



**CITY OF SOUTHPORT
BOARD OF ALDERMEN – REGULAR MEETING
COMMUNITY BUILDING
223 E BAY STREET, SOUTHPORT NC 28461
NOVEMBER 3, 2025 | 10:00 AM**

Present Members:

Mayor Pro-Tem Rebecca Kelley, Alderman Karen Mosteller, Alderman Robert Carroll,
Alderman Lowe Davis, Alderman Frank Lai

Members Absent:

Mayor Rich Alt

Staff Present:

City Manager Noah Saldo, City Clerk Tori Deviney, Deputy Clerk Scott Baillargeon Public
Information Officer ChyAnn Ketchum, Planning Services Director Maureen Meehan, Police
Chief Todd Coring, Public Works Director Tom Stanley, City Engineer Tom Zilinek, City
Engineer Bob Jarvis, Parks and Recreation Director Heather Hemphill

A. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 10:00 a.m. by Mayor Pro-Tem Kelley, who presided in the
absence of Mayor Alt.

B. Invocation

Alderman Davis offered the invocation

C. Pledge of Allegiance

Mayor Pro-Tem Kelley led everyone in the Pledge of Allegiance

Mayor Pro-Tem Kelley noted that Mayor Alt had to travel out of town due to a death in the
family. He was expected to return later that afternoon but was unable to attend this meeting.
Mayor Pro-Tem Kelley stated that she had spoken with him at length regarding the agenda and
that he would follow the meeting as his travel schedule allowed.

D. Public Comment

Mayor Pro-Tem Kelley asked if anyone had signed up for public comment. City Clerk Tori Deviney reported that no one had signed up.

No public comment was received.

E. Consent Agenda – Initial Discussion

A motion was made by Alderman Spencer and seconded by Alderman Mosteller to approve the Consent Agenda.

City Manager Saldo offered a brief explanation of each item before the Board took action.

City Manager Saldo noted that the first item concerned the City's annual sidewalk repair contract, which had already been funded in the FY26 budget. The contract followed a competitive bid process and would allow several sidewalk segments around town to be repaired over the next few months.

The second item involved structural repairs to the Indian Trail Meeting Hall, also approved as part of the budget. Following a structural analysis, several concerns were identified as needing corrective work. Alderman Davis questioned where the problems were specifically. City Manager Saldo asked Public Services Director Tom Stanley to come forward and provide additional detail.

Mayor Pro-Tem Kelley interjected to read the ethics statement.

No conflicts were disclosed.

Director Stanley explained that the repairs would focus on the crawl space and the floor structure, where soft spots had been discovered during inspection. The structural assessment revealed termite and rot damage, requiring replacement of the girders around the building. He also reported brick and lintel damage along the rear wall that would need to be repaired, and a new rear door would be installed.

Because the work involved structural reinforcement, Director Stanley added that the floor system would be brought up to current meeting-facility code standards, increasing the load capacity to 100 pounds per square foot.

Alderman Davis inquired whether the front steps met code. Director Stanley clarified that although he is not the building inspector, the front steps and railings met code at the time of installation and continue to be treated as compliant unless altered. He noted that the front deck has roughly a two-inch sag and will also be repaired, acknowledging that once lifted, additional issues may surface, a common challenge with older buildings.

City Manager Saldo proceeded to the next item, the Community Building deck. He explained that the deck had been budgeted for repairs this year and is in need of replacement. The contract

would remove the existing structure and rebuild the deck in a similar configuration, resulting in a new, safe outdoor space for community events.

City Manager Saldo then presented a resolution supporting the City's application for the Bonnet's Creek Flood Reduction Grant. The resolution would designate the City Manager and City Engineer Tom Zilinek. as authorized officials. If funded, the project would support ongoing stormwater mitigation efforts throughout the community.

Finally, City Manager Saldo explained that the Fire Department would soon undergo its ISO inspection and required a resolution formally affirming that it is the official fire department of the City of Southport, as part of the inspection documentation.

Alderman Davis stated that she was supportive of four of the five items and asked whether one item could be removed and voted on separately. Mayor Pro-Tem Kelley reminded the Board that a motion and second to approve the Consent Agenda were already on the floor.

During this discussion, Alderman Carroll noted that the Board had not yet approved the regular agenda, which should procedurally come before the Consent Agenda. To correct the overlook, Mayor Pro-Tem Kelley asked that the motion on the Consent Agenda be withdrawn so the Board could return to the agenda approval.

It was agreed that Item F3, the Community Building Deck Replacement Contract, could be separated from the Consent Agenda and addressed individually.

Alderman Davis made a motion to move Item F3 from the Consent Agenda to the Regular Agenda as Item G1, and the motion was seconded by Alderman Spencer. Motion passed unanimously.

Mayor Pro-Tem Kelley called for a motion to approve the regular agenda as amended, which was given by Alderman Lai and seconded by Alderman Spencer. Motion passed unanimously.

The Board then returned to the Consent Agenda, now excluding Item F3.

A motion to approve the revised Consent Agenda was made by Alderman Lai and seconded by Aldermen Spencer. Motion passed unanimously.

F. Agenda

1. Community Building Deck Replacement Contract

Alderman Davis opened the discussion by reiterating her ongoing opposition to replacing the Community Building decking. She stated that she believed the City should "give it a try" by removing the deck entirely and allowing the area to remain grass rather than rebuilding it. She explained that for weddings and other events, where guests often process from the building steps toward the outdoor space, a red carpet runner could be used instead, a common practice at many outdoor venues. Alderman Davis argued that this approach could save the City as much as \$55,000 and would be more environmentally friendly.

Alderman Carroll pointed out that the full \$55,000 would not actually be saved, as the existing deck would still need to be demolished and the area would need to be graded and replanted. Mayor Pro-Tem Kelley suggested that the installation of irrigation, could cost more than rebuilding the deck. Alderman Davis acknowledged the point but argued that even saving a portion of the cost, such as \$25,000, would still represent meaningful savings to taxpayers.

Alderman Mosteller expressed concerns about the long-term maintenance requirements of grass in that location saying it is not as environmentally responsible to use ongoing watering of grass to try to maintain a golf course like patch outside of here. She noted that to maintain the appearance expected for weddings and similar events, the lawn would have to be kept at a such a standard, which would require continual watering and care. She added that many of the venues that successfully use grassy areas for events are large hotels or “uber-venues” with ideal growing conditions or resources for intensive maintenance. The presence of a large tree shading the area at the Community Building, she explained, would make growing and sustaining such grass especially difficult.

Alderman Mosteller then made a motion to approve the contract for deck replacement.

Alderman Lai seconded her motion. Mayor Pro-Tem Kelley asked her to read the motion into the record. Alderman Carroll read the motion for Alderman Mosteller.

Motion: That the Board of Aldermen approve the contract with Millennium Contractors, Inc. for the replacement of the Community Building deck, in an amount not to exceed \$55,000, as recommended by staff, and authorize the execution of all necessary documents to proceed with the project.

There being no further discussion, Mayor Pro-Tem Kelley called for a vote.

Motion passed with majority vote 5-1, with Alderman Davis voting against, and all other members voting in favor.

Yay - Alderman Lai

Yay - Alderman Spencer

Yay - Alderman Mosteller

Yay - Alderman Carroll

Yay – Mayor Pro-Tem Kelley

Nay - Alderman Davis

2. Shoreline Stabilization

City Engineer Bob Jarvis explained that the Cape Fear River shoreline within the City of Southport continues to experience significant and increasing erosion. He noted that the erosion is driven by multiple factors, including storm-related wave action, boat and ship traffic, and the effects of ongoing sea level increase. The City’s engineering consultants, formerly Olsen

Associates, now operating as FA Olsen, have been assisting the City with the design, permitting, and construction components of shoreline protection elements.

To date, the consultants have completed comprehensive topographic and cultural resource surveys, assisted with easement acquisition, and advanced the overall project design. Permit applications for Phases 1 and 2 of the project have been submitted and are currently under review by CAMA and other state and federal agencies. Mr. Jarvis reported that the applications were accepted with very few questions, and there is no indication that the reviews will be delayed.

Mr. Jarvis explained that Phase 1 includes installation of a rock revetment extending from the area near Atlantic Avenue toward the Riverside Motel. Under Task Order No. 6, the consultant would prepare updated topographic surveys, final design, and full bidding documents for Phase 2, along with bid-phase services.

Mr. Jarvis went on to outline the expected timeline for the project. He explained that permit approvals are anticipated by spring of 2026, and possibly sooner if the review process continues without issue. He explained that the applications were accepted with very few questions, which gives staff reason to be optimistic about timely approval early next year. While the permit reviews are underway, the consultants will be completing the construction documents, allowing those materials to be ready as soon as approvals are issued. Once the permits are granted, the project would move directly into the bidding phase, also expected to take place in the spring of 2026.

Mr. Jarvis stated that the City anticipates awarding a construction contract and issuing a notice to proceed by late spring of 2026. Construction would begin immediately thereafter and is expected to last approximately four months, placing the projected completion date in the latter part of 2026.

Alderman Davis inquired about the deadline to get things going. Mr. Jarvis clarified that the City must encumber the project funding by June 30, 2026, meaning the City must award the construction contract by that date to a contractor. Construction does not need to be completed by the deadline. Based on the current schedule provided by the consultants and the positive feedback received during the permitting process, Mr. Jarvis stated that staff does not anticipate any difficulty meeting this requirement.

Alderman Mosteller asked for a breakdown of expenditures to date on the \$5 million grant funding the project. City Manager Saldo reported that only a small amount, the majority, \$40,000, has been spent on consultant work and legal fees associated with easements. The bulk of the funding will be used for the construction phase.

Alderman Mosteller expressed concern about ensuring that no funding is left unused, asking whether the City anticipates being able to obligate the full amount. Mr. Jarvis stated that current estimates indicate the City will be able to utilize the full \$5 million, with “add alternates”

included in the construction contract. If the total cost of the base project and alternates comes in above the funding amount, one or more alternates can simply be removed to stay within budget.

Mr. Jarvis noted that projects of this scale typically include consultant and construction oversight fees of around 10 percent, meaning those costs will increase as the project advances through final design and construction, further contributing to the full expenditure of the available funds.

Alderman Carroll then turned to the map in the packet and asked for clarification on the limits of Phase 1, noting that the depiction appeared not to extend all the way to Atlantic Street and seemed to stop near private property on Moore Street.

Mr. Jarvis confirmed that the map was accurate and explained that Phase 1 does, in fact, end just beyond that area and transitions near the private property line. He added that the contractors will reinforce the existing revetment installed during earlier emergency efforts on Bay Street, and additional revetment will be placed along the bulkhead near the waterfront park, restaurant, and motel. The remaining shoreline enhancement, including beach reestablishment and the installation of offshore breakwaters, will occur during Phase 2, further down the shoreline.

Alderman Davis asked whether all easements had been secured. Mr. Jarvis confirmed that the easements are in place and the Phase 1 limits shown on the handout are accurate.

Alderman Mosteller noted that the consultant's notes referenced "spring" and "early summer" of 2026, pointing out that summer does not officially begin until June 20. Given the June 30, 2026 funding deadline, she expressed worry that this left only a narrow window, roughly 60 days, for the City to finalize contract awards if the schedule tightened.

Mr. Jarvis responded that the uncertainty in the dates was largely due to the permitting process. He explained that all indications so far were positive, with the applications accepted and very few questions raised, and that the City should receive approvals within the standard 75-day review period. He acknowledged that his earlier timeline may have been "more pessimistic than optimistic," and stated that staff anticipates being able to award the construction contract by June 1 at the latest.

Alderman Mosteller asked whether expedited permitting was possible, but Mr. Jarvis explained that with nearly 15 different entities involved, there is no mechanism to pay for accelerated review. City Manager Saldo added that the City has already reached out to state and federal representatives to help apply pressure at the State level to keep the process moving.

Alderman Carroll questioned if they thought they could get an extension on the deadline. City Manager Saldo noted that staff had asked Representative Miller previously but had been told that no further extensions would be granted again. Despite these concerns, both Mr. Jarvis and City Manager Saldo expressed confidence that the City could meet the deadline if agencies stay on track.

Alderman Spencer then asked whether the section of shoreline being addressed in Phase 1 was the deepest part of the channel and therefore the most expensive to stabilize because the depth of the channel. Mr. Jarvis confirmed that this portion of the river is indeed deeper offshore; however, he explained that the work planned for Phase 1 involves placing a rock veneer along the existing shoreline edge. Because the contractor will not need to extend far into the deeper channel to complete this portion of the project, it should not be more expensive than other end. Access from the shore will allow the work to proceed efficiently.

Alderman Lai emphasized the urgency of moving forward. He noted that, without action, continued wave action, ship traffic, and sea level rise would soon push the shoreline out to Bay Street. He stated that this project is “absolutely essential” for Southport. Mr. Jarvis stated the City has already implemented emergency measures at other points along Bay Street to protect infrastructure, the street and sidewalk, from eroding.

Alderman Carroll made a motion to authorize the approval of FA Olsen Associates Task Order No. 06 to continue the design work and prepare bidding documents for the shoreline stabilization project. The motion was seconded by Alderman Lai.

Motion passed unanimously.

3. UDO Text Amendments

Planning Services Director Maureen Meehan introduced the discussion on proposed updates to the Unified Development Ordinance (UDO). She explained that updates to the UDO had been paused while the City completed its Comprehensive Plan, which was formally adopted in October, hence coming back and revisiting the UDO. At the Board’s September meeting, members of both the Board of Aldermen and the Planning Board were asked to submit topics, ideas, recommendations, and updates for the UDO. Staff compiled those submissions and organized them by UDO section for clarity.

Director Meehan also included policy references from the newly adopted Comprehensive Plan to demonstrate alignment between proposed ordinance changes and the public input captured during the plan’s extensive engagement process.

Director Meehan noted that no public input was submitted for this request in September; however, because the Comprehensive Plan reflects significant public participation, its related policy actions remain an important reference as staff begins the update process. She emphasized that the range of suggested amendments was broad, spanning everything from a full reorganization of the UDO, to parking revisions, to the creation of new zoning districts, and that these were “big-ticket items.”

Ms. Meehan explained that she wanted to be sure the Board took the necessary time to look at all of the proposed updates cohesively with everyone, noting that the list includes a wide range of items. She respectfully requested that the Board use this discussion to identify short, mid, and

long-term priorities, including what can and needs to be updated in the very near future. She also asked the Board to consider whether developing an entirely new UDO might ultimately be the best way to meet the City's goals.

Director Meehan reminded the Board that the last major UDO update occurred in 2020, and since then the ordinance has had three to four amendments each year, which causes it to become increasingly chopped up over time. Director Meehan added that while staff is capable of carrying out these updates, the department has so many other activities and projects going on that it may not be able to complete a major overhaul in a true timely fashion.

Alderman Carroll opened the discussion by stating he recommended instructing staff to obtain bids and estimates for revamping a new UDO. He clarified that this step would ensure the Board is informed as it considers future decisions.

Alderman Lowe asked whether this meant such an approach would be in lieu of considering these and adopting these. She stated that she felt that some of the items needed to be moved on pretty quick. Alderman Carroll agreed on needing to move forward with the items, what the future looks like.

Alderman Mosteller noted that when the City last undertook a major UDO update in 2020, the Cape Fear Council of Governments (COG) was hired to manage the project, and they led the process in coordination with the Planning Board. Alderman Spencer noted that the effort was extensive and took them a year and a half to do.

Alderman Mosteller agreed that the 2020 UDO update required significant effort because the document had to be thoroughly examined and thoughtfully organized. She emphasized that such work is inherently time-consuming. Alderman Spencer agreed, pointing out that the previous update "took a year and a half" to complete, underscoring the scale of undertaking a full rewrite.

Alderman Mosteller turned to the section on Home Occupations. Alderman Mosteller referenced the language describing an *"approval process of special use permits with standards that can be administratively approved."* She expressed hesitation about shifting certain home-occupation approvals entirely to staff-level review. In the City's current process, she explained, neighbors who may be affected by a business operating within a residential district have an opportunity to provide input. She emphasized that while some low-impact uses, such as an in-home office with no customer traffic, might be appropriate for administrative approval, she did not want to lose the component that allows neighbors to comment on proposed business activities occurring within residential neighborhoods.

Alderman Davis asked whether the draft specifically addressed this concern, referencing a past case in Cade's Cove involving a woodworking business being operated from a garage. She recalled that the case required multiple reviews and a lengthy process before a final conclusion was reached about what the property owner was allowed to do.

Director Meehan responded that home occupations vary in their level of impact and that many modern home-based businesses generate no traffic at all. She noted that requiring a full special use permit, including advertising costs and hearing procedures, may be unnecessary for very low-impact uses. However, she stated that standards could be developed to maintain neighbor notification, such as establishing a comment period before staff makes an administrative decision. If staff received comments that raised concerns or conflicts, Director Meehan said the application could then be “triggered” into a formal special use permit process before the Board of Adjustment.

Alderman Mosteller asked for clarification on how a comment period would function and whether it would require a hearing at an aldermen meeting or some other form of public comment. Director Meehan explained that comments would be submitted directly to staff, not presented at an aldermen meeting. Staff would review the comments, and if the issues warranted it, the matter could be elevated to a Board of Adjustment hearing.

Mayor Pro-Tem Kelley also asked how adjacent property owners would be notified. She noted that when she previously lived next door to a home-based bakery, the property had been posted prior to approval. Director Meehan explained that under statute, property posting is required for a special use permit, but there are multiple options for administrative notification. She referenced the method used by CAMA for riparian owners, notification by certified mail, as a model the City could consider for home-occupation administrative decisions. This process would document that neighbors were informed and would allow them to submit comments for staff consideration.

Shifting to the Parking Standards section, Alderman Mosteller directed attention to page 44 and noted that the section was extensive. She explained that one of her long-standing concerns from the previous year involved an unintentional change to the parking requirement for mixed-use development. Historically, the requirement had been two spaces per residential unit, but at some point it had been revised to one space, which affected several projects in the downtown area where parking availability is already limited. She expressed concern that the reduction had created unintended consequences and emphasized the importance of correcting it.

She added that she found the issue confusing because on page 16 of the UDO, the section on Commercial Accessory Dwellings continued to require two off-street parking spaces per residential unit. She questioned why mixed-use residential units had been reduced to one space, noting that both uses occur within commercial areas, and emphasized that the standards should remain consistent.

Alderman Mosteller noted that while the new Comprehensive Plan is in favor for reducing parking requirements, Southport is already significantly challenged in its downtown areas. She stated that such reductions may be suitable in larger urban markets. She asked that the City carefully consider whether reduced parking standards are appropriate before making changes that could worsen existing constraints.

Alderman Davis asked whether the proposed revisions included changing residential accessory dwelling units (ADUs) from two required parking spaces down to one. Director Meehan responded that the draft did reflect that change. Alderman Davis expressed concern and said the City needed to take a closer look at that adjustment as well.

Director Meehan explained that commercial ADUs and residential ADUs function differently. A residential ADU is typically used by a family member or someone assisting the household, not a tenant renting independently. Because of that, the main dwelling already provides two required parking spaces, and an additional single space for the ADU may be sufficient. She emphasized that residential ADUs cannot currently be rented out; they must be occupied by someone living as part of the primary household.

Alderman Carroll then pointed out what he viewed as an inconsistency in the draft: a short-term vacation rental with multiple bedrooms located in a commercial district could be required to provide only one parking space, despite potentially hosting several vehicles. He questioned whether parking should be tied to the number of bedrooms rather than applying a single standard that might allow large bedroom counts with minimal parking requirements.

Director Meehan clarified that mixed-use residential units within the BD and CBD zoning districts *can* be rented, but their size is limited. Under the UDO, the residential portion cannot exceed a certain ratio, no more than one and a half times the size of the commercial use located below it.

Alderman Mosteller acknowledged this clarification and reiterated that these items were part of a broader conversation about ensuring parking standards remain workable for Southport. Director Meehan confirmed that this discussion was exploratory and that all concepts presented were open for further review and adjustment.

Alderman Mosteller raised a concern regarding accessory structures on residential lots, particularly on non-conforming lots. She noted that the Board had previously discussed establishing a minimum rear setback requirement to prevent situations where structures were built setback to setback, leaving almost no usable yard space. She recalled instances where large accessory structures were constructed with only approximately eight feet of rear yard remaining, barely enough room for basic outdoor use, such as letting a dog outside. She requested that the Planning Board engage in further discussion on developing standards to avoid such outcomes and ensure that non-conforming lots retain at least some practical rear open space.

Alderman Davis then sought clarification on terminology, noting that accessory structures and accessory dwellings are conceptually two different things. Director Meehan confirmed that this distinction was correct.

Alderman Mosteller referenced Homestays, Section G(2)(b) and pointed out that the term “full-time resident” still appeared in the second-to-last sentence, despite prior efforts to revise such language throughout the document.

Alderman Davis then asked whether staff had an estimate of how many homestays currently operate within the City. Director Meehan responded that she did have those numbers but did not have them immediately available. She added that the number of homestays is significantly smaller than the number of full-home short-term rentals, likely around half a dozen, and clarified that a *homestay* refers to a situation where someone rents out a room in their home while continuing to live in the residence.

Alderman Mosteller raised an additional concern related to setbacks, specifically noting that roof overhangs are currently allowed to encroach into setback areas. She stated that this practice should be reevaluated, especially on non-conforming lots where side setbacks may be as small as four feet. She explained that allowing a two-foot overhang with a gabled roof could result in stormwater being directed onto an adjacent property, creating potential drainage and property-impact issues. She shared that in other jurisdictions where she has lived, overhangs were required to be counted within the setback limits, and she encouraged the Planning Board to consider whether Southport should adopt a similar approach.

Director Meehan responded that the UDO had been amended within the past two years following an applicant's request to adjust setback encroachments. That update allowed certain mechanical units, such as HVAC systems, to encroach halfway into the setback, while roof eave encroachments were reduced to 18 inches. She agreed, however, that staff could revisit whether overhangs should be required to remain fully within the setback area. Director Meehan acknowledged the concern and stated that staff would be glad to look into options to address the issue.

Alderman Mosteller then moved to the section on Mobile Vendors located on page 48 of the agenda. She pointed out that the draft language requires "*a signed letter between the property owner and the business owner*," but she felt the phrasing was unclear. She recalled that the original intent was for a new letter to be required each time a vendor moved to a different property, ensuring that every property owner explicitly authorized the vendor's operation at that specific location. However, the current wording gave the impression that only an annual letter was needed, rather than one tied to each individual property. She suggested that the language be clarified to convey the intended requirement more clearly.

Alderman Davis noted that she understood the underlying reasoning behind the mobile vendor letter requirement but raised a clarification question. She asked whether, during the Fourth of July festivities, a food truck parked directly in front of someone's home would be required to obtain a permit or a letter of approval from the homeowner.

Director Meehan clarified that for City-sanctioned events, such as the Fourth of July Festival or the Food Truck Rodeo, food trucks do not need approval from individual property owners. Those vendors must still obtain the necessary City-issued permit, comply with state requirements, and secure Fire Marshal approval, but they do not need permission from adjacent homeowners because the City predetermines the designated concession areas.

Mayor Pro-Tem Kelley added, that however, if a private resident arranged for a food truck to operate in front of their home during the festival period, but not as part of the official Fourth of July event, that operation would not fall under the City's festival authorization. In that case, the vendor would need to complete the standard permitting process, including documentation of the property owner's consent. Director Meehan agreed.

Alderman Mosteller stated that she had one remaining item from her April 2024 list, referencing Section 3.7, Residential Standards, Item A(5). She explained that the section currently reads that multifamily residential structures are controlled by "*maximum height, maximum number of dwelling units, maximum floor area ratio, [and] the maximum open space ratio.*" She pointed out that the term "maximum open space ratio" appears to be incorrect, as subsections A through D immediately below reference minimum open space requirements. She stated that the two terms are in conflict and that "minimum" is clearly the correct standard. Director Meehan acknowledged the issue and confirmed that staff had already noted that correction.

Mayor Pro-Tem Kelley then raised an additional question regarding swimming pool setbacks, directing attention to page 49, item 1. The draft states that the coping or decking of a pool, whichever is closest to the property line, "*shall not be less than five feet in distance.*" She said the language reads awkwardly and could be interpreted to mean a pool must be *exactly* five feet from the property line rather than at least five feet. She requested clarification.

Director Meehan clarified that five feet is the minimum setback for pool coping, and that a pool may be located farther away, such as ten feet, with no issue. She agreed that the language could be made clearer and stated that staff could reword the section to improve readability.

Alderman Davis asked about the rationale behind the requirement. Director Meehan explained that it was largely a cleanup provision, intended to ensure that rear yard open space remains functional and unobstructed. It also helps with runoff management, particularly since the City does not currently regulate impervious surface coverage; she expressed concern that adding impervious limits at this time could be considered a downzoning because it would restrict density. The five-foot minimum therefore preserves some consistent, usable open space behind homes without significantly limiting property rights.

Alderman Mosteller said she fully supported the intent but emphasized the importance of making the language clear for residents and applicants.

She then asked how the standard would apply to non-conforming lots, where setbacks can be reduced. Specifically, she asked whether the minimum distance would still be five feet, or whether it would match the reduced setbacks applicable to the structure on such lots.

Director Meehan responded that for non-conforming lots, the City could approach it either way, either maintain the full five-foot minimum or allow the pool coping setback to match the reduced structural setback. She explained that staff has generally interpreted the requirement to mean that

if a home is allowed a four-foot setback due to non-conforming lot status, the pool coping may also be four feet. Alderman Mosteller agreed that interpretation made sense.

Director Meehan confirmed that staff could revise the wording to explicitly state the requirement as a minimum setback, ensuring the language is clear and easy for applicants to understand.

Alderman Davis noted that she had one additional topic for discussion, explaining that when the UDO was approved in 2020, the City had already experienced Hurricanes Matthew and Florence but had *not* yet experienced the pattern of intense heavy-rainfall flooding that has now occurred almost yearly.

Alderman Davis referenced a proposal she had raised previously, suggesting that the City consider requiring new homes to be built above slab level, with raised foundations, perhaps one or two feet above grade, similar to minimum elevations required in FEMA flood zones. She acknowledged that such a requirement would increase construction costs but argued that those expenses are minor compared to the financial and emotional devastation of a flooded home, especially for residents outside FEMA-designated flood zones who often do not carry flood insurance.

Alderman Lai asked whether existing flood zone regulations, such as elevation requirements in AE versus X zones, already addressed this concern. Alderman Davis responded that many of the homes experiencing repeated flooding in Southport are not in FEMA flood zones at all, citing areas such as Stuart Ave and Park Ave, where substantial flooding occurs despite properties not being required to carry flood insurance. She explained that homeowners outside special flood hazard areas are less likely to purchase flood coverage, leaving them unprotected.

Alderman Carroll agreed that flood insurance is relatively inexpensive outside mapped flood zones, typically \$300–\$500 per year. However, he cautioned that regulations increasing building height requirements could negatively affect housing affordability, noting that many families are already struggling to afford living in Southport. He expressed struggling with the idea of mandating elevated foundations but supported expanding stormwater and drainage improvements, observing that blocked drains are a recurring, contributing issue.

Alderman Davis acknowledged the tension between regulation and affordability, noting that the topic had been discussed before. She pointed to neighborhoods like North Caswell, where homes are situated below street level and are just sitting ducks. She explained that even with improved drainage maintenance, these houses flood because stormwater becomes temporarily trapped by topography and road paving, which has incrementally increased elevation over time.

Alderman Spencer stated that while he personally recommends that clients build on pilings or raised foundations, he was hesitant to impose such a requirement on everyone.

Alderman Davis responded that she did not wish to force the requirement but hoped the City could strongly encourage elevated construction. She noted that stormwater in many older blocks

becomes briefly dammed, causing homes on slabs to suffer structural and interior damage that raised homes avoid.

Alderman Davis offered to consult several builders to determine the actual cost difference between constructing on a slab versus raising a foundation by approximately two feet.

Alderman Spencer added that he personally advises her real estate clients to choose raised-foundation construction whenever possible, stating that flooding “comes and goes,” but slab homes cannot tolerate the impacts.

Mayor Pro-Tem Kelley reiterated her understanding of concerns about over-regulating but noted that flood insurance remains inexpensive for homes outside mapped flood zones. She explained that she carries such insurance herself for less than \$1,000 per year and considers the peace of mind well worth the cost.

Alderman Mosteller referencing Section 3.7(A)(6). The draft states that *“no more than 20% of the off-street parking associated with multifamily use may be located in the front yard facing a public street.”* She asked the Planning Board to consider eliminating off-street parking located in the front yard facing a public street, explaining that doing so would improve streetscapes and create development patterns more consistent with Southport’s historic character. She noted that parking positioned in front of buildings “brings everything right to the street,” which diminishes the traditional visual rhythm of historic blocks. Currently standards allow a 25-foot front setback.

Mayor Pro-Tem Kelley noted that she had an additional item to raise but wished to offer a caveat before doing so, explaining for transparency that she owns an inn in Southport. She then directed the Board to page 50, under the definition and standards for hotel, motel, or inn, which state that any building on the site must be a minimum of 200 feet from any residential district. She pointed out that because Southport’s Business District (BD) directly abuts residential zoning, such a requirement would effectively prevent any new hotels from being built in town.

Director Meehan clarified that Mayor Pro-Tem Kelley’s establishment would be considered a boutique hotel, which falls under separate standards. She explained that boutique hotels fall under the PS standard, which is permitted by right.

Alderman Carroll asked for clarification on how boutique is defined. Director Meehan stated these establishments are limited by size, number of rooms, and the prohibition of certain accessory uses, such as outdoor bars or pools, to ensure compatibility with nearby residences.

Alderman Spencer referenced an ordinance adopted earlier in the year governing driveway widths for U-shaped driveways. He reported that several residents had approached him stating that the ordinance was impractical.

Director Meehan responded that this topic was already included in the broader review of non-residential design standards, where staff intends to ensure driveway requirements are feasible across both residential and non-residential contexts.

Mayor Pro-Tem Kelley asked whether there were elements the City should proceed with immediately or was a consultant needed. Alderman Mosteller stated that she believed the Planning Board was fully capable of handling all of the items discussed during the meeting. She clarified that, although she could not speak for Director Meehan, she understood that the Director's focus was on the larger-scale restructuring tasks, such as reformatting portions of the UDO to make it more user-friendly, improving readability, and ensuring internal consistency.

She added that she strongly supported the idea of comparing the UDO with the Code of Ordinances, noting that many sections of the Code date back to 1984.

Alderman Davis asked whether the Board of Adjustment had reviewed any of the proposed changes. Director Meehan explained that while the Board of Adjustment had not been formally consulted on this batch of amendments, they frequently offer valuable insight when variances or special use permits reveal unclear or difficult-to-interpret sections of the UDO.

3. Public Comment Policy

The Board then transitioned to discussion of the Public Comment Policy, originally presented at the prior month's meeting. Alderman Carroll stated that he had requested feedback and had received only limited comments. He recommended removing Item 3 under Procedures, which imposed specific time limits for speakers and spokespersons. He noted that the Board had not enforced such limits for several years and suggested adopting the policy as written, with Item 3 removed.

Alderman Davis objected, stating, "Absolutely not," and clarified that she opposed re-instituting time limits and supported removing Item 3, thus agreeing with Alderman Carroll's suggestion. After brief confusion, Alderman Davis reiterated that she supported adopting the policy without speaker time restrictions.

Mayor Pro-Tem Kelley asked if there was a motion. Alderman Carroll made the motion, and Alderman Mosteller seconded it.

Alderman Davis requested postponing the vote until the next public meeting to give the community an opportunity to weigh in, noting that the policy directly affects residents.

The Board discussed how speaker time is handled in Brunswick County, where the standard is three minutes for both Planning Board and Commissioner meetings, with visual timers used to assist speakers. The County also allows a spokesperson up to eight minutes to speak on behalf of a group, though Alderman Carroll noted his earlier motion included the removal of that provision as well.

Alderman Mosteller added that the remainder of the policy deals largely with decorum, not time limits, and she supported adopting the document as presented with Item 3 removed. She stated that if the Board wished to debate speaker time limits in the future, that discussion could occur at a later meeting.

Alderman Davis raised concerns about defining decorum. Alderman Carroll pointed to examples within the draft, such as requiring that public comments shall be relevant to city business, municipal services, or matters within the jurisdiction of the board of aldermen, and not personal disputes between neighbors. He expressed surprise that the City did not already have a formal policy.

Mayor Pro-Tem Kelley requested adding language prohibiting scenting or loud noises during public comment to prevent disruptions. Alderman Carroll asked staff to provide appropriate wording at the next meeting. The Board expressed general support for incorporating that addition.

A motion was made and seconded to adopt the Public Comment Policy as written, with the removal of Item 3.

Alderman Davis asked for clarification on if the Board was voting on a policy without giving the public an opportunity to speak on it.

Mayor Pro-Tem Kelley responded that the policy had been publicly noticed, appeared on the agenda, and had been open for comment earlier in the meeting, yet no one had come forward to speak. She also noted that two components, the suggestion regarding scenting and loud noises, and the issue of time allocations for speakers, were already scheduled to return at a future meeting for additional discussion.

To illustrate, Alderman Carroll referenced several items already consistent with current practice:

- **Item 1:** Public comment would be scheduled at every regular meeting of the Board of Aldermen
- **Item 2:** Persons wishing to speak must sign up

Alderman Carroll explained that the policy was simply formalizing what the Board already practiced putting it in a policy.

Alderman Davis asked whether there was urgency in adopting the policy that evening instead of waiting until the following Thursday. Alderman Carroll replied that the Board needed to conduct the people's business and that government runs slow enough without delaying matters unnecessarily.

Noting that a vote had already taken place but that there was confusion about it, Mayor Pro-Tem Kelley stated that the Board would redo the vote for clarity. She asked Alderman Davis whether she now understood the motion. Alderman Davis responded that she did, and that she had misunderstood or missed the earlier vote; therefore, her vote would be no.

The Board then revisited the motion. Mayor Pro-Tem Kelley called for the vote once more:

Yay - Alderman Mosteller
Yay - Alderman Carroll
Yay - Mayor Pro- Tem Kelley
Yay - Alderman Spencer
Yay - Alderman Lai
Nay - Alderman Davis

Motion passed by majority vote of 5-1.

I. Manager's Report

City Manager Saldo began his report by noting that the past weekend had been filled with successful community events throughout Southport. He shared that he greatly enjoyed attending both the Wooden Boat Show and the Holly Days at Southport Baptist Church.

City Manager Saldo then provided an update from Public Works, offering a shout out to staff for their ongoing efforts to address issues within the stormwater system. He reported that several stormwater drains, previously covered or filled with dirt, had been uncovered and restored, including on West St. George Street and West Owens Street. He added that staff also completed drainage improvements on West Leonard Street and are continuing to push forward.

City Manager Saldo noted that the City is preparing for several new stormwater-related projects in the coming year and is actively pursuing grant opportunities to support larger improvements.

J. Board Comments

Alderman Davis reported that she had received a message from the Chairman of the Parks and Recreation Committee asking her to remind the community about several upcoming programs, including yoga classes. She noted, however, that she was unable to locate the specific details in the moment and asked the Parks and Recreation Director if she would be willing to share the information.

Director Heather Hemphill announced that yoga classes began earlier that day, with sessions now offered on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays. The schedule is as follows:

- Mondays & Wednesdays: 7:30–8:30 a.m. and 8:30–9:30 a.m.
- Fridays: 9:30–10:30 a.m.

Director Hemphill noted that the classes are held at the Jaycee Building and are fully listed on the City's website. Public Information Officer ChyAnn Ketchum has also shared the schedule across all City social media platforms.

Director Hemphill continued with additional updates, noting that the department is preparing for its November holiday programming, including multiple Thanksgiving activities and the annual Senior Luncheon. She highlighted that Ms. Maureen ("Cookie") will once again prepare a

homemade meal for participating seniors, with attendees providing side dishes. The luncheon is scheduled for next Wednesday at the Senior Building.

Director Hemphill reported that the After School Program continues to operate successfully and that Parks and Recreation will also be offering camp sessions during the upcoming school breaks later in the month. Finally, she shared that the department is already gearing up for Christmas and the full slate of holiday events that come with it.

Alderman Carroll thanked staff and shared that it was great to see so many City employees present at events over the weekend. He noted that this was City Manager Noah Saldo's first Wooden Boat Show, and he was proud to see him out in the community representing the City so well.

Alderman Carroll added that early that morning, Public Works was already out setting up barricades in preparation for the week's activities. He expressed his appreciation for the hard work, coordination, and long hours that staff put into making Southport's festivals successful.

Alderman Lai remarked that it had been a wonderful and very active weekend in Southport. He shared that the Wooden Boat Show was, as always, a highlight. He noted that one of his neighbors had built a wooden boat in his garage, and it was a treat to watch him bring it out and display it at the event.

Mayor Pro-Tem Kelley shared that she had the pleasure of participating in the Stede Bonnet Regatta, which was enjoyable despite the light winds early in the day; conditions improved as the afternoon progressed. She also attended the Fire Department's Trunk-or-Treat event with her children, which he described as a wonderful and well-organized community activity.

Mayor Pro-Tem Kelley went on to note that the weekend was full of events, including the Holly Days and the Jack Helbig Memorial Foundation Boat Pull, both of which were successful and well attended. She expressed appreciation for City staff, acknowledging how many departments were present all over town supporting various activities. She thanked them for their work in managing such a busy weekend.

Mayor Pro-Tem Kelley then took a moment to mention, for those who were not present at the beginning of the meeting, that Mayor Alt had experienced a death in the family out of state. She offered prayers for the mayor and his family and informed the public that the mayor was actively on his way back and expected to return later that afternoon.

K. Closed Session

Mayor Pro-Tem Kelley stated that, with no further comments, the Board would proceed into closed session for a personnel matter.

A motion to enter closed session was made by Alderman Carroll and seconded by Alderman Spencer. The motion passed unanimously, and the Board entered closed session at 11:11 a.m.

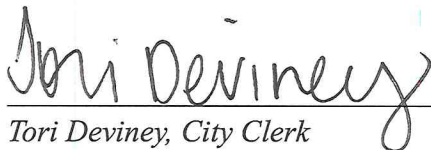
Closed session discussion

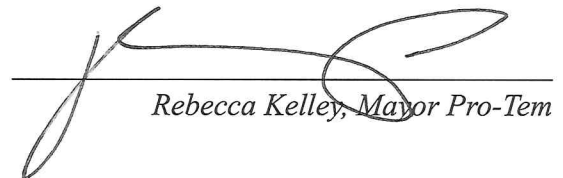
A motion to return to open session was made by Alderman Spencer and seconded by Alderman Mosteller. The motion passed unanimously, and the Board reconvened in open session at 11:22 a.m.

L. Adjourn

A motion to adjourn was made by Alderman Spencer and seconded by Alderman Mosteller. The motion passed unanimously, and the meeting adjourned at 11:23 a.m.

ATTEST:


Tori Deviney, City Clerk


Rebecca Kelley, Mayor Pro-Tem

