



CITY OF FOREST PARK
MAYOR & COUNCIL
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
January 6, 2020 7:00 P.M.

Call to Order:

The Regular Meeting of Mayor and Council of January 6, 2020 was called to order by Mayor Angelyne Butler at 7:12 p.m.

Invocation:

The Invocation was given by Pastor Jeremy Tuck followed by the Pledge of Allegiance to the American Flag.

Present:

Mayor Angelyne Butler
Councilmembers: Kimberly James, Dabouze Antoine, Hector Gutierrez, Latresa Wells and Allan Mears

Also present were City Manager Angela Redding, Director of Finance Ken Thompson, Director of Public Works Jeff Eady, Fire Chief Buckholts, Police Chief Nathaniel Clark, Support Manager Diane Lewis, Director Recreation and Leisure Services Tarik Maxwell, Director of Planning, Building and Zoning James Shelby, Economic Development Director Bruce Abraham, City Clerk Shalonda Brown, City Attorney Michael Williams and Management Analyst LaShawn Gardiner

Comment Period:

Carl Evans – stated he would like to address some issues that are going on right now with the recycling right now because it's being contaminated. Mr. Evans stated he believes that is happening because the residents are uninformed. He suggests since this a large rental community that there be a liaison from the city to keep the residents informed especially new residents. The information that can be provided would be pertinent telephone numbers, services provided by the city to include days, what's allowed for garbage & recycling and the meeting schedule etc. Mr. Evans stated a lot of the problems that's happening are because of lack of communication.



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Mayor Butler stated before we go any further with public comments, she was using the incorrect agenda and was out of order. She stated we were supposed to have the ceremonial swearing in ceremony.

**Ceremonial Swearing
In of Elected Officials:**

Councilman Hector Gutierrez was sworn in by Curtis Bearden.

Councilwoman Latresa Akin-Wells was sworn in by Pastor Jeremy Cook.

Councilman Alan Mears was sworn in by Mayor Angelyne Butler.

Comment Period:

Connie Robbins – stated she is so hurt and disgusted with everyone (Council and Staff) for the lack of support Joanne Crowder retired December 31st and not a soul came to her retirement party. She had been with the City and the center for 15 years and deserved better than that. Ms. Robbins stated Ms. Crowder was a part time employee, however she worked full-time hours. She would buy donuts with money out of her own pocket, provided lunch to anyone that did not have a lunch and anything the center ran out of she provided it. Ms. Robbins stated after 15 years, Ms. Crowder deserves the key to the city and a proclamation. She stated we have been losing leaders every time we blink at the senior center and she doesn't think they will ever have anyone else that cared as much as the other leaders did. Ms. Robbins stated they all should be ashamed how they ignored Joanne's retirement.

Diane Lunsford – stated her comments are directed to Mr. Clark of the Police Department. Why is an officer still wearing a uniform until lately and a gun, driving a police car when she's on light duty because she's pregnant when all of the other officers on light duty are in plain



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clothes and no gun? Mrs. Lunsford stated she would like to also know about the neighborhood watch is it on or is it not. She stated at the October Watch they were told by Ms. Flanigan and Mr. Reynolds there will no longer be a neighborhood watch at the police facility and it was up to the residents to establish their own neighborhood watch and they would come to help. Mrs. Lunsford asked why Mr. Williams doesn't call you down when you have a special called meeting then during the special called meeting y'all amend the agenda. Just because he makes approximately \$1500 a week does that mean he's going to turn the blind eye to y'all. She stated that is twice that has happened.

Ms. Thrasher – stated she has been a resident of Forest Park for 51 years. She stated around 7p.m. on January 1st her son had taken their brand new puppy outside for potty training, and while he was out there they heard a horrible sound in the back of the house. She stated she got up and got her weapon because she didn't know what was going on and there were two coyotes within her fenced in backyard. She stated her entire property is not fenced in, but they were in the fenced area of her backyard. She stated when she turned the corner she was about 50 feet in front of the coyotes. She stated the sound of the coyotes is different and she thought something was really happening to her child or her dog. She wants to know what the plan is or is their plan regarding this. She would like someone to look into that for her.

Samuel Ibanez – stated he would like to wish the Mayor, Council and everyone a Happy New Year. He stated in the past there have been some issues, but the time has come now to make a difference. Mr. Ibanez stated the attorney nor does council ever answer his calls. He stated this is a 2020 and let's see if this year



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can be better than last year because they are the ones that pay the salary for the governing body to sit up there. He wished everyone a blessed night.

Approval of Minutes:

Councilwoman James stated the meeting was a special called meeting therefore, there was not work session or regular meeting minutes to approve, and it should only be Approval of Minutes for Special Called meeting on December 16, 2019.

Councilwoman James made a motion to approve the Special Called meeting minutes of December 16, 2019. It was seconded by Councilwoman Wells. Voting for the motion was unanimous.

Appointment of Mayor Pro-Tem:

Councilman Mears made a motion to appoint Councilwoman James as Mayor Pro-Tem. It was seconded by Councilman Antoine. Voting for the motion was unanimous.

Resolution Naming Depositories:

A request was made to Consider a Resolution by the Mayor and Council naming the depositories for funds of the City of Forest Park; authorizing withdrawals of said funds by check or draft; and naming the officers of said City authorized to sign checks or drafts.

Councilwoman Wells made a motion to approve the Resolution and keeping Mayor Butler and Ken Thompson as officers authorized to sign checks or drafts. It was seconded by Councilman Mears. Voting for the motion was unanimous.

Ordinance Authorizing the Temporary Loans:

A request was made to Consider an Ordinance authorizing the temporary loans by the City of Forest Park, under the Constitution of the State of Georgia; Article 9, Section 5, paragraph V.



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Councilman Mears made a motion to approve the Ordinance. It was seconded by Councilwoman Wells. Voting for the motion was unanimous.

Agreement with The Collaborative Firm, LLC:

A request was made to Consider entering into a contract with The Collaborative Firm, LLC to provide Planning Services.

Councilwoman Wells made a motion to approve the request. It was seconded by Councilman Antoine. Voting for the motion was unanimous.

Agenda Amendment:

Mr. Williams stated due to the discussion in the executive session an amendment to the agenda would be in order to discuss the status of the City Manager.

Councilwoman Wells made a motion to Amend the agenda to discuss the status of the City Manager. It was seconded by Councilman Antoine. Voting for the motion were: Councilwoman Wells, Councilman Antoine, Councilman Gutierrez and Councilman Mears. Voting against the motion was: Councilwoman James. The motion carried.

Mr. Williams stated the amendment to the agenda would be the discussion of the removal of the City Manager pursuant to Section 2.41 of the City's Charter.

Councilwoman Wells made a motion to discuss the removal of the City Manager pursuant to Section 2.41 of the City's Charter. It was seconded by Councilman Antoine.

Councilwoman James stated she is in total disagreement with this proposal. She thinks Mrs. Redding has done an outstanding job. Councilman Antoine asked for point of order. Mayor Butler asked him to state his point.



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Councilman Antoine stated there is still a motion on the table and there is not a discussion correct. Mayor Butler stated it is open for discussion.

Councilwoman James stated Mrs. Redding has done an outstanding job with the city and with her 25 years of living in the City and being familiar with previous City Managers, this woman works she does not just sit at her desk and twiddle her thumbs. Councilwoman James stated she is in absolute disagreement with removing her.

Councilwoman Wells stated she loves Angela as a person, but when it comes to the City Manager that person works for the Mayor and Council. If the City Manager is not listening to our requests when it comes to what the citizens want, she represents Ward 4 and when things are not getting done in timely manner that make it seems that I'm not doing my job. Councilwoman Wells stated there have been some things that have changed, and we have come a long way from the previous City Managers. She stated she doesn't look at Angela as a bad person but they need someone who is going to consistently work with the Mayor and Council and not make it hard for them to do their jobs. She stated if anyone would like to speak with her after she is willing to give more details and she has 2 1/2 pages of why she is making that decision.

Councilman Antoine stated in his stance it is ok to disagree with somebody professionally and agree with them personally; that is where they are right now. He stated to move the city forward they need someone who will work better with the Mayor and City Council, person that has time and make themselves available to hear what the Mayor and City Council wants. This is not to say that Mrs. Redding is a horrible



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person, but to move the City forward in the direction that the Mayor and Council wants it to be to address our issues because our issues are the people's issues. He stated when you see him he's representing the people's voice and that is what he is here for.

Councilwoman James stated when it comes to the Charter and what we have to display, the City Manager does work at the pleasure of the Mayor and Council; however the City Manager is not a personal servant to anyone of us she works for the better interest of the City. Councilwoman James stated she doesn't lean one way or the other to any particular person. She does her best to make sure the things are taken care of in the City and again she does not agree with this and if it passes, she does not agree with it.

Mrs. Redding stated to the Mayor she would like to say a few words. She stated first of all, thanks for the opportunity and thanks to all the Councilmembers and she knows that she has done her best. Doing this job even when there have been bounds that have been overstepped in relations to what I'm supposed to do as a City Manager. She stated she has been with the City, June made 20 years. She stated she appreciates the opportunity and loves Forest Park and she has done the best that she can do. She is a total believer that God is in control and whatever direction that is being taken tonight is God's plan for her life and that is what she believes in. Mrs. Redding stated it has been a pleasure to serve as the City Manager and to the new Council Member, she stated she wished he would have gotten the opportunity to get to know her and not make a decision not knowing her or working with her. She stated today is your first day in office and to come in and not have had a conversation with me in regard to the



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job is a disservice, but again God is in control. She stated to the citizens and business owners she appreciates the opportunity to have served you.

Councilwoman Wells stated she would like to say one last thing. She is not against Angela as a person and it took a lot for her to make this decision, but she has looked at certain things and she has a list of them and it's a lot. She stated she's not saying that Angela didn't do her job, but she made her job more hectic and she represents the people. One thing that she will say is when certain people started getting fired for instance when she first came in the Finance Director was fired and the governing body had no idea until the next day. That is not something that you do without including the Mayor and Council. People calling us and we didn't know what to tell them and as a councilmember that is not a position that I want to be in. Then there are certain things that went on in the Police Department and some of the officers are still here and they shouldn't be.

Mrs. Redding stated that is not her fault that is because of legal ramifications.

Councilwoman Wells stated everyone is aware of the illegal investigation and surveillance on certain council members and one of the people involved was over our IT Department in the Police Department. She asked what that says about us as a City. Knowingly know these people illegally watched us, went through our trash and did all of this stuff and still have jobs today. That is not ok, and if it happened to one of you all I would hope that you would not be ok with it. Things that were so simple like putting a street sign in Ward 4 took 3-4 weeks to happen and when they complain about it they are looking at her. When we first made the



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decision to hire Angela, I kept telling her that I didn't want her to get involved and she has been with the City too long to get involved with this political stuff. I had to put that to the side to move our city forward and that is what I came up with. If anyone wants to see the list that I have, you are more than welcome. I can email them to you and we can discuss this after the meeting. This didn't just come about and it has been a long time coming. Councilwoman Wells stated they had all given Angela the opportunity, and because she felt that she and Angela were friends she could talk to her and tell what issues they were having; this was six or seven months ago and people weren't satisfied then even previous council members who are no longer here. Councilwoman Wells stated it may seem like a bad thing, but she wished Mrs. Redding the best and this is a decision that she didn't want to make and she didn't want her to take the position because she didn't want her to get involved in politics, but that is what she wanted to do. Councilwoman Wells stated she even talked with the City Attorney to see if we could keep Mrs. Redding here and get her old position back. She stated that she gets emotional about it because she and Angela were ok. She fought for her a raise when we had other city managers and when no one else would fight for her. Councilwoman Wells stated it is a hard decision for her but it is a decision that has to be made.

Mrs. Redding stated she would like to add a few comments because she is not going to go back and forth. She stated she wants to be clear that what is going on in the Police Department is something beyond her control. If you have an investigation that has been turned over to GBI and it has been mentioned several times to the governing body that because of the investigation that part comes first before the administrative part. So, sure people are still here, but that is



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not her fault that they are still here it is because of the circumstances and the legal investigation that is going on. Mrs. Redding stated just as Councilwoman Wells stated she has her list of things, she has a list of things that she has completed for her and a matter of fact, I have completed more things for Councilwoman Wells than any other Councilmember up here because of the various requests that she's made. Mrs. Redding stated so she has a list and I have a list but in the end she stated she has done the job to the best of her ability and she appreciates everyone and all the glory goes to God.

Councilman Gutierrez stated being his first day, this is one of the things that he had to think about and weigh on. With the position comes tough decisions and he did interact and reach out to a lot of people and it's nothing personal and he appreciates her and her message. He stated he is open to discussing things later.

Mrs. Redding stated she is glad that he said that because she would definitely like to hear his reasons.

Councilman Antoine stated again you can disagree with someone politically but agree with them personally. This is not personal.

Voting for the motion were: Councilman Antoine, Councilman Gutierrez and Councilwoman Wells. Voting against the motion were: Councilwoman James and Councilman Mears. The motion passed.

**Appointment of Interim
City Manager:**

Mr. Williams stated due to the discussion in the executive session a motion will be in order pursuant to section 2.42(b) of the Charter to appoint an Interim City Manager. He stated a motion would be in order to appoint Chief Clark.



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Councilwoman Wells made a motion to appoint Chief Clark as the Interim City Manager. It was seconded by Councilman Antoine.

Councilwoman James stated because of everything that is going on in the Police Department and Chief Clark coming in and getting everything done and he has been doing a wonderful job at the Police Department, exceptional job in the Police Department. She doesn't feel that he should have his time pulled from that department to manage the entire City of Forest Park.

Councilwoman Wells stated you didn't have an issue when Chief Hobbs was doing it.

Councilwoman James stated she was not in the position as City Councilperson when Chief Hobbs was appointed as Interim City Manager and that was not her call. Her point is not that a Chief of Police would not be able to handle being an Interim until they find someone to take that position. It is only because we as Councilmembers know everything that's happening that some of the residents are not aware of that is taking the time of Chief Clark. He has been putting in a lot of hours (23 hour days) sometimes in the Police Department. For the projects that we have in play here in the city and to expect him to manage the city in her opinion is not a good move.

Councilman Antoine asked Chief Clark to stand. Councilwoman Wells stated while he is coming to speak, she wanted to say one thing, before the meeting we introduced the Deputy Chief and that would be his position and he is there to assist the Chief in whatever he needs and that should not be an issue.



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Councilman Antoine asked Chief Clark how long, how many years he has been in Law Enforcement. Chief Clark responded approximately 34+ years. Councilman Antoine stated in this position as Interim City Manager is this something that you can't handle. Chief Clark responded Sir, as a public servant, I don't think there is no job that I can't handle. He stated he is here to serve the community in whatever capacity the governing body and citizens deem necessary. Councilman Antoine stated if God is for you, Chief Clark stated who can be against me.

Councilman Gutierrez stated to Chief Clark just discussing number, you've managed greater departments than this number wise correct. Chief Clark replied yes. Councilman Gutierrez adding the city on what would that look like? Chief Clark stated the department he came from in Ft. Smith, Arkansas and the daytime population over 100,000+ as far as citizens and sworn personnel of 164 including him.

Councilwoman James stated to Chief Clark that she 100% loves him and appreciate him and she knows as he stated as a public servant he will do what the governing body directs him to do because that's your position and she knows if this governing body directs you to be the Interim City Manager, she has no doubt that he would be able to do it to the best of his ability. But her as a governing body member and sees everything that is going on, she personally would not put that on him. That would not be something that she would put on him, not saying that you can't do the job, but she would not put the city of what we are going through, she would not vote to put that on him. She stated there is nothing against him personally, but just as governing body member she wanted to make that clear.



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Councilman Antoine stated to Chief Clark that behind that badge people may not know that you are a good person and he supports you and make sure you pick up his phone calls.

Chief Clark stated whatever capacity the governing body affords him to serve he will give this governing body, citizens and guest of this City 110% serving is in DNA.

Mrs. Redding stated to Chief Clark congratulations, good luck on this journey and as the person who fought to bring you when others were against you I just want to wish you the best of luck. Chief Clark thanked Mrs. Redding for allowing him to serve in the capacity of Chief of Police.

Voting for the motion were: Councilman Antoine, Councilman Gutierrez and Councilwoman Wells. Voting against the motion was: Councilwoman James. Councilman Mears abstained. The motion carried.

Governing Body Comments: Councilwoman James - stated she wrote out her comments. She wished everyone a Happy New Year and stated we are in 2020 and her wish is for everyone to understand their vision and your purpose in all areas of your life. She stated she is choosing to make her direction and vision clear in this New Year. Councilwoman James stated she knows that she is a chosen servant leader who has been called and appointed for this season. She congratulated Councilman Gutierrez, Councilwoman Wells and Councilman Mears on their new and renewed appointment. No longer will she deny who she is and the purpose in which she was appointed. In this year she plans on living her life to the fullest with perfect vision. This year she will be 50 years old, that is half a century, and as she look back at all that she has accomplished up to this



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point, she has much to do and it is important to her to have something between 1970, which is the year she was born, and the end of her life or the resurrection, whichever comes first, I can't separate any area of her life because it all works together. She stated she appreciates Chief Clark and everyone that helped to memorialize Officer Richard Cash and she learned that his son Officer Cash is continuing the legacy of his dad who was killed at the age of 25. She thanked the first responders, police officers, fire fighters and military. She also thanked all of the City's employees. Her goal for this year is to continue to put the potential of Forest Park out front for all to see. This includes information to our residents, businesses, the city and schools. She thanked everyone for coming out and she stated it is her honor to serve the community.

Councilman Antoine – thanked everyone for coming out. He stated he wanted to address a couple of issues. He stated he would like to address the coyote issue, to the young lady that brought that up, he will be working with the City Manager so that he can address that issue. For the young lady that brought up the senior center, he has a meeting setup with Willie Freeman. Councilman Antoine stated for those that don't know he is very active in the senior community and he does his quarterly meetings where gets the young ladies nails done, Mary Kay and sewing. They do a lot of things to get the seniors involved. He stated he will be reaching out to Mr. Freeman so they can do something special for the Director. Officer Cash is one of only officer in Forest Park that passed away in the line of duty and he wanted to give a shout out to the Chief because people flourish where they are loved and it had to take over 20 years to celebrate a fallen officer and it should not have to take that long. Councilman Antoine stated those that don't know him, he is available



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and accessible to them and he's on Facebook and Instagram. He stated Ward 2 is the best Ward because it has City Hall, the park, Main Street and Forest Parkway. If you know any ideas that can develop your Ward please reach out to him.

Councilman Gutierrez – wished everyone a Happy New Year and stated it is an honor to be there and shout out to Sandra Bagley because those are going to be some big shoes to fill and he hopes he lives up to that. He is thankful for the residents that get up and speak and the gentleman speaking about the recycling initiative, which is one of the things that he learned about in the last 5 years. He stated he would just throw everything in his recycling bin and this issue really matters. Polluting recycling centers and containers are a big thing if you don't do it the right way. He stated it starts with the citizens and by identifying who is moving in the community so we can welcome them into Forest Park and make them aware of the resources that we have. He thanked everyone for coming out and once he gets his phone activated please feel free to contact him. Councilman Gutierrez stated he respectfully disagree with Ward 2 being the best Ward.

Councilwoman Wells – thanked God for allowing her to serve another 4 years in the city that she grew up. She thanked her family, friends and citizens that came out to witness her being sworn in. She thanked her Pastor, Pastor Tuck for the Invocation and swearing her in. She would like to thank Chief Clark and it has been difficult since he has been here and came into some stuff you had no idea that you were coming into and you have done an outstanding job. She stated she didn't want to put this on you but that's always been done in the past it has always been the police Chief; with you doing



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a great job that you're doing I feel that you will do a great job as Interim City Manager.

Councilwoman Wells addressed the comment about the Coyote, she has been speaking about this for a long time and even had the signs put out in everybody's Ward to make you aware that the coyotes were out there. She stated she hears them all night in her own home and she reached out to the City Manager and traps were put out. She asked Ms. Thrasher to provide her with her contact information and she will reach out once they get an update. Councilwoman Wells stated she has tried to change and doesn't like to respond to negative comments; she has been in office for 8 years and this has been going on ever since she has been in office, the same negative people saying the same negative stuff every council meeting. This is 2020 and we are moving forward. If you love the city that you live in and want to contribute, then contribute something positive. Nobody's perfect and we all work hard for the people that elected us. The same people that get up and complain shows you a lot about their character not ours. She wanted to respond to the comment about an officer being on light duty and throwing up in their face they are pregnant, she thinks that is so distasteful and an embarrassment.

Councilwoman Wells offered an apology to Sgt. Flanigan for even having to endure that. She wished a Happy New Year to everyone and she thanked the ones that want to see the city move forward and grow. Help us help our city.

Councilman Mears – thanked everyone in Ward 5 that had confidence in him to put him back in this chair again. He stated all he can promise is to do the best that he can with the problems that you have on a day to day basis. Whatever problems you want to share with him as a Councilmember he is willing to listen and work with you to try and get everything worked out.



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He again would like to thank his Ward for their vote and confidence in him which is undoubtedly the best Ward in the city.

Councilman Antoine - stated he would like to recognize State Representative Schofield for being present. Representative Schofield stated session started January 13th and know that she's fighting hard to make sure we become one Forest Park and take this city to the next level. Councilman Antoine asked State Rep. Schofield where you would go to find the new laws that passed for 2020. Stated Representative Schofield replied www.legis.ga.gov

Councilwoman James - stated she would like to make reference to the coyotes. She stated we did have a National Wildlife presentation a few months ago that talked about the coyotes and there are very limited things we can do as a city related to the coyotes. She would also like to say when you are an officer you are an officer 24 hours a day and some comments do not need to be made when it comes to making comments about our police officers. It doesn't matter if our Police Officer is on duty or off duty they are always on duty. She stated we need to be mindful of the comments that we make when it comes to those that go out first and go in first when we are running away they are going in so we should be mindful of that. Councilwoman James thanked Mayor and Council for the appointment of Mayor Pro-Tem and it's an honor and she looks forward to serving under the Mayor and hopes she never miss an appointment. She's honored.

Councilman Mears - stated as Councilwoman James stated we did have a wildlife expert in here to explain about coyotes. She suggested small animals keep them inside, bring your dog



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food inside and they are going to hang around where there is food.

Councilwoman Wells -stated to Ms. Connie Robbins no one knew about Ms. Joanne's retirement, but everyone knows how involved they are and they try to make it everything we can and no one knew about this, so before you attack us ask us.

Councilman Gutierrez - stated he would like to thank Ms. Joanne for her years of service.

Mayor Butler thanked everyone for attending the meeting and looks forward to seeing them on the next meeting.

Adjournment:

Councilwoman James made a motion to adjourn the meeting. It was seconded by Councilman Mears. Voting for the motion was unanimous.