches, I think Ms. Franklin does it, he watches these shows. Well, it's not really shows. They're like stories that I guess it's AI telling stories or whatever, but there's one thing that I heard when I walked by, I said, "rewind that," and I wish I wrote it down and I forgot to bring it with me. So, I'm probably going to botch it up, but it says something like this: A lie only takes a few minutes to destroy someone's name, and a good name sometimes takes a lifetime to build. And I said, rewind that. Let me write that down. I probably wrote it down. I probably wrote it up here wrong, but it's it really resonates with me in how sometimes things are put out there that's wrong, and so I will be in the next few days. Once I gather all the information that I need, we'll be contacting Cox Media Group and 95.5 WSB Radio because there are some things that have been said that are Defamatory when it comes to me and the things that people have put out, and for most part, most people know me and they know my integrity. So, I will speak to something that was something that I said this evening, and one thing that we all can agree on is we are the voice of the people. We are the voice of our community, and it doesn't matter whether I tell you who that person was or who that group was or whatever. I don't have to do that. I just have to be a voice for the people. And one of the things I did not say is that I don't support these events. I did not say that we should not have these events. What I did say is there it has to be a boundary, and it has to be some regulations on where things are done. That's what I said, and so I don't want you to misunderstand that. To say, "Oh, Councilwoman James don't want no alcohol in the park." That's not what I said. So, make sure when you quote me, you quote it correctly. I did not say that. I said that there should not be any alcohol over there where the playground equipment is, and the babies are, and the kids are, you should not walk around with a drink and walk over there where our babies are. That's what I said, and I stand by that. And I don't have to say anybody's name. I don't have to say who told me what. I don't have to do that because I have been elected to speak for my community, and so when my community speaks to me, I will speak on it, and I don't have to say who said what. Okay, I don't have to put anybody out like that. Let's see. One other thing I was going to say. Oh, and I do want to honor Mr. Gregory Haynes who was the first person who bought *Forest Park Day*, back then it was called Rose Town, so he was the originator. So, I want to make honor, make sure we give honor to him for having that event on a regular basis. And what else? Oh, let me speak on youth programs. We have a lot of youth programs in our community. We have a lot of great. People do a lot of great things. What I will say is, you have to know people's fruit, and you have to understand that their fruit will tell them who they are. So, if I'm a mentor and I'm rough housing someone as a mentor without calling their parents, that's a problem. If I am not able to correctly put correct information down and cause someone to be arrested, that is a problem. So, there's things that we have to make sure that we are looking at before we invite people in our community to do certain things under the city's name, and that's all I have to say about that.

Mr. Geffken asked Alan Owens, the Waste Management Representative to address the comments and concerns regarding the Transfer Station.

Mr. Owens commented as follows: Good evening, Madam Mayor, governing body, and City Manager. Again, I know everyone wants to leave, so this is not going to take long. But I agree with Councilman Gutierrez, and I have written down some of the concerns that again I've serviced kind of the city of Forest Park for over 10 years, so I know the property at the transfer station is owned by an entity that is a commercial property by waste management. That doesn't include my purview. I only manage sanitation services for the city and the residents. That's why you see me here. I don't talk all the time, but I sit and listen to the concerns. So, to the residents, I have written those down. The noise, and I will take that back to that entity and to Councilwoman Wells. Kind of mentioned, yeah, there is always that activity and discussions that we can have, and we've always been open to those discussions, talking about Lamar Drive and Cash Memorial. So, I just wanted to again thank you all for allowing me to kind of comment and then just address the residents that we understand their concerns as well. Thank you.

Mayor Ellison commented as follows: Okay, I'm not going to give you my laundry list of things I had but I did want to mention that Rodney Finch had been in the hospital. If some of you did not know, he's always here, and we just want to wish him speedy recovery. And next time that happens, you need to let us know before I hear it after the fact, so we can come and take care of you. Okay. One other thing I will mention. I won't mention all my other things, but Senator Gail Davenport will be honoring one of our original Forest Park residents, Deacon Robert Lockhart, on Sunday, August 30th. We're still looking for a location, so, the location has not been confirmed yet. But he's going to be honored with an intersection in Clayton County in recognition of his outstanding contributions to the community, he was a dedicated advocate for education through his leadership and active involvement in the PTA. And back in those days, the PTA was the governing body, and they worked diligently to keep our kids educated in school and out of jail, so he will be honored. Of course, he's deceased now. He and his wife actually lived to be 100 before she passed away, but very instrumental in in the community of Forest Park, and we look forward to doing that celebration on Sunday, August 30. The time and place will be announced soon. And if all hearts and minds are clear, is there a motion to adjourn this meeting?

XIV. **EXECUTIVE SESSION** - Personnel, Litigation, Real Estate or Cyber Security OCGA § 50-14-1. None.

XV. **ADJOURNMENT** - Motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:25 p.m. was made by Councilmember Akins-Wells; seconded by Councilmember James. The motion passed unanimously 4-0.

Respectfully submitted by:

Vanessa Holiday, City Clerk

Gwendolyn Ellison, Mayor

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.