



CITY OF SOUTHPORT

Historic Preservation Commission
Indian Trail Meeting Hall, 113 W. Moore Street
November 5, 2025
4:00 P.M.

AGENDA

Please turn off all cell phones

The Historic Preservation Commission's regular monthly meeting will be held at 4:00 p.m. on the first Wednesday of each month. All members are asked to attend.

- A. Call to Order**
- B. Invocation**
- C. Pledge of Allegiance**
- D. Approval of Agenda**
- E. Public Comment**
- F. Old Business**
 - 1. Discussion of Board of Aldermen Inquiries on Proposed Local Historic District Standards
- G. New Business**
 - 1. Annual Meeting
 - Annual Report
 - 2026 Regular Schedule Meeting Calendar
- H. Other Business**
- I. Announcements**
- J. Adjourn**



MEMORANDUM

TO: Charles Drew, Chairman and Members of the Historic Preservation Commission
FROM: Maureen Meehan, Planning Director
RE: Aldermen Questions on the Proposed Design Standards
DATE: October, 31, 2025

At the conclusion of the workshop held with the Board of Aldermen on October 15, 2025, the Aldermen agreed to submit their remaining questions concerning the proposed design standards to the Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) for their response at the Commission's next regularly scheduled meeting. Attached are the comments that were received. Please review these comments and come prepared to formulate a response to these questions. If you have any questions prior to the meeting, please feel free to contact me.

From: [Rebecca Kelley](#)
To: [Tori Deviney](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Summary of Citizen Feedback and Recommended Considerations – Historic Overlay & Design Standards
Date: Thursday, October 30, 2025 1:56:03 PM

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Team,

I wanted to share a summary of questions and recommendations I received from concerned citizens following our joint workshop. The comments reflect a genuine desire to support preservation while also ensuring clarity, fairness, and inclusivity in implementation. Several points are worth the Commission's consideration as we move forward:

1. Administrative Feasibility & Property Inventories

The current draft states that compliance "begins on the date of adoption." While conceptually sound, we don't yet have verified data on existing exterior materials, features, and mechanical systems.

Recommendation: Before adoption, provide property owners their current inventory sheets with an explanation of why updates are needed. Allow 30–60 days for owners to correct construction/renovation dates and note existing materials or historic details. This step would strengthen the city's records and help prevent disputes over what predates the standards.

2. Boundary Inclusivity & Equity

The proposed overlay currently excludes some historically significant areas north of St. George Street—many tied to Southport's African-American heritage—and the Yacht Basin district.

Recommendation: Re-evaluate the boundaries to ensure all historic and culturally important sites, including African-American landmarks and the Yacht Basin, are represented and protected.

3. Applicability to Churches & City Buildings

Clarify whether city-owned and church properties within the district are required to obtain Certificates of Appropriateness (COAs). Consistency in application will prevent confusion.

4. Landscaping Oversight

The draft still includes language about landscaping and natural features being subject to HPC review.

Recommendation: Confirm whether all landscaping provisions were

intended for removal, and update accordingly.

5. Quasi-Judicial Process & Transparency

Questions remain about subjectivity, appeals, and enforcement.

Recommendations:

- Include the appeal process for property owners.
- Outline penalties for non-conformance.
- Clarify whether the 90-day COA review limit includes public hearings, and consider an “automatic approval” clause if the HPC fails to act within that window.

6. Minor COA Adjustments

- **Eliminate:** Temporary medical-related exterior alterations already regulated by building permits.
- **Relocate:** The “six-month renewal” COA fits better under the main COA process section.

7. Visibility from Public View

Many historic properties are fully visible due to Southport’s original layout. Language referencing “visible from the road” or “not seen from public view” unintentionally penalizes these owners.

Recommendation: Either remove these phrases or add a statement clarifying that highly visible properties will work collaboratively with HPC to find fair solutions.

8. Communication Improvements

Past reliance on utility bill inserts for notices proved ineffective.

Recommendation: Implement more direct and reliable outreach—such as individual mailings—and maintain a record of communication dates, distribution methods, and responsible departments for accountability.

Closing Thought

The intent of this feedback isn’t to slow progress but to ensure the Historic Overlay is inclusive, equitable, and practically enforceable. Taking time to address these administrative and communication details now will ultimately strengthen public confidence and long-term compliance. Alternatively, I would love to see some other option that would allow us to enforce only for new construction or major renovations...perhaps in the UDO?

Respectfully submitted,
Rebecca Kelley

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Rebecca

Rebecca Kelley

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Noah,

Here are my questions and recommendations as requested of Aldermen for the HPC.

In the Forward it states :”The intent of these design standards is to:

1. Provide guidance to assist...”

I think it would be more accurate to say, “Provide rules and standards to assist...”

In the Goals of the Historic Preservation Commission, Goal 2 states, “The City of Southport Historic Preservation Commission shall establish policies and procedures...”

Question: What is the process for recommended new policy and procedures by the HPC? Do the policies go to Federal and/or State and then to aldermen for approval? As a Quasi Judicial Board, once the Standards are approved, who provides oversight of the Historic Preservation Commission? This type of information should be explained in the design standards document.

In the Levels of Review section, can we implement a max response time limit for the HPC to finalize the pre application, i.e. 14 days?

How will the City or HPC inform different contractors such as electricians, plumbers, builders, roofers, etc., the requirements for all the Southport Local Design Standards? (for example, requirements in the Disaster Preparedness and Prevention section)

Will the City or HPC ensure through COA process that all contractors are knowledgeable, competent and will adhere to Southport Local Design Standards?

What are the costs to the city to administer these regulations and how will it be paid for if obtaining a COA does not require a fee?

How will the HOC criteria impact future City tax base due to HOC requirements?

Please do a before and after report of tax base amounts for each new home construction and renovations in historic area over last five years. If possible, it would also be important to know if the changes would have been allowed based on the proposed Historic District Standards.

There are many restrictions that deal with historic material on historic homes and should not be expected or required of non contributing or new construction homes. Please add statement “for contributing homes only” throughout document for these type of statements. For example, 2.5.5 “Covering a porch with non-historic material such as vinyl or metal siding, or winterizing a screened porch by permanently attaching plastic sheeting is not permitted.”

Concern: Roof, siding, windows and masonry repair or replacement of existing materials can be very expensive for homeowners. Preservation & protection of home should allow for new materials or technologies. Please provide a general statement that the HPC will work as needed with homeowners to allow for new materials and technologies to ensure homes do not fall into a state of disrepair or are not irreparably frozen in time.

Standards for storefronts 2.7.5 “Retain original roof forms and features. Do not add additional stories, penthouse, roof decks, skylights, mechanical equipment or any other features that can be seen from the sidewalk, right-of-way or any public rear access walkway. Exceptions may be made on a case-by-case basis if there is a clear historic precedent.”

This standard does not allow for stores and restaurants to grow as needed and it can impact City’s future viability. Exceptions can be based on congruity not historic precedent.

Thanks,

Marc Spencer

Updated language for consideration:

Change - **Yellow** Remove - **Green**

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Certificate of Appropriateness

Probably the most frequently asked question of the HPC is “When do I need a Certificate of Appropriateness (COA)?” The COA is a permit that a property owner receives indicating that a proposed change or action has been reviewed and approved by the HPC for congruity with the special character of the historic district or landmark and for consistency with the historic district regulations. A COA is required for any exterior change planned for a local historic landmark or building within the local historic district (See Map on page 37). Exterior changes are defined as any alteration including but not limited to the architectural style, general design, general arrangements of buildings or structures on the site, size and scale of the buildings or structures, building materials, types and styles of windows, doors, **lights**, signs, and other fixtures. **Landscaping and changes to natural features such as trees, creeks, creek banks and riverbanks are also subject to HPC review.** As a part of the COA review process, the HPC shall consider the preservation of the character and integrity of the City and its historic districts and individual landmarks. To verify that the proposed action requires a COA, call the City’s Preservation Planner at 910-457-7900.

Routine Maintenance Actions (COA Not Required)

Property owners should be aware of certain actions that are considered “routine maintenance” or are otherwise not subject to HPC review and thus do not require a COA. These items include:

- a. Repair or change of color of painted surfaces;
- b. Seasonal decorations;
- c. Moveable playground equipment;
- d. Temporary real estate “open-house” or “yard sale” signs placed and removed on that day;
- e. Addition to, installation of, or replacing gutters or downspouts with like materials, construction, and matching trim colors as long as significant architectural features are not removed or obscured;
- f. Landscaping;
- g. Removal or planting of trees (City Tree Protection Permit process still applies) in rear and non-visible yards;
- h. Removal of diseased or dead trees in any location;
- i. Fence installation/removal in the rear and non-visible side yards;
- j. Installation/removal of mechanical equipment in the rear and non-visible side yards;
- k. Alteration/installation of exterior lighting;
- l. Alteration/removal of sidewalks, parking lots, and/or driveways;
- m. Temporary emergency roof tarps, window air conditioning units, fans, or portable generators;
- n. Installation of foundation vents on non-visible on the rear or non-visible side yards;
- o. Alteration/installation/removal of storm windows or doors;
- p. Alteration/removal of existing shutters on rear or non-visible side yards;
- q. Alteration/addition/construction/removal of swimming pools;
- r. Demolition of a non-historic addition or accessory structure;
- s. Construction of a new accessory structure less than 144 square feet;
- t. Maintenance and emergency restoration of existing above ground utilities;
- u. Public safety issues.

City of Southport Local Historic District Review

All exterior work and new construction to a locally designated landmark or property within the City of Southport's Local Historic District requires a COA, regardless of whether or not a building permit is required.

The following table provides examples of projects and COA requirements. For any projects not listed below please contact the Preservation Planner for more information.

Proposed Work	Minor COA	Major COA	Comments
Routine Maintenance does not require a COA			
Site and Setting			
Changes to significant site features		X	
Alteration, construction/removal of stone or brick terraces, water features, berms, and ground moving activities	X	X	UDO Stormwater Ordinance applies.
Alteration/construction/removal of fences or walls on front or side visible elevations		X	See "Fences" section
Removal of terraces, and walkways		X	City Tree Protection and Landscape Preservation permit process still applies.

In the Routine Maintenance Comment box add: See page 14

Change to a Minor COA - Alteration, construction/removal of stone or brick terraces, water features, berms, and ground moving activities

Delete - Removal of terraces and walkways

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10. In determining whether the work proposed in the application would be congruous with the special character of the district, or in certain cases, designated landmarks outside the district, the HPC commission will consider the items generally and specifically set forth in these standards including the following principles:

- a. The special character of the district is primarily defined by the following elements:
 - i. Architectural styles, sizes, scales, height and proportions of historical Southport buildings and other structures.
 - ii. Vistas of the Historic District should be maintained. These include seascapes, landscapes, and streetscapes.

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- 1.1.1. Identify **and if possible**, preserve and maintain historic public and private landscapes that contribute to the character of the historic district, including open spaces, streetscapes, and yards.
- 1.1.2. Identify **and if possible**, preserve, and maintain the individual components and historic features that contribute to Southport's historic character, including: mature trees, ornamental trees, and hedge rows.
- 1.1.3. Preserve and maintain mature canopy trees **if possible**. Planting of non-native ...

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1.1.6 New walkways **shall should** not exceed a width of four (4) feet and shall not be built past public sidewalks where they exist. No hardened structures are allowed within the public right of way. (ROW permits are required for any allowable encroachments.)

1.1.7. Contemporary edging or border materials, such as exposed landscape timbers, railroad ties, pre-cast concrete, plastic, or other substitute material borders are not appropriate in areas seen from the public view.

1.1.8. Historic sidewalks and other paving materials should be preserved and maintained. **When possible new** sidewalks **shall should** be compatible in material, detailing, color and finish to existing historic sidewalks.

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Driveways and Off-Street Parking

Many homes in the local historic district do not have driveways, most residents utilize on-street parking. However, where driveways and parking lots exist maintenance and repair can be achieved through monitoring to identify settling and cracking of these surfaces. When necessary, selective, or full, in-kind replacement of paving materials **should must** follow the [Masonry Standards](#) **if possible**.

1.4.4. **When possible, avoid** removing trees and other landscape elements that contribute to the historic character of a site.

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1.6.2. Built in features such as pavilions, gazebos, screened rooms, or other types of roofed structures such as boat sheds are not appropriate.

1.6.4. **When possible, repair** docks, piers, and boardwalks and their details and features, using accepted preservation methods.

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2.1.2. Preserve, maintain, and repair historic roofing details and materials such as slate, standing seam metal, and tile **when possible**. Replace in-kind only if necessary due to deterioration or damage. Replace only the damaged or deteriorated portion using materials identical necessary, identical to the original if possible.

2.1.3. New roofing materials should be compatible with either the existing or original roofing material. Match the historic material as closely as possible in color, shape, size, and texture. Asphalt, fiberglass-asphalt shingles, and metal roofs are acceptable. Any distinctive patterns of shingles or slates shall be retained and/ or replicated **exactly when possible**.

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2.1.10. Avoid constructing additional stories resulting in an altered appearance **that is incongruous with the Historic District**.

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2.2.6. It is inappropriate to strip paint with the object of staining it or leaving it unfinished for a supposedly "natural" appearance when such an appearance cannot be historically documented.

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2.3.1. Retain and preserve historic brick and masonry elements, including walls, chimneys, foundations, and retaining walls. **When possible, preserve masonry** elements that are character-defining features of the building or property.

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2.4.5. Tinted glass is not appropriate in the historic district in any area visible from public view. Energy-saving or "low-E" glass may be used only if it is not tinted.

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2.4.7 Preserve and repair original or historic **shutters if possible**. It is appropriate to add **louvered** shutters to a historic structure if there is evidence that it once had **shutters blinds** or the addition of **shutters is congruous with the historic character of the structure**. All shutters shall be installed so that they will fit the window frame opening if closed and shall be of correct proportions for each window. Blinds shall be provided with operable hardware, consisting of hinges, pintles, and holdbacks located in the appropriate positions.

Shutters may be operable or fixed. Shutters made of synthetic or substitute materials, that duplicate the look, appearance and patina of wood may be allowed. They should not be nailed or screwed onto the building surface.

Page 64 (cont.)

2.4.9. Avoid the placement of metal awnings over windows and doors. Fabric awnings may be used **if the house originally or historically had them**. Install awnings in such a manner that they do not conceal architectural features or damage historic building fabric. Choose colors and patterns that harmonize with the building and do not compete with it.

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2.5.9. It is not appropriate to add new porches, entrances, or balconies to primary elevations or other areas of a building that are seen from the public view if none existed historically. **Exceptions may be considered**. Applicants shall demonstrate to the HPC that an addition with different height, scale, size and massing from the existing structure is congruous with the Historic District.

2.5.10. Collapsible gates on porches to restrain pets or young children are reviewed by the HPC on a case-by-case basis and should be truly temporary and removable. Permanent gates are reviewed by the HPC. Gates of any kind at the foot of porch steps create an unnecessary visual barrier and are not appropriate.

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2.6.7. It is inappropriate to paint existing, unpainted historic foundations. A previously painted foundation should continue to be painted to avoid damaging the masonry. See Section 2.3. Standards for Masonry for maintenance recommendations for unpainted and painted masonry.

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2.9.2. **If possible, locate roof ventilators**, antennas, solar panels, and satellite dishes in areas not visible from public view. Satellite dishes exceeding 24" in diameter shall not be installed in the historic district.

2.9.3. **If possible, paint** meter boxes, vents, and other utility fixtures visible from the street in colors that will allow them to blend in with the historic/existing building.

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3.1.2. It is appropriate to consider height, scale, size and massing of the additions to ensure it is compatible with the existing structure and does not overpower it visually. **A new addition should never be taller or wider than the original structure. Observe the principle of "additive massing" where the original structure remains dominant, and the additions are adjoining and smaller masses.** Generally, observe the principle of "additive massing" where the original structure remains dominant, and the additions are adjoining and smaller masses however, exceptions may be considered. Applicants shall demonstrate to the HPC that an addition with different height, scale, size and massing from the existing structure is congruous with the Historic District.

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3.1.4. If possible, additions should be constructed so that they can be removed from the original building in the future without irreversible damage to significant features.

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3.1.13. It is not appropriate to site additions that require the removal of mature trees or plantings.

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3.2.7. If a contributing building was demolished or moved from the site, design the replacement building to be of similar height, scale, massing, and location as the previously existing building. Applicants will have a heavy burden to shall demonstrate to the HPC that a replacement structure with different height, scale, and massing as the previously existing building is congruous with the Historic District.

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3.3.8. If alternatives exist, it is not appropriate to site additions that require the removal of mature trees or plantings. Mature trees and plantings should be protected during the construction phase.

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4.1.1. Choose relocation only as a last resort to demolition. Property owners that want to relocate a contributing building should design the replacement building to reflect the relocated building's height, scale, massing, and location. Applicants will have a heavy burden to shall demonstrate to the HPC that a replacement building with different height, scale, massing, and location as the previously existing building is congruous with the historic district.

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4.2.1. Choose demolition only as a last resort. Property owners of contributing buildings should design the replacement building to reflect the demolished building's height, scale, massing, and location. Applicants will have a heavy burden to shall demonstrate to the HPC that a replacement building with different height, scale, massing as the previously existing building is congruous with the Historic District.

I am in favor of a plan to ensure that the historical nature and beauty of Southport is protected. However, the Board of Aldermen (BoA) have a fiduciary responsibility to protect the city from taking positions that would be in violation of NC law or lead to other civil penalties.

As such, I am submitting the following to you, the HPC members, to seek solutions to the following hurdles, which are substantial, and most must be addressed before the passage of a document with a low risk of civil action against the city.

1) There is an identified statute in the Historic Preservation Committee's (HPC) presentation that reads in part; "However, regardless of the determination of significance the HPC can delay demolition of up to a year (365 days) to allow for a full study of potential alternatives." In layman's terms that means any landowner in the district can merely wait 365 days from the day of rejection and then can demolish the structure. **Question;** Does this not defeat the strategic goal of the proposed legislation?

2) Question; Does Statute SB 282 that eliminates downzoning supersede the older historic preservation statute?

3) The current language states that once passed, any residential unit within the district boundaries are subject to all the building standards, no matter the age of the structure. **Question;** Is there a work around? This has come to be part of the rallying cry against this project.

4) Question; Should the BoA take into consideration during their deliberations, the fact that over 200 lot owners out of 253 total lots have requested this legislation not be passed? That is over 80 % of the total.

5) Question; Should the BoA take into consideration during their deliberations, the fact that several lot owners have expressed their willingness to take the city to civil court?

6) Question; Should the Board of Aldermen take into consideration during their deliberations that a growing number of lot owners have stated they will seek de-annexation of a large section of the historic downtown?

7) Could this whole concept be boiled down to something on the order of, any residence within the Historic District that demolishes, or reconstructs 50% of the

structure must comply with the standards. I know this would still not address adding a second or third story, even if those additions were in the same style as the original structure. Bottom line is, I am pondering if the proposal as submitted goes too far. I come back to that basic principle that if 80% of the impacted tax payers are saying “no”, regardless of how many meetings there were, or of all the hard work that has gone into this idea, here and now, there is little support for this project.

Respectfully,

Rich