

## City Council Regular Session

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Agency: Forest Park City Council

Date: June 20, 2023

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### Summary

- City faces challenges in distributing American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funding, including restrictive rental criteria and excessive consulting fees for home repair program administration.
- Residents will be able to submit quality of life complaints and get real-time updates on their resolution through SeeClickFix, a city-approved place-based reporting platform.
- Both council members and locals praised [Ricky Clark](#), the recently appointed city manager, for his efforts.

### Follow-Up Questions

- Will households be asked whether they consent to having their property taxes used to pay for street lighting services?
- Which criteria will be used to select senior officers for participation in the Adopt a Cop program?
- What will happen to residents of Forest Park when Medicaid and PeachCare redetermination resumes, and what are the city's plans?

### Notes

**Attendees:** Kimberly James (Ward 1); Dabouze Antoine (Ward 2) {via Zoom}; Hector

Gutierrez (Ward 3); Latresa Akins-Wells (Ward 4); Alan Mears (Ward 5) {via telephone}

[Agenda](#); [Video](#)

### Work Session

1. [\(18:27\)](#) Council Discussion on Government Tax Solutions – Executive Offices
  - Ricky Clark, City Manager: Intends to resolve delinquencies at no cost to the city.
6. [\(31:26\)](#) Council Discussion on Lighting Services Agreement – Executive Offices
  - Residents have requested a street light be added to Elam Church Road.
  - Clark: Proposes implementation of a street lighting district that will be billed to residents' property tax bill.
  - James: Will residents be billed retroactively?
  - Clark: No, billing will be based on the date the policy is adopted.
7. [\(34:39\)](#) Council Discussion on Implementation of Adopt a Cop - Police Department
  - Program for senior officers to provide mentorship and guidance to new police recruits.
  - Gutierrez: Commends Police Chief Brandon Criss for proactively addressing the employee retention issue.
8. [\(37:02\)](#) Council Discussion/Approval to Amend the Simplified Noise Ordinance – Police and Legal
  - Last amended October 5, 2020, the current ordinance ([Title 11, Chapter 5, Section 11-5-3](#)) states that a decibel meter is used to determine if a person is in violation.
  - Proposed amendment would determine that a person is in violation if the noise can be heard more than 100 feet from its source.
  - Criss: Proposal will bring ordinance into alignment with current police and state noise enforcement.
9. [\(39:16\)](#) SeeClickFix – Executive Offices
  - As part of the city's One Forest Park Initiative, [SeeClickFix](#) will allow residents to report quality-of-life issues (litter, damage to sidewalks, traffic lights, etc.) to City of Forest Park by location and allows them to see updates as the issue is resolved.
  - Clark: Executive Office will provide monthly reports to the council, including heat maps showing where violations occur. The application is slated to be rolled out by the end of summer. Proposed by Gutierrez.
  - James: How much will it cost?
  - Clark: \$20,000, his office will look at the feasibility of utilizing already designated American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funding; if not, additional funds

remaining in budget can be used.

10. (43:18) Council Discussion on City Edge Project Quarterly Update – Executive Offices

- On September 7, 2021, the council approved to set aside \$400,000 of the American Rescue Funds allotment to aid with [rental assistance](#) specifically for residents of the City of Forest Park. The funds are administered by City Edge Projects, Inc.
- Ashley Beeler, City Edge Projects:
  - Spending an average of \$21,000 for two-three people for the last few quarters, which is considered consistent but low.
  - \$148,000 left to distribute and looking to collaborate with other rental assistance programs to spend the money.
  - Many applicants need assistance but don't qualify based on COVID criteria.
- Gutierrez and Akins-Wells: Can criteria be changed to accommodate more applicants? How are residents being notified of the program?
- Beeler: Program information is getting out because they are receiving applications from outside of the city as well. Wants to know whether the criteria of when an applicant contracted COVID can be extended to allow more approvals.
- Clark: Recommends bringing funding in-house and re-evaluating how the funding is utilized.
- James: Open to re-evaluating but wants to make sure the city is following the guidelines outlined for the use of the funds.
- Clark: Funds were allocated based on population size; city can choose how the funds are distributed.

11. (51:52) Discussion of a Home Repair Grant Program and Guidelines - Executive Offices & Procurement

- Clark: Proposes to bring the process for this ARPA-funded program in-house to assist more residents in lieu of spending the \$300,000 on a consultant. Also wants to appropriate a portion of funds to local businesses towards beautification.
- Gutierrez: Wants to make sure to keep the bulk of funding towards residents (at least 70% to residents and no more than 30% towards businesses).
- Mike Williams, City Attorney: Originally \$10,000 per homeowner and only small contractors would be eligible to be used.
- Gutierrez: Will city issue list of eligible contractors?
- Clark: Residents will be responsible for securing contractor so as to avoid city liability. Will also look into the city paying contractors directly instead of having

residents pay up front and be reimbursed, as cost is a likely barrier for most residents and the reason the aid is needed.

### **Regular Session**

- (1:37:08) Recognition of officer receiving the Attorney General's Award for Distinguished Service in Community Policing - Police Department
  - Criss: Master Patrol Shelton was recognized by the Attorney General's Office in Washington, D.C. on June 5 for her calm demeanor and quick thinking in successfully de-escalating a domestic call in which a woman was suicidal and threatening her husband with a rifle.
- (1:43:36) Department of Human Services (DHS) Medicaid Redetermination Presentation – Legislative Offices
  - The Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA) gave states a temporary 6.2% Federal Medical Assistance Percentage (FMAP) increase to ensure continuous coverage for Medicaid recipients on or after March 18, 2020 until 2023. During this time, the redetermination requirement was paused.
  - The federal government is now asking all states to [resume redetermination for Medicaid and Peachcare](#), which will take place between April 2023 and May 2024; those who are no longer eligible will lose coverage.
  - Martha Merritt-Whaley, Employment and Training Supervisor, Department of Family and Children Services Community Outreach Team: DFCS is requesting assistance advising recipients to log into [gateway.ga.gov](http://gateway.ga.gov) to check their redetermination date.

### **Public Comments**

1. (1:57:54) Carl Evans: Expressed concerns about the condition of streets and lack of sidewalks, especially along Main Street, impacting businesses; would like to see the area redeveloped. Conveyed appreciation for Clark looking into a \$300,000 consulting fee for the home repair program.
2. (2:01:02) Lawanda Folami: Invited council to an upcoming black tie affair, with details forthcoming. Offered assistance to DFCS to help Medicaid recipients access the Georgia Gateway website to complete their redetermination.
3. (2:03:55) Delores Jones Anderson: Expressed concerns of trash along Cash Memorial Boulevard as it transitions to Lamar Drive, causing damage to her tire while entering her residence.

### **New Business**

11. (2:08:13) Council Approval of Resolution & Intergovernment Agreement (IGA) with Clayton County Board of Elections
  - Clark: Either paper ballots or machines will be used. The intergovernmental agreement as prepared states three-image case precinct scanners will be used, which is a paper ballot.

- James and Akins-Wells: Not in favor of changing the voting process; voters do not want to use paper ballots.
  - Clark: Voting process will be simplified by new process in which resident completes a paper ballot and scans it into a machine.
  - Gutierrez: Wants to move to electronic process to foster transparency.
  - Akins-Wells said, “I would just say ask the voters, because that’s who we vote for.”
  - Motion to approve the IGA with the understanding that voters will use electronic machines was approved unanimously.
- 13: [\(2:15:25\)](#) Council Approval on Lighting Services Agreement
- Council voted only on lighting for Elam Church Road and will vote on Lighting Services Agreement in the near future: approved unanimously.

All other agenda items were approved unanimously.

## Conversation Highlight

- “I would just say ask the voters, because that’s who we vote for.” — *Latresa Akins-Wells // Forest Park City Council Member (Ward 4)*

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