

May 8, 2025
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

CITY OF SOUTHPORT
BOARD OF ALDERMEN
223 E. BAY STREET
6:00 P.M.

PRESENT: Mayor Richard Alt
Mayor Pro-Tem Rebecca Kelley
Aldermen Marc Spencer, Robert Carroll, Frank Lai, Lowe Davis,
Karen Mosteller

STAFF: Noah Saldo, Interim City Manager
Tori Deviney, Deputy City Clerk
Charles Drew, Fire Chief
Heather Hemphill, Parks & Recreation Director
Tom Stanley, Public Services Director
Maureen Meehan, Planning Services Director
Wendell Biddle, City Planner
ChyAnn Ketchum, Public Information Officer

A. Call to Order

Mayor Alt called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

B. Invocation

Pastor Gary Albertson, Trinity Methodist Church, gave the invocation.

C. Pledge of Allegiance

Mayor Alt let the assemblage in the Pledge of Allegiance.

D. Public Comment

Alderman Lai made a motion to open public comment, second by Alderman Spencer. **Unanimous vote; motion carried.**

Mr. Hugh Sutherland, 774 Indigo Village Court, and a member of *Thriving Men's Tennis Group*, addressed the Board. He talked about the E. Moore Street tennis courts being a part of Southport's heritage fostering youth development, relationships, and lifelong memories. He stated that health studies had deemed tennis the healthiest sport and per Mayo Clinic, tennis adds ten (10) years to a person's life span. Mr. Southerland reported that in 2022 the Brunswick County Parks and Recreation Department was recognized for its tennis program by the U.S. Tennis Association with an award for outstanding department that has made it greatest impact in the community. Mr. Southerland expressed gratefulness for living in a town that fosters a vibrant, connected community for all ages. He urged the Board to restore the tennis courts to preserve a valuable piece of Southport's past and its future.

Mr. Norm Rademach, 6251 Cottage Creek, expressed his personal comments to the Board. He spoke of playing tennis his entire life and has played on Southport's court for over 12 years. Referencing examples of recent tennis court repair bids, Mr. Rademach stated his opinion that the city had received an excessive bid for repairs. He cited bids for Ocean Greens single court \$20,000; Southport Harbor Village \$20,000 - \$30,000; Indigo Plantation \$30,000 - \$40,000. He offered the names of three (3) contractors, pointed out other experts present in the audience, and speculated the USDA could provide funding. He talked about the expense to turn the tennis courts into a parking lot and he encouraged the Board to repair and retain the tennis courts.

Mr. Tom McKay, 7705 E. Yacht Drive, Oak Island, spoke about recently moving from Cary, NC, being luck in being introduced to 50+ members of a tennis club, and his hope the Board would refurbish the tennis courts.

Alderman Mosteller made a motion to close public comment, second by Alderman Lai. **Unanimous vote; motion carried.**

E. Approval of Agenda

Alderman Carroll made a motion to approve the agenda, second by Alderman Kelley. **Unanimous vote; motion carried.**

Mayor Alt read the Ethics Statement:

"If any members know of any conflict of interest or the appearance of a conflict of interest concerning matters on the agenda, please so state at this time."

No conflicts of interest stated.

F. Approval of Consent Agenda

Alderman Carroll made a motion to approve the Consent Agenda, second by Alderman Kelley. Unanimous vote; motion carried.

1. Minutes of the January 9, 2025 Regular Aldermen Meeting (agenda pages 3-27)
2. Minutes of the January 6, 2025 Aldermen Budget Meeting (agenda pages 28-40)
3. Minutes of the February 7, 2025 Special Aldermen Meeting (agenda pages 41-56)
4. Disaster Debris Contract (agenda pages 57-84)
5. Resolution Authorizing the Mayor to Sign the Necessary Sunny Point Property Acquisition by NCWRE Documents (agenda page 85)

Mayor Alt explained that a Disaster Debris Contract is annually adopted for clean up after a major storm event and to ensure compliance with FEMA reimbursement requirements.

Resolution #25-0508.01

A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE MAYOR TO EXECUTE CLOSING DOCUMENTS

WHEREAS, on March 21st, 2024, the Southport Board of Aldermen entered into Option Agreement SPO#10-LA-197 with the State of North Carolina to sell +-426.65 acres of land the City owns described in Deed Book 2282, Page 305 and Deek Book 2403, Page 1368, Brunswick County Registry, Brunswick County PID 19000002. With the option period ending Marsh 21, 2025; and

WHEREAS, on March 13, 2025, the Board of Aldermen extended the option period to a new ending date of July 31, 2025, with closing to occur on or before September 5, 2025; and

WHEREAS, the process of acquisition is nearing completion and preparing for closing.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE BOARD OF ALDERMEN OF THE CITY OF SOUTHPORT that the Mayor is hereby authorized to execute and sign all necessary closing documents including but not limited to the Deed on behalf of the City.

Adopted this 8th day of May 2025.

/s/ Richard Alt, Mayor

ATTEST:

/s/Tori Deviney, Deputy City Clerk

G. Agenda

Alderman Carroll made a motion to open Public Hearing, second by Alderman Kelley. **Unanimous vote; motion carried.**

1. Public Hearing: Unified Development Ordinance (UDO) Amendment to multiple sections for consistency with NC General Statutes Chapter 160D, Local Planning and Development Regulation (agenda pages 86-94)

Director Meehan explained that the proposed amendments are a response to statutory changes to NC General Statutes Chapter 160D, which local government must make. She reported that the Planning Board had reviewed the proposal and recommended approval.

Alderman Davis emphasized that the proposed amendments had to be adopted per state law.

There were no comments from the public.

2. Public Hearing: Unified Development Ordinance Amendment to Section 3.1 Table of Permitted and Special Uses; Section 3.6.A.5 Accessory Use Standards; Section 3.6.Q. Accessory Use Standards; and Article 8 Definitions and Measurements of the Unified Development Ordinance (agenda pages 95-100)

City Planner Biddle addressed the Board. He explained the proposed UDO text amendments; “The creation of a new land use Specialized Events along with a Temporary Use Permit to provide Bed and Breakfasts (B & B) operations among other commercial establishments with the opportunity to host occasions such as weddings, quinceaneras, holiday parties and other formal occasions at their premises.”

City Planner Biddle provided the background for the proposal:

- July 2024 application for the necessary Special Use Permit to operate a B&B
 - Management plan for the B&B proposed operating as an event space
 - Request for events venue highlighted the lack of an appropriate land use within the UDO
 - October 2024 Planning Board committee established
 - Four (4) core questions steered the committee:
1. Should specialized events be limited to B&B, or can we create an amendment that enables specialized events to also be used as a primary land use?

2. What parameters should be put into place to ensure the nature of residential zoning districts is not altered by higher impact activity such as B&Bs hosting specialized events?
3. How will safety precautions such as capacity limits be enforced?
4. How do we ensure that emergency services are not overwhelmed?

City Planner Biddle provided the definition for *Specialized Events*: *A commercial venture held in non-religious venues wherein the event is secondary to the venue's primary land use and would be required to adhere to specific land use standards.* He reviewed the proposed amendments to UDO Section 3.6 Accessory Use Standards and Table 3.1 Accessory Uses Amended. He pointed out the exempt events: birthday parties, family gatherings, after work functions, religious ceremonies and large scale community festivals and events, i.e. 4th of July.

Citing specifics of her family gatherings, Alderman Kelley questioned how a “family gathering” would be monitored. City Planner Biddle responded the decisive factor would be paying for the venue and if held at a hotel there would be no capacity concerns.

Responding to a query by Alderman Spencer, City Planner Biddle indicated that AirB&Bs are not considered a commercial activity and are prohibited from hosting major events. Alderman Kelley stated her awareness of weddings being held at AirB&Bs.

Alderman Mosteller expressed her confusion about the language for restaurants and parks; why an amendment is needed when the Parks & Recreation Department permits events for the parks, and restaurants historically hold special events, i.e. private parties, etc. in business zoned areas. Alderman Mosteller went on to talk about the Special Use Permit required for operation of a B&B in a residentially zoned district and if creating a third land use as a venue in a residentially zoned neighborhood is appropriate. She noted that B&Bs should be able to have events or gatherings related to their overnight occupancy limit. She cautioned that *Specialized Events* occupancy (possibly 150 attendees) would burden adjacent property owners.

Alderman Davis spoke about the initial application that triggered the proposed amendments and its being next to St. Phillips Church which has services in the daytime and in the evenings. She stated a big event with outdoor music, etc. will clash with the heritage use of a church. Referencing the Board of Adjustment held two (2) cases pertaining to the subject, Alderman Davis asked that the June board agenda packet include all information and boards' minutes pertaining to the subject.

Responding to a question by Alderman Lai, City Planner Biddle pointed out that restaurants and breweries may close for major events such as a Super Bowl party or host a specialized event like Mardi Gras where there could be live music, and the number of how many times specialized events can be held is limited. Alderman Kelley stated her opinion the proposed restrictions are over-reaching in the Commercial Business District (CBD) and Business District (BD).

Alderman Davis recalled the excruciating detail that went into deciding the permitted uses at Franklin Square Park, one of which was weddings.

Mr. Paul Swenson, 107 N. Atlantic Avenue addressed the Board. He read a letter he had submitted in the Fall of 2024 to the Southport Board of Adjustment for their consideration of an application to operate a B&B at 209 E. Moore Street. Mr. Swenson expressed his concerns and opposition to Specialized Events and the potential occupancy of those large events. He pointed out that the property at 209 E. Moore Street, and the location of a potential B&B, abuts his residence, has a large rear yard, could easily accommodate 150 people, and there is inadequate parking which is compounded by proximity to the Southport Community Building with minimal off-street parking. He stated that the owners were fully aware of the residential zoning of the property at 209 E. Moore Street when they purchased it. He shared his recent perusal of the Carriage House B&B website and the misleading information it contained. Additionally, he shared his experiences of 35 years as a city resident and the lack of enforcement of code violations. He speculated what would happen if a specialized event, i.e. wedding, was held without proper authorization, reported by a citizen, and attempted to be shut down by a city official or the police department.

Stating he knowingly purchased his residence next to an HOA clubhouse, Mayor Alt recalled the public outcry over short-term rentals. He concurred with Mr. Swenson as to the potential for code enforcement and police action and he suggested implementing an action plan for reacting to violations. Referencing the Noise Ordinance, Mayor Alt added that he did not see any benefit to residents and he spoke about providing neighborhood input.

For a point of comparison, Alderman Davis noted that the room the Board is currently in has a maximum room occupancy of 150 people.

Alderman Kelley made a motion to close Public Hearing, second by Alderman Lai.
Unanimous vote; motion carried.

H. Committee Reports

1. ABC Board (agenda pages 101-102)

Alderman Lai reported that April was a good month with increases in all sales areas for the ABC Store. He pointed out that landscaping work is being done and it was unknown who dumped a load of gravel in the parking lot. The next meeting of the ABC Board will be held May 14, 2025.

Alderman Spencer reported that in cooperation with the Brunswick County Manager, Steve Stone, water taps are being installed at the Northwood Cemetery at a reduced tap fee cost.

Alderman Mosteller reported that the Beautification Committee has nearly completed the Waterfront Park project:

- New picnic tables built from donated movie set lumber
- 9 of 12 benches have new slats for seats and backs
- New standardized color and fonts on the city sign

Alderman Mosteller added that the Beautification Committee has completed the work on the Visitor Center sign at Davis Street and has also trimmed and mulched that area. She indicated that the next monthly morning clean up would be Saturday, May 10, beginning at 9:00 a.m., meeting at the jail annex on Rhett Street.

Pointing out that the Southport Historical Society sponsors a commemorative brick sale each year, Alderman Mosteller reported that Saturday, May 10, bricks would be laid in front of the Visitors Center at Fort Johnston. The annual Southport Historical Celebration will be held May 22 at 5:30 p.m. on the Garrison lawn at Fort Johnston Museum and Visitors Center. The event will include *Blue Tulip* a jazz blues band, and Southport historical figures actor portrayals by Southport *Living Voices*.

Alderman Mosteller gave a shout out to the Forestry Committee and the City for its 21st year of recognition as a *Tree City USA* by the National Arbor Day Foundation. She spoke about the successful Arbor Day Celebration held April 25th in Franklin Square Park. She stated the Forestry Committee meets on the second Tuesday of each month, 5:00 p.m. at the Indian Trail Meeting Hall, W. Moore Street. The next meeting will be May 13th.

I. Manager's Report

City Manager Saldo thanked the Southport Fire and Police departments for assisting Boiling Spring Lakes and other agencies during a recent fire.

Noting the week of May 5-9 is Municipal Clerk's Week, City Manager Saldo thanked Deputy City Clerk, Tori Deviney, for her dedication and leadership.

City Manager Saldo announced that a "round table" discussion would be held May 12th, 3:30 p.m. in the Community Building, with local businesses to gauge their concerns and gather ideas on how the city can better support them.

City Manager Saldo reported that he and the mayor had attended the ribbon cutting of the Southport Health and Rehabilitation Center re-opening. The center had sustained flood damage from Potential Tropical Storm #8 (PTS8).

J. Mayor's Comments

Mayor Alt thanked the Public Services Department for their continued work on the city's storm water system. He pointed out that the city is applying for grant funding to address larger storm water issues within the city. Responding to a question by Mayor Alt, City Manager Saldo stated that the city is pursuing additional federal/state fund for storm water projects.

Mayor Alt reported that May 12 will be the Mayors' Meeting at the Brunswick Electric Membership Corp location on NC Highway 17. Senator Rabon and Representative Miller are expected to attend with discussions focusing on fire fees and fire tax.

Addressing Fire Chief Drew, Mayor Alt stated that the rehab center had installed an internal pumping system to pump water out of the building in the event of flooding. He asked Manager and City Engineer to work with the center to determine where water would be pumped to. Mayor Alt spoke about the evacuation of 82 patients from the center during PTS#8.

K. Staff Reports

1. Development Services (agenda pages 103-107)

L. Board Comments

Alderman Davis spoke about a Memorial Day Parade and Ceremony, sponsored by the John Smith Cemetery Preservation & Restoration Foundation and the American Legion Post 213, to be held Monday, May 26, 10:30 a.m. starting at the Long Shore-mans Hall, corner of 10th and Lord Streets. She indicated the parade has grown over the years to include bicycles, golf carts and the Southport antique fire truck. She stated the fire

department color guard will be in attendance, police will direct traffic and the ceremony will be held in the large open area at John Smith Cemetery directly across from Lowe White Park on Leonard Street. She encouraged all to attend.

Alderman Davis complimented Parks and Recreation Director Heather Hemphill and Allayna Taylor, Community Relations Director, for a successful beginning to the Summer Market held every Wednesday at Waterfront Park.

Alderman Davis spoke about the Fire Academy she is attending, what she is learning, and the fun she is having. She announced that the next academy will be held Thursday, May 15, 6:00 p.m.

Alderman Spencer reported on his attendance at the League of Municipalities City Vision. He emphasized the opportunity to interact with people from around the State and he stressed the need for more collaborative efforts with neighboring communities. He added that he gathered information on the uses of Artificial Intelligence (AI) by other communities, i.e., Sanford NC using robotic lawnmowers.

Alderman Spencer thanked County Manager Steve Stone for correcting the water issue in the cemetery and saving the city money.

Alderman Lai gave a shout out; “to all city staff for all they do all the time.”

Alderman Mosteller announced the Southport Arts Mania event, sponsored by Brunswick Community College, Downtown Southport Unity, Caswell Avenue Community Garden, and Southport Garden. Event to be held Saturday, May 17th 10:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. at the Caswell Avenue Garden with vendors, fish fry, and student artists exhibits.

Mayor Alt reminded board members that appointments for various boards and committees are due and to work with the Clerk to set up applicant interviews. City Manager Saldo anticipated having appointments ready for Board consideration at the June 12 Board of Aldermen meeting.

M. Adjourn

Alderman Mosteller made a motion to adjourn, second by Alderman Carroll.
Unanimous vote; motion carried.

Richard Alt, Mayor

ATTEST:

Tori Deviney

Tori Deviney, Deputy City Clerk

(SEAL)

