



**City of Southport  
Planning Board Special Meeting  
Indian Trail Meeting Hall  
113 W Moore St  
Southport NC 28461  
03/27/2025  
10:00 am  
MINUTES**

**Present Members:** Chair Sue Hodgins, Vice Chair Will Hewett, Fred Fiss, Lawrence N. Ashley, John Bove, Bob Lambert, Kevin Locklin

**Staff Present:** Maureen Meehan, Planning Services Director, Wendell Biddle, City Planner, Todd Coring, Police Chief; Tom Zilinek, City Engineer; ChyAnn Ketchum, Public Information Officer, Tori Deviney, City Clerk

**Absent:** None

**A. Call to Order**

Chair Sue Hodgins called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m.

**B. Invocation**

Mr. Hewett provided the invocation

**B. Pledge of Allegiance**

Chair Hodgins led members in the recitation of the Pledge

**C. Public Comment**

Chair Hodgins asked for a motion to open Public Comment.

**A motion was made by Mr. Hewett and seconded by Mr. Ashley, to open Public Comment.**

**The motion carries unanimously**

Chair Hodgkin asked Deputy Clerk Deviney if there were any speakers or email comments.

City Clerk Deviney shared thirteen emails received.

*Charles and Joanne Wesson – Southport NC*

Mr. Wesson expressed their support for the relocation of the Southport Police Department to occupy the old courthouse on Moore Street.

*Charles Franka – 305B Stuart Ave.*

Mr. Franka expressed their support for the Police Department occupying the old courthouse on Moore Street.

*Francesca and Max Slaughter – Southport NC*

Ms. Slaughter expressed their support for the Police Department occupying the old courthouse on Moore Street.

*Garrett Manindu – 603 Longleaf Dr.*

Mr. Manindu expressed support for the Police Department occupying the old courthouse on Moore Street.

*Jay Beard – 830 N. Ward St.*

Mr. Beard expressed support for the Police Department occupying the old courthouse on Moore Street.

*Jean Connor – 315 N. Burrington Ave*

Ms. Connor expressed support for the Police Department occupying the old courthouse on Moore Street.

*Aaron Fisher – Southport NC*

Mr. Fisher expressed support for the Police Department occupying the old courthouse on Moore Street.

*Katherine Hufham – Southport NC*

Ms. Hufham expressed support for the Police Department occupying the old courthouse on Moore Street.

*Glen Williamson – 319 Stuart Ave.*

Mr. Williamson expressed support for the Police Department occupying the old courthouse on Moore Street.

*Paul Gross – 1018 N. Caswell Ave.*

Mr. Gross expressed support for the Police Department occupying the old courthouse on Moore Street.

*Rachel Lankford – Park Ave.*

Ms. Lankford expressed support for the Police Department occupying the old courthouse on Moore Street.

*Charlie Sullivan – 5002 Seaward Ct.*

Mr. Sullivan expressed support for the Police Department occupying the old courthouse on Moore Street.

*Wendy Lawson – 205 E. State St.*

Ms. Sullivan expressed support for the Police Department occupying the old courthouse on Moore Street.

*Bonnie Bray – 515 Quartermaster Dr.*

Ms. Bray noted that the Arts Group has moved on from the courthouse and that the Police Department needed to be moved into a larger building.

Chair Hodgkin shared for the record that the Board is working to provide the best location possible.

There being no more speakers from the floor, Chair Hodgkin asked for a motion to close Public Comment.

**A motion was made by Mr. Hewett and seconded by Mr. Bove to close Public Comment.**

**The motion carries unanimously.**

#### **D. Old Business**

##### **1. Old City Hall / Courthouse – 201 E. Moore St. – Recommendation Review and Possible Action**

Chair Hodgkin shared that a Special Meeting of the Planning Board Work Session had been scheduled for April 1, 2025, regarding the recommendation to the Board of Aldermen regarding the courthouse; and read into record UDO Article 2.3.A.12 and City Ordinance Section 13-34;

- *“The Planning Board shall review with the city manager and other city officials and report as recommendations to the Board of Aldermen upon the extent, location and design of all public structures and facilities, on the acquisition and disposal of public properties, and on the establishment of building lines, mapped street lines, and proposals to change existing street lines.”*

and outlined the responsibilities of the Planning Board to advise in the City's best interest; and asked if there were any comments from City Staff.

City Engineer Tom Zilinek spoke about the plans and shared details of the proposed structural modifications.

Chair Hodgins thanked Mr. Zilinek and Police Chief Corring for being present; and opened the floor to Board questions to Staff.

Mr. Ashley noted that there had been a lot of work done at the courthouse and shared that there was still roughly \$6.6M in work to be done and asked if there was a plan to address the work that still needs to be completed.

City Manager Saldo spoke about the ongoing work.

City Engineer Zilinek spoke about the completed work and spoke to the priorities of repairs outlined in the annual budget; and enumerated the immediate and intermediate repairs that would be conducted in the coming year.

Mr. Ashley noted the Parks Building and asked about the timeline for completion for that building.

City Engineer Zilinek shared the timeline for the Parks Building to be completed.

Mr. Locklin emphasized the need for a standalone Police Department outfitted with state-of-the-art equipment to ensure the safety of Southport Residents; and asked Chief Corring if the Old Courthouse must be designated for a Police Department or a Government Building would it suffice the Police Department's needs; and spoke to the Police Department's proposed plan for a new building; and asked Police Chief Corring what an ideal building would comprise.

Chief Corring spoke to the effort to draft a plan for a building and presented it to multiple City Managers over the years; and noted that he had reviewed Police Departments from other cities and built a design based on similar constructions; and the alterations made to those designs received from Board feedback; and noted that Southport residents have stated that they want the Police Department to be housed in the old courthouse.

Mr. Locklin asked if he would be satisfied with a brand-new building; and noted that the Old Courthouse is a historical government building and it should be preserved as a historic space; and emphasized the need for a building dedicated to a state-of-the-art Police Department; and asked Chief Corring if he could have a brand-new building would he accept that.

Chief Coring noted that he had several discussions over the last five years regarding a Police Department; and shared what he had done to change the design to reduce costs; and the number of locations reviewed that could accommodate the square footage necessary, and that none could be found; and that he would be satisfied with a brand-new building if a location became available.

Chair Hodgkin asked the Board for any other comments or questions.

Mr. Ashley spoke about the current police headquarters and noted that it is overcrowded; and discussed the proposed designs that eliminated Staff areas, such as break rooms and locker rooms, to accommodate the needs of the department; and addressed the design modifications to be a shared location will impede services.

Mr. Fiss emphasized Mr. Locklin's sentiments and the need for a stand-alone Police Department; and noted that the Courthouse is a public treasure and requires renovation; and spoke about the difficulties of securing an achievable budget for historic renovation of the courthouse; and noted relocating City Admin to the Courthouse, and other options for Southport to consider.

Mr. Bove expressed concern regarding the limited scope provided in the layout and about not having enough information to make an informative or reasonable decision.

Chair Hodgkin asked if anyone had any other concerns to address.

Mr. Hewett noted the work session scheduled for June 1, 2025, and suggested moving the location to accommodate the number of public speakers so they can familiarize themselves with the conference room at City Hall.

Public Information Officer Ketchum shared that filming would not be possible in the Conference Room at City Hall as it was not yet wired for visual and audio technology.

Mr. Hewett noted taking a field trip to the building to orient the Board of the building and its functions; and noted the location of the building was central to many Southport services but emphasized the difficulty of using the building; and shared that the Police Department was overdue to having their own space.

Chair Hodgkin emphasized the need for a meeting space for the Aldermen and Boards and Commissions; and noted that with the addition of the Police Department would only confound matters; and spoke to other buildings that also

need renovations, and noted that there was not one City-owned property that could accommodate the needs of the Police Department; and emphasized the need to schedule renovation of these properties; and noted reaching out to State representatives to obtain funding; and expressed support for courthouse renovations.

Mr. Locklin echoed the comments of the Board for a standalone Police Department; and noted that having a building with more square footage was necessary.

Mr. Ashley asked Chair Hodgins if he could address City Manager Saldo about the square footage usage used by City Staff at the current location of City Hall 1029 N. Howe St.; and noted that about 12,000 square feet were available at City Hall, and how much was being used.

City Manager Saldo shared that the current square foot usage of City Staff at City Hall was at 90% capacity, and shared details of how it was being utilized.

Mr. Ashley expressed concern about moving the services from the current City Hall building to the Old Courthouse as there would be less square footage available; and asked Police Chief Coring if there had been any designs rendered for a Police Department located at the current location of City Hall.

Chief Coring shared the plans that had been rendered; and shared the history of moving from space to space; and noted that at the time a decision had not been made concerning designs and the Police Department had relocated to where it is currently.

Mr. Locklin spoke about the number of relocations the Police Department has endured over the years; and about the number of buildings the Southport has available; and about the option of setting up satellite offices to disperse departments so that not all departments were housed under one roof.

Chair Hodgins shared her appreciation for the comments received from the Board and Staff; and noted that they will schedule a field trip to the Old Courthouse to decide on the best option available; and asked if any questions or concerns be sent to City Manager Saldo; and asked the Board for further discussion.

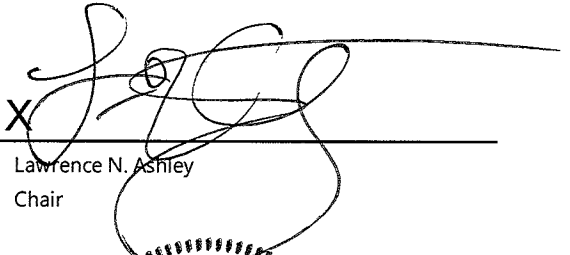
## **E. Adjourn**

Chair Hodgins asked for a motion to adjourn.

**A motion was made by Mr. Ashley and was seconded by John Mr. Bove to adjourn.**

**The motion carries unanimously.**

The meeting adjourned at 11:26 a.m.

X   
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Lawrence N. Ashley  
Chair

X   
\_\_\_\_\_  
Scott Baillargeon  
Deputy City Clerk

