CITY OF FOREST PARK
URBAN REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY REGULAR MEETING
Thursday, July 9, 2026, at 5:30 PM
City Hall - Council Chambers, Virtual Meeting Via Zoom and YouTube

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City Website
Phone (404) 363.2454

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
745 Forest Parkway
Forest Park, GA 30297

Avery Wilson, Chair
Kimberly James, Vice Chair
Melanie Carter, Board Member
Taylor King, Board Member
Eliot Lawrence, Board Member
Debra Patrick, Board Member
Sherita Sutton, Board Member

VIRTUAL MEETING NOTICE: Meetings will be available on Forest Park's YouTube Channel.

MINUTES

CALL TO ORDER/WELCOME: Chairman Avery Wilson called the Urban Redevelopment Agency Regular meeting to order on July 9, 2026, at 5:30 p.m.

ROLL CALL

PRESENT:
Avery Wilson
Melanie Carter
Eliot Lawrence
Sherita Sutton

ALSO PRESENT:
Danielle Matricardi, Esq., URA Attorney
Rochelle B. Dennis, Economic Development Director
Marvin Hines, Deputy Public Works Director
SaVaughn Irons-Kumassah, Interim Planning & Community Development Director
Tony Lamar, Senior Accountant
Charise Clay, Main Street Manager
Dieuvalda Lamrtiniere, Economic Development Staff Assistant

APPROVAL OF AGENDA WITH ANY ADDITIONS/DELETIONS:
Kimberly James made a motion to approve the agenda with the addition of FY26-27 Budget Amendment under old business. Eliot Lawrence seconded the motion. The motion unanimously

passed.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

1. **Approval of Meeting Minutes for June 11, 2026**
   Eliot Lawrence made a motion to approve the June 11, 2026, Regular Meeting minutes as presented. Melanie Carter seconded the motion. The motion unanimously passed.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

There were no public comments.

LEGAL UPDATE

There were no legal updates.

FINANCE UPDATE

2. **June 2026 Finance Report**
   Senior Accountant Tony Lamar delivered the June 2026 Finance Report.

   As of June 30, 2026, the Urban Redevelopment Authority Fund remained financially stable on a year-to-date basis. Total revenue sources recorded through June were $4,222,134.19, while total expenses were $2,782,905.93. This means revenues and other financing sources exceeded expenses by approximately $1,439,228.26 before considering outstanding encumbrances and project commitments.

   After considering encumbrances of $1,470,515.40, the June financial report shows remaining budgetary flexibility of approximately $142,737.14. While the funds are not in an overall deficit position, the remaining cushion is narrower than it was in May and should be monitored closely before fiscal year-end.

   The strongest positive financial trend continues to be investment income. Investment income reached $1,856,105.63 year-to-date, exceeding the annual budget of $1,500,000.00 by $356,105.63. This investment performance has helped support the fund while other anticipated revenue sources have not yet materialized.

   The primary concerns remain revenue timing, project-related commitments, and the suspected fraud-related bank activity. Lease income remains at $0.00 year-to-date against a budget of $840,000.00, and sale-of property proceeds remain nominal at $100.00 against a budget of $5,000,000.00. These revenue categories should be tracked closely because they represent major assumptions in the URA Fund's annual resource plan.

   The Board discussed moving future discussions related to financial account summaries, statements, and other sensitive financial matters to Executive Session rather than addressing them during the public meeting. It was agreed that these items would be placed on future agendas for Executive Session, as appropriate, until additional information is obtained regarding the matter under review.

OLD BUSINESS

3. **Gun Range Update:**
Deputy Public Works Director Marvin Hines delivered the update.

The targets have been relocated from the east side to the west side of the range, and concrete has been poured to stabilize the target system. Electrical service has also been extended to the targets, and that work is now complete.

The berm has been established and stabilized with grass to prevent erosion. The remaining work consists of constructing a knee wall, which is anticipated to be approximately 36 inches high and built with railroad ties. Staff indicated that the Public Works Department is expected to complete the installation; however, if the scope of work exceeds Public Works' capabilities, a contractor may be engaged.

Staff clarified that the project involves reorienting the existing Police Department gun range by reversing the direction of fire to improve safety and ensure that rounds are directed away from the adjacent roadway. No new range is being constructed; rather, the existing range has been reconfigured.

It was noted that the project is nearing completion, with the majority of the substantive work now finished. Appreciation was expressed to Mr. Hines for stepping in to oversee the project and provide the Board with a comprehensive progress update. Staff anticipates providing a final update at the next meeting once the remaining work has been completed.

A Board member indicated an interest in visiting the site to observe the progress, and staff encouraged the visit and suggested coordinating with the Police Department's Range Master, Lieutenant Anderson.

4. **The Park at Fort Gillem Update**
Rochelle Dennis, Economic Development Director, provided the update.

Staff reported that representatives from TI Asset Management were unable to attend the meeting due to a previously scheduled off-site training and severe weather but conveyed their regrets.

An update was provided on the critical repairs funded through the Board's previously approved $700,000 allocation. Staff advised that the majority of the critical repairs have been completed. Through cost savings realized during the project, TI Asset Management was able to expand the scope of work to include the removal of several trees. Staff explained that tree removal was necessary because mature trees had damaged sidewalks, curbs, and other infrastructure over time. The additional work is expected to improve safety, visibility, and ongoing maintenance throughout the property.

Staff also updated the Board on efforts to secure comprehensive property insurance for Park at Fort Gillem. Over the past several months, staff has worked with the City's risk management consultant and insurance broker to compile the information necessary to obtain coverage for the entire property. The process has included calculating the square footage and estimated replacement value of all 51 buildings on the site, including 50 residential buildings and the leasing office. Staff noted that the age and construction type of the buildings required extensive analysis to develop accurate replacement cost estimates. The completed information has now been submitted to the insurance market, and staff anticipates receiving coverage proposals within the next 30 days.

Staff further advised that discussions are underway with TI Asset Management regarding the enforcement of renter's insurance requirements for tenants. While renter's insurance has historically been required, enforcement has lapsed as many residents are currently on month-to-month leases. Staff is evaluating options to reinstate the requirement as part of the property's overall risk management strategy.

During Board discussion, members commented on the ongoing asphalt repairs and observed that portions of the roadway had been patched while other areas remained in poor condition. Questions were raised regarding the repair methodology, project sequencing, and anticipated timeline for completion. Staff agreed to request a detailed update from TI Asset Management outlining the asphalt repair process, project schedule, and the status of the remaining roadway improvements for presentation at a future meeting.

5. **Park at Fort Gillem Master Redevelopment Update**
Rochelle Dennis, Economic Development Director, provided the update.

Staff reported that Valentino is completing the survey work for the Park at Fort Gillem redevelopment project. Although the survey was nearing completion, TSW, the consultant preparing the master redevelopment plan, requested additional information to support the planning process.

As a result, Valentino has returned to the site to complete the additional survey work, including supplemental field data and CAD files required for the redevelopment planning effort. Staff anticipates the survey will be completed within the next two weeks, at which time TSW will begin the concept redevelopment phase of the master plan.

Staff noted that the survey has taken longer than originally anticipated due to the complexity of the 32-acre site and the level of detail required. The work extends beyond a standard topographic survey and is intended to provide the comprehensive information necessary to support the redevelopment planning process.

No additional questions were raised by the Board.

6. **Grapevine Update**

Charise Clay, Main Street Manager, provided the update.

Staff provided an update on construction progress for The Grapevine Culinary Incubator, noting that the project continues to move forward. The public was encouraged to follow the City's social media platforms for construction updates and behind-the-scenes progress, including recent updates highlighting the interior build-out and tenant recruitment efforts.

Staff reminded the Board that, at a previous meeting, the Urban Redevelopment Agency approved Change Order No. 1 for the replacement of the storefront windows and related finishes, increasing the construction contract by approximately $42,000.

The Board then considered an additional change order related to the drive-thru serving the building's coffee kiosk tenant space. Representatives from Precision Planning, Inc. (PPI), the project's construction administrator, presented two options:

- **Option 1:** Install only the infrastructure necessary to support a future drive-thru system, including conduit, loop detection, and related utilities, at a cost of **$3,861**. The future tenant would be responsible for purchasing and installing the menu board, communication equipment, and related components.
- **Option 2:** Install a complete drive-thru communication system, including the menu board, speaker system, camera, communication controls, and employee headsets, at a cost of **$26,644.85**. Under this option, future tenants would only need to provide their own point-of-sale system.

Staff explained that the original building design included the physical drive-thru window but did not include the infrastructure or communication equipment, as it had originally been anticipated that a future tenant would bear those costs. After further consideration, staff recommended providing the complete system to reduce startup costs for future entrepreneurs and better support the City's business incubation goals.

During Board discussion, members sought clarification on which tenant space would utilize the drive-thru. Staff explained that the system would serve the dedicated coffee kiosk tenant space designed for a coffee shop or similar quick-service concept.

Board members also discussed protecting the City's investment by ensuring that future lease agreements include provisions addressing responsibility for the maintenance, repair, and replacement of the drive-thru equipment. Staff advised that operational policies and lease terms are currently being developed with industry consultants and will address issues such as equipment responsibility, management practices, and other operational considerations.

Eliot Lawrence made a motion to approve Option 2 to install a complete drive-thru communication system. Sherita Sutton seconded the motion. The motion unanimously passed.

7. **NASA Lifeline Mural Update**
Rochelle Dennis, Economic Development Director, provided the update.

Staff provided an update on the NASA Lifelines Mural Project, which was initiated in January 2026 after being introduced by Councilwoman Dolores Gunn as a partnership opportunity with NASA's Lifelines Program and the Atlanta Science Festival. Staff noted that the project represents a unique opportunity to bring public art to the City while promoting science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) through a partnership with NASA.

Staff explained that the Office of Economic Development has served as the project manager, while NASA has maintained responsibility for all major project decisions and funding. Several potential mural locations were identified and presented to NASA for consideration. NASA ultimately selected The Grapevine Culinary Incubator as the preferred location based on visibility and traffic counts. Staff thanked the Urban Redevelopment Agency for approving the installation of the mural on the building.

Staff further reported that several local mural artists were identified and submitted to NASA for review. Following its selection process, NASA chose Richard Martin, a Clayton State University graduate and former Forest Park resident, to complete the mural. The proposed mural design has been submitted to NASA and is currently awaiting final approval.

Although the original project timeline called for completion by June 30, 2026, staff advised that NASA has extended the schedule and has confirmed that the previously committed $8,000 in project funding remains available. Once NASA approves the final mural design, it will establish a revised project schedule and completion timeline.

Upon completion of the mural, a public unveiling ceremony will be coordinated in partnership with the Urban Redevelopment Agency, the City of Forest Park, the Downtown Development Authority, NASA, and Councilwoman Dolores Gunn, who originally brought the project forward.

Staff also reported that efforts are underway to secure a scissor lift for the mural installation, either through City resources or through a local equipment provider, to support the artist during construction.

In response to a Board member's question regarding community involvement, staff confirmed that the City's new STEM middle school has always been envisioned as a project partner and will be included in the mural unveiling and related educational activities.

No further questions were raised by the Board.

8. **Community Development Block Grant Update**
Rochelle Dennis, Economic Development Director, provided the update.

Staff provided an update on the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program and reported that all required grant documentation has been successfully submitted. Staff also advised that the City completed its grant monitoring review and received a favorable outcome with no significant findings.

Staff reminded the Board that the URA previously identified and recovered approximately $396,000 in CDBG funds. During the reconciliation process, an additional $100,000 was identified, bringing the total amount of recovered CDBG funding to approximately $496,000.

Staff reported that the necessary approvals were obtained to reallocate the funds toward infrastructure improvements rather than the previously planned interior design-related expenses. All required submissions and reimbursement requests have been completed, and staff anticipates receiving the reimbursement check from Clayton County in the near future.

Staff expressed appreciation to the Finance Department and all parties involved in successfully completing the grant process and securing the additional funding for the URA.

9. **URA Boundary Expansion Map**
Rochelle Dennis, Economic Development Director, provided the update.

Staff provided an update on the URA boundary expansion and advised that the final approved URA boundary map has been completed. Copies of the updated boundary map were provided to Board members in their meeting packets. Staff noted that the updated map will also be posted on the City's website under the URA webpage.

10. **FY26-27 Budget Amendment**
Rochelle Dennis, Economic Development Director, provided the update.

Staff provided an update regarding the URA's environmental insurance policy and advised that the policy has been finalized, approved, and secured for a five-year term.

Staff explained that the total cost of the policy is approximately $309,000**;** however, the insurance provider invoiced the full five-year premium upfront rather than billing the amount incrementally over the five-year term as originally anticipated during the budgeting process.

In coordination with the Finance Department, staff requested a budget amendment to ensure sufficient funds are available to cover the environmental insurance obligation. Staff requested that the URA amend its FY 2026-2027 budget by $310,000 within the environmental insurance line item to account for the insurance expense and related anticipated needs.

Kimberely James made a motion to amend the FY 2026-2027 URA budget by adding $310,000 to the environmental insurance line item. Eliot Lawrence seconded the motion. The motion unanimously passed.

NEW BUSINESS

11. **IGA Community Development Forest Park Marketplace Analysis Proposal**
Rochelle Dennis, Economic Development Director, provided the update.

Staff provided an update regarding ongoing efforts to recruit a full-service grocery store to the City of Forest Park. Staff explained that, after extensive research, outreach, and conversations with various grocery retailers, the City has been exploring opportunities to identify the best approach for attracting a sustainable grocery option that aligns with the community's demographics and market conditions.

Staff introduced a proposal from the Independent Grocers Alliance (IGA) for a Forest Park marketplace analysis and neighborhood assessment. The proposed $8,500 study would provide a comprehensive evaluation of the City's grocery market feasibility, including demographic analysis, population trends, income analysis, competitive mapping, trade area evaluation, site scoring, retail demand analysis, supportable square footage estimates, sales projections, key challenges, and potential opportunities.

Staff explained that the purpose of the analysis is to provide a data-driven approach to grocery recruitment rather than pursuing specific retailers without understanding market realities. Staff noted that while national retailers such as Publix and Kroger are highly recognizable brands, successful grocery recruitment requires matching a retailer's business model with the community's demographics, trade area, and market demand.

Staff shared that the City has previously explored opportunities with various grocery concepts, including Aldi, but identified challenges related to available sites and ownership. Based on discussions with IGA, staff believes an independent grocer operating under the IGA network may provide a strong opportunity for Forest Park, as the organization has experience supporting grocery concepts in communities with similar characteristics.

Board members discussed previous grocery stores that operated in Forest Park and acknowledged that IGA is familiar with the history and challenges of prior grocery operations in the community. Discussion also included the importance of supporting and marketing existing grocery businesses within the City, including current and future grocery options such as American Food Basket and the planned grocery component at Forest Square.

Board members expressed differing perspectives regarding the value of conducting a formal market analysis. Some members questioned whether the study would lead to actionable results and emphasized the need to ensure that existing businesses receive support and marketing assistance. Other members noted that a well-prepared market analysis can provide valuable data, identify realistic opportunities, and help guide future recruitment efforts when conducted by an experienced organization.

In response to questions, staff advised that there is currently limited interest from independent grocery operators seeking to locate in Forest Park beyond the grocery concept being explored at Forest Square. Staff further explained that the IGA analysis would not only evaluate market conditions but also assist in identifying appropriate grocery operators and recruitment strategies based on the findings.

Sherita Sutton made a motion to approve the expenditure of $8,500 for the Independent Grocers Alliance neighborhood and marketplace analysis. Eliot Lawrence seconded the motion. Melanie Carter and Kimberly James voted no. The motion passed by a 3-2 vote.

12. **Georgia Power Right of Entry Fort Gillem Project #2025080046 (Flankers Road 230 KV Substation)**
Rochelle Dennis, Economic Development Director, provided the update.

Staff presented an addendum to the previously approved Right-of-Entry Agreement with Georgia Power. Staff explained that the agreement had previously been brought before the Board and approved; however, Georgia Power requested modifications to the signature page and has now provided an addendum for consideration.

The Right-of-Entry Addendum authorizes Georgia Power to access the property to perform necessary site preparation activities associated with the installation of transmission line infrastructure. The scope of work includes clearing and removal of trees within the transmission line area, establishing a 150-foot right-of-entry corridor, conducting soil borings, installing transmission line foundations, and setting transmission poles.

Staff clarified that the work is related to providing electrical infrastructure to support the Digital Realty data center and associated substation improvements. Board members discussed the importance of ensuring that the project provides adequate power capacity and does not negatively impact surrounding properties or residents.

Staff confirmed that the addendum is limited to the previously approved agreement and does not represent a new project or change in purpose.

Kimberly James made a motion to approve the Georgia Power Right-of-Entry Addendum as presented. Sherita Sutton seconded the motion. The motion carried with one abstention by Eliot Lawrence.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT UPDATE

12. **Economic Development Director, Rochelle Dennis, delivered the update.**

Staff provided the Board with an economic development update and highlighted several ongoing projects, initiatives, and business recruitment efforts.

Staff reported that **Project Gateway** is currently under consideration as a potential economic development project at Gillem. The project represents a potential logistics/distribution operation with an estimated 100 jobs. Staff advised that discussions are underway regarding a potential tax abatement and inducement resolution, with additional details to be provided as the project progresses.

Staff also reported early discussions regarding a potential residential development opportunity on Main Street, potentially located at the former Zaxby's site. Staff noted that the project remains in the preliminary stages and additional information will be shared as details become available.

Staff announced that the Office of Economic Development is planning its first Economic

Development Mixer, tentatively scheduled for November 5 or 6, 2026. Staff is currently coordinating schedules and will provide additional details once finalized.

Staff provided updates on several business engagement initiatives, including approximately six ribbon-cutting events currently being coordinated. Staff also introduced a new **Business Essentials Welcome Packet** being developed in partnership with the Public Information Office. The resource is intended to provide new businesses with a convenient guide to City services, contacts, and resources. Staff is working to digitize the packet and make it available online.

Staff highlighted continued growth in the City's film activity through **Film Forest Park**, noting additional film projects secured that day. Staff also reminded the Board of upcoming events, including the **Best of Forest Park Awards on December 11, 2026**, and the **second annual Job Fair scheduled for August 13, 2026**.

Staff provided an update on the refresh and rebranding of the City's **Elevate Workforce Development Program**, referred to temporarily as "Elevate 2.0." Staff explained that the program is being redesigned to better connect residents with existing workforce resources throughout Clayton County. Through participation in the Clayton County Workforce Collective, staff identified an opportunity to create a more coordinated approach by leveraging existing workforce programs and resources rather than duplicating services. Staff anticipates a relaunch of the updated program in early fall.

Staff provided updates on several key development projects:

- **794 Main Street (Georgia Utility Contractors Association Training Center):** The property is under contract, and all major contingencies have been addressed. Staff advised that a closing date is being finalized. This project is being managed through the Development Authority and represents a significant investment on Main Street.
- **767-770 Main Street (Florence on Main):** The proposed mixed-use development remains under contract. The project is awaiting the outcome of its DCA tax credit application, with a decision expected in October.
- **803 Main Street (Carter on Main):** Staff reported that the property owner has placed the property on the market. Staff has attempted to contact the owner for additional information and will provide updates as more information becomes available.
- **842 Main Street:** Staff continues to work with Planning & Community Development and Precision Planning, Inc. on a potential container park restaurant concept. Staff advised that zoning considerations remain a primary challenge and that additional work is needed to determine how the concept may align with the City's Main Street Arts and Entertainment District vision.

Staff then announced that **Smoothie King** will be opening at Forest Square on Jonesboro Road. Staff recognized Main Street Manager Charise Clay for her efforts in securing the project. Staff noted that Ms. Clay worked extensively with the franchise representatives for more than a year to identify a suitable location that met the company's specific requirements. After evaluating numerous potential sites, the team successfully secured a location, and Smoothie King is now moving forward with plans to open in Forest Park.

The Board congratulated Ms. Clay on her first major business recruitment project and recognized her dedication and persistence in bringing the new business to the City.

Staff concluded the economic development update by expressing excitement about the continued momentum of projects and business opportunities throughout the City.

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

Avery Wilson made a motion to enter Executive Session at 6:50p.m. Kimberly James seconded the motion. The motion unanimously passed.

Avery Wilson made a motion to exit Executive Session and reconvene the Regular Meeting at 7:09p.m. Kimberly James seconded the motion. The motion unanimously passed.

ADJOURNMENT
Chairman Avery Wilson adjourned the meeting at 7:10 p.m.

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.