



**CITY OF SOUTHPORT
BOARD OF ALDERMEN - REGULAR MEETING
COMMUNITY BUILDING
223 EBAY ST, SOUTHPORT NC 28461**

April 9, 2026 | 6:00 PM

Present Members:

Joseph Hatem, M.D., Paul Gross, Marc Spencer, Lowe Davis, Robert Carroll, Karen Mosteller

Absent Members:

Rebecca Kelley

Staff Present:

City Manager Noah Saldo, Public Information Officer ChyAnn Ketchum, Police Chief Todd Coring, Fire Chief Charles Drew, Battalion Chief Ralph Treadway, Planning Services Director Maureen Meehan

Others Present:

City Attorney Brady Herman

A. Call to Order

Mayor Hatem called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM.

B. Invocation

Mayor Hatem provided the invocation.

C. Pledge of Allegiance

Mayor Hatem led everyone in the Pledge of Allegiance.

D. Public Comment [3 Minute Time Limit]

Paul Winter - 715 N Atlantic Ave

Mr. Paul Winter addressed the Board regarding an alley encroachment located at the south end of the 700 block between North Atlantic Avenue and Howe Street, connecting to East Owens Street.

Mr. Winter stated that he had previously spoken on the matter at the September 11 meeting and reiterated his position that the alley should be reopened. He emphasized that his concerns were not politically motivated.

He referenced details from a property deed associated with the encroachment, stating that the deed included language indicating that no opinion was rendered as to title and that easements for utilities and rights-of-way were specifically excluded from the transfer.

Mr. Winter asserted that the alley was not conveyed as part of the property sale and suggested that the structure currently obstructing the alley had been inactive for an extended period. He stated that the structure should either be moved, an easement created around it, or the structure removed entirely, emphasizing that his primary concern was restoring access to the alley.

He further stated that there appeared to be a parcel assemblage occurring and referenced a connection between the property owner and a Raleigh-based developer, Empire Properties. He noted the developer's history of urban infill projects.

Mr. Winter concluded by stating he would submit additional written comments for the public record.

Alderman Carroll asked Mr. Winter if he was an attorney and whether he had any relationship with members of the Board.

Mr. Winter responded that he was not an attorney and that he did not have any financial relationship with any Board member.

When asked about personal relationships, Mr. Winter questioned the relevance of the inquiry in the public comment setting.

Alderman Carroll stated for the record that Mr. Winter does have a relationship with a member of the Board.

Shirley Sullivan - 5002 Seaward Ct

Ms. Shirley Sullivan addressed the Board regarding evacuation routes and hazard preparedness.

Ms. Sullivan expressed appreciation for the efforts of the Southport Fire Department and Police Department, stating confidence in their work to protect residents, visitors, and those working in the City. She noted that the City's website provides substantial emergency preparedness information, including a link to the Southeastern North Carolina Regional Hazard Mitigation Plan, and questioned whether an updated version of the 2021 plan is available given recent population growth.

Ms. Sullivan stated that her concerns center on increasing risks associated with continued growth in Southport and Brunswick County. She identified primary hazards as hurricanes, tornadoes, and flooding, and also listed additional concerns including drought, sinkholes, excessive heat, earthquakes, wildfires, controlled burns, dam failure, infectious disease, radiological emergencies, cyber attacks, and terrorism.

She discussed evacuation routes serving the area, including River Road (NC 133), NC 87, and Southport-Supply Road (NC 211), noting that these routes are also used by residents of Oak Island, Caswell Beach, St. James, Bald Head Island, and nearby unincorporated areas. Ms. Sullivan expressed concern about the capacity of these routes in emergency situations.

Ms. Sullivan also raised concerns about the proximity of Military Ocean Terminal Sunny Point, one of the world's largest military terminals, and its relationship to potential threats such as international conflict or terrorism, as well as its proximity to the Duke Energy nuclear facility. She clarified that her comments were intended as a "wake-up call" rather than an alarm.

She further stated that current traffic studies do not account for approved but unbuilt developments or proposed projects in the area. She suggested that developments occurring "by right" along evacuation routes should receive additional review.

Ms. Sullivan urged City and County leadership to advocate at the state level for improved safety measures and emphasized the importance of considering hazard risks alongside infrastructure capacity. She stated that infrastructure systems-including fire, EMS, evacuation routes, wastewater, schools, medical facilities, and roadways-are at or nearing capacity.

Ms. Sullivan concluded by requesting continued consideration of hazard preparedness and infrastructure impacts as development decisions are made.

Sharon Mitchell - 251 E 11th St, Apt G

Ms. Sharon Mitchell addressed the Board regarding flooding concerns affecting her residence in Brunswick Village, located near the hospital.

Ms. Mitchell stated that she was nervous speaking but wanted to share ongoing concerns following a flooding event that occurred approximately two years ago, during which residents of her building were displaced. She explained that all six apartments in her building were impacted and that residents continue to experience anxiety during rainfall due to the prior event.

Ms. Mitchell stated that a resident had previously contacted the former mayor to inquire about potential drainage solutions, including the installation of a French drain near the former emergency room area to help prevent future flooding. She

noted that a response was received indicating that a \$20,000 grant had been secured to address the issue; however, she stated that no improvements have been made to date, despite the approach of hurricane season.

She described the emotional and financial toll of the flooding, stating that she was displaced from her home for approximately six months and lost the majority of her belongings. She further stated that even light rainfall now causes significant concern among residents.

Ms. Mitchell acknowledged and expressed gratitude for the assistance provided by the Southport Fire Department during the flooding event. She stated, however, that the drainage issue remains unresolved and expressed concern that ongoing construction in the area has not addressed the problem.

Ms. Mitchell stated that she understands the issue may not fall directly under the City's responsibility but asked if the Board could assist in encouraging action from the responsible parties. She requested any available information regarding the referenced grant and asked that updates be communicated to residents if available.

Ms. Mitchell concluded by asking for consideration and assistance in addressing the drainage issue to prevent future flooding and reduce the ongoing fear experienced by residents.

Bonnie Bray - 515 Quarter Master

Ms. Bonnie Bray addressed the Board regarding the closure of the City's Parks and Recreation Department.

Ms. Bray stated that nearly one month had passed since the department was shut down on March 11, including the suspension of four employees, the closure of the gym and other facilities, and the suspension of the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board. She noted that part-time employees were informed there was no work available and that families had to make alternative arrangements for before- and after-school care.

Ms. Bray stated that residents have not received information regarding when services will be restored. She further stated that the public has been told the matter cannot be discussed until the completion of a State Bureau of Investigation review related to alleged financial issues dating back approximately six months.

Ms. Bray questioned why certain actions were taken, including the continuation of cash transactions after concerns were raised, the lack of involvement of the department director in addressing discrepancies, and whether internal control policies were properly implemented. She also questioned why all facilities and

services were closed, stating that the scope of the alleged issue did not appear to justify the extent of the shutdown.

Ms. Bray expressed concern about the impact on the community, stating that Parks and Recreation programs foster civic engagement and connection among residents of all ages. She referenced broader concepts of civic trust and stated that the City's actions have affected that trust within the community.

E. Ethics Statement

1. 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.

Mayor Hatem introduced Item E, the Ethics Statement, and asked if any Board members had a conflict of interest or the appearance of a conflict regarding items on the agenda.

Mayor Hatem stated that he had a conflict related to the closed session item concerning an alley matter and that he would not be participating in that portion of the meeting.

Alderman Carroll asked whether any Board members had a relationship with individuals who own property adjacent to an alley, stating that such relationships could present the appearance of a conflict.

Alderman Gross stated that he resides at 1018 North Caswell Avenue, where his property abuts an alley. He clarified that he has no financial interest in the specific alley discussed during public comment. He further disclosed that the earlier speaker, Mr. Paul Winter, is his brother-in-law.

Alderman Davis clarified that the alleyway discussion listed on the regular agenda pertains to alleyways in general and not the specific alley referenced during public comment. She stated that, in her view, this would not constitute a conflict for Alderman Gross regarding that agenda item.

Mayor Hatem acknowledged the clarification and confirmed that the Board would proceed.

F. Approval of Agenda

Mayor Hatem introduced Item F, Approval of the Agenda, and called for a motion.

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

Mayor Hatem asked if there was any further discussion.

Mayor Hatem then called for a vote on the motion to approve the agenda. The motion carried unanimously.

G. Approval of the Consent Agenda

Mayor Hatem introduced Item G, Approval of the Consent Agenda, explaining that the item included a call for a public hearing on May 14, 2026, regarding a major modification to the Southport Crossing Planned Unit Development (PUD) Master Development Plan.

Mayor Hatem clarified that the action before the Board was only to schedule the public hearing. He noted that the subject property is located at the intersection of NC 211 and NC 133 and stated that a full presentation would be provided by Planning staff at the May meeting. He further noted that information related to the project, including wetlands, traffic impacts, open space, and tree preservation, was included in the agenda packet for review by both the Board and the public prior to the hearing.

Alderman Gross asked whether it was appropriate to proceed with scheduling the public hearing given the North Carolina Department of Environmental Quality's (NCDEQ) moratorium on extending sewer service in Brunswick County due to capacity concerns. He questioned whether the Board was "putting the cart before the horse."

Mayor Hatem responded that the matter relates to the planning and zoning process and that it is not the City's role to delay projects based on those concerns. He acknowledged the issue and asked for input from the City Manager and City Attorney.

City Manager Saldo stated that the situation could be viewed in different ways, noting that the County is currently working with NCDEQ to determine future standards. He explained that the development review process and sewer capacity issues are separate tracks, and that the developer is aware of the constraints and will need to coordinate with the County. He added that any City approval would not guarantee the availability of sewer service.

Alderman Davis stated that the development already has approval for approximately 60 single-family homes and that the public hearing would address a request for additional development. She stated that decisions regarding sewer capacity are not within the City's authority and that the Board's role is to consider whether to allow increased or modified development.

Mayor Hatem reiterated that the City is not the "gatekeeper" for sewer service and that the developer is proceeding through the established process.

Alderman Mosteller asked if Alderman Gross was satisfied with the responses and reiterated that the matter before the Board pertains to zoning and scheduling a public hearing.

Alderman Gross acknowledged the explanations but reiterated concerns regarding growth and infrastructure impacts.

City Attorney Herman stated that the City's authority is limited to zoning and entitlement decisions and does not extend to control over water and sewer services. He noted that the situation would be different if the City still controlled those utilities, but under current conditions, the Board should proceed within its established purview.

Mayor Hatem stated that the Board was following standard procedure and that this item represented the next step in the process.

Alderman Mosteller made a motion to call a public hearing for May 14, 2026, for consideration of a major modification to the Southport Crossing Planned Unit Development Master Development Plan.

Alderman Davis seconded the motion.

Alderman Carroll clarified that the motion was to approve the consent agenda.

Mayor Hatem confirmed the clarification and called for a vote. The motion carried unanimously.

1. Call for a Public Hearing: Southport Crossing PUD Master Development Plan Major Modification

H. Special Recognition

1. Arbor Day Proclamation

Mayor Hatem introduced the Arbor Day Proclamation and invited members of the Forestry Committee to join him.

Mayor Hatem proclaimed April 9, 2026, as Arbor Day in the City of Southport and encouraged citizens to participate in activities that support and protect the urban forest.

Mayor Hatem concluded by expressing appreciation for the City's tree canopy and the continued commitment to its preservation.

2. Friends of Franklin Proclamation

Mayor Hatem introduced the recognition of the Friends of Franklin and invited representatives to come forward.

He specifically recognized the leadership and contributions of Jeanne Potter Brown, Cheryl Daniel, Ginger Harper, and Katherine Huffman, noting their role in strengthening community pride and supporting Southport's historic assets.

Mayor Hatem expressed appreciation for the organization's commitment, stating that their efforts reflect the spirit of volunteerism and civic pride within the community.

Ms. Jeanne Potter Brown expressed appreciation for the recognition and thanked the Board on behalf of the Friends of Franklin for their efforts. She stated that their work was not through yet.

I. **Agenda**

1. Minimum Housing Ordinances

Director Maureen Meehan and Code Enforcement Officer Derek Mabe

1. 825 N Caswell Ave
2. 829 N Caswell Ave
3. 724 N Lord St

Mayor Hatem introduced Agenda Item I, Minimum Housing Ordinances, and recognized Planning Director Maureen Meehan.

Director Meehan stated that three properties were being presented in accordance with the City's minimum housing code, noting that the property owners had not complied with final orders issued by the Code Enforcement Officer. She explained that pursuant to the City's ordinance and N.C. General Statute 160D-1203, the Board of Aldermen may adopt ordinances requiring compliance and authorize enforcement actions in cases of continued noncompliance.

Director Meehan introduced Code Enforcement Officer Derek Mabe of Alliance Code Enforcement, who presented the cases. She noted that one property was recommended for demolition (825 N. Caswell Avenue), and two properties were recommended for repair (829 N. Caswell Avenue and 724 N. Lord Street).

825 N. Caswell Avenue - Demolition

Mr. Mabe presented the property at 825 N. Caswell Avenue, stating that it had been determined unfit for human habitation due to significant structural deterioration, including a large hole in the roof that had allowed water intrusion over an extended period. He stated that the property owner had not responded to notices or made contact regarding the violations.

Mr. Mabe outlined the enforcement history, including:

- Initial notice of violation issued January 9, 2025
- Hearing held June 5, 2025, which the owner did not attend
- Final order issued July 17, 2025, requiring repair or demolition within 30 days

He stated that no corrective action had been taken and that demolition was recommended. He further noted that demolition bids had been obtained in preparation for enforcement.

Alderman Carroll made a motion to approve all three minimum housing ordinances collectively, including the two repair ordinances and the demolition ordinance.

City Attorney Herman advised that the ordinances should be considered and adopted individually, noting that the versions provided at the Board's desks were updated from those included in the agenda packet and that each ordinance would be recorded separately. He recommended that each ordinance be addressed one at a time to ensure clarity in the official record.

City Manager Saldo clarified the motion as approval of the demolition ordinance for 825 N. Caswell Avenue, based on the updated version provided at the Board's desks.

Alderman Carroll confirmed. Alderman Spencer Seconded.

Alderman Davis inquired about the cost of demolition and whether the City would recover those costs. Mr. Mabe stated that the estimated cost was approximately \$12,000 and that a lien would be placed on the property for recovery. City Manager Saldo confirmed the estimate. City Attorney Herman explained that recovery would occur either through property sale or foreclosure.

Alderman Davis asked about notice procedures. Mr. Mabe stated that notices were sent to the owner's address of record and posted on the property, though postings are sometimes removed.

Alderman Mosteller raised questions regarding parcel identification and how a lien would apply, noting that the structure appeared to span two parcels. City Attorney Herman explained that the lien would apply to the parcel identified in the ordinance, with additional remedies available under statute for other properties owned by the same individual.

Alderman Carroll asked whether the property taxes were current; staff indicated they were not aware.

Director Meehan added that the owner's son had contacted the Planning Department and was aware of the situation.

Alderman Davis noted the extended timeline of enforcement of a span of 18 months and stated that sufficient time had been provided for compliance.

Mayor Hatem called for a vote on the demolition ordinance for 825 N. Caswell Avenue.

The motion carried unanimously.

829 N. Caswell Avenue - Repair

Mr. Mabe presented the property at 829 N. Caswell Avenue, stating that while the property had minimum housing violations, it was not in a condition warranting demolition. He noted that the property is currently occupied by a tenant.

Mr. Mabe described observed deficiencies, including damage to the front porch allowing water intrusion and deterioration of structural components, as well as siding damage and previous overgrowth. He noted that some corrective actions, such as removal of overgrowth, had already been completed by the property owner.

Mr. Mabe stated that the case had reached the stage requiring Board action to enforce repairs through the ordinance process.

At this time, Mayor Hatem recognized an individual wishing to speak regarding the property and asked that they approach the microphone.

A member of the public, identified as Mr. Ingram, addressed the Board regarding the property. He explained that there is confusion regarding the property addresses of 825 and 829 N. Caswell Avenue, stating that portions of the property are associated with different parcel records and ownership

arrangements within his family. He noted that he is working to resolve these issues.

Mr. Ingram stated that he resides at the property and has lifetime rights to the home, which was left by his grandmother. He explained that his brother is the legal owner but is currently ill and unable to manage the property. Mr. Ingram stated that he has been responsible for maintaining the property and paying taxes.

He further stated that he intends to begin repairs, specifically addressing the front porch and siding, and requested additional time to bring the property into compliance. He noted personal challenges, including health issues and work obligations, but expressed his commitment to completing the repairs.

Code Enforcement Officer Mabe stated that the required repairs are relatively minor and that staff has been in communication with Mr. Ingram. He noted that staff has offered to meet on-site to review the required repairs in detail.

Alderman Davis asked what was needed to bring the property into compliance. Mr. Ingram responded that the primary issues involve the porch and exterior siding.

Alderman Carroll inquired about the enforcement process for repair ordinances. Mr. Mabe explained that adoption of the ordinance would authorize the City to complete the repairs if the property owner fails to do so, with associated costs placed as a lien on the property.

Alderman Davis asked Mr. Ingram how much time he would need to complete the repairs. Mr. Ingram stated that he could complete the work within 30 days.

Alderman Spencer suggested allowing six months to complete the repairs, noting the importance of providing reasonable time for compliance, particularly for individuals actively attempting to improve their property.

City Manager Saide clarified that the current order requires repairs within 30 days but that the Board has the authority to adopt the ordinance with an amended timeframe.

Alderman Carroll made a motion to adopt the repair ordinance for 829 N. Caswell Avenue with an amended timeframe of six months to allow completion of repairs.

Alderman Spencer seconded the motion.

The motion carried unanimously.

724 N. Lord Street- Repair

Mr. Mabe presented the property at 724 N. Lord Street, stating that the case was initially triggered by significant accumulation of debris on the property, along with minimum housing violations.

Mr. Mabe described the condition of the property, including deteriorating exterior siding, missing paint, and needed trim repairs around windows. He noted that some corrective actions had been taken, including removal of debris and partial siding replacement, though additional work remains.

Mr. Mabe stated that the property is occupied by tenants and that the owner has indicated an intent to make repairs and address tenant-related issues, including potential eviction.

Alderman Davis questioned whether the property required more than cosmetic improvements. Mr. Mabe acknowledged that additional repairs are needed but stated there was no indication that the structure is uninhabitable.

Alderman Spencer inquired about interior inspections, and Mr. Mabe stated that entry into the home requires permission and had not been conducted.

Alderman Spencer asked whether the determination of habitability for the previously discussed demolition property involved an interior inspection.

Code Enforcement Officer Mabe stated that he was unsure whether the Chief Building Inspector had entered the structure but noted that the extent of visible damage, including a significant hole in the roof, indicated likely water intrusion and possible mold.

Alderman Spencer then asked for clarification regarding ownership of the 724 N. Lord Street property, specifically whether the owner was also acting as the landlord.

Code Enforcement Officer Mabe confirmed that the property is owned by an individual who is renting the home to tenants.

Alderman Carroll made a motion to adopt the repair ordinance with a six-month timeframe, consistent with the previous property. Alderman Spencer seconded the motion.

Alderman Mosteller expressed concern that the property owner had been notified of violations for over two years without full compliance.

Alderman Carroll acknowledged the concern but asked what progress had been made recently.

Code Enforcement Officer Mabe stated that the property owner had removed a significant amount of debris and accumulation from the rear of the property prior to allowing tenants to occupy the home. He added that since tenants moved in, additional accumulation has occurred; however, the owner has completed some repairs, including replacing siding on the rear of the structure, though the work remains unfinished.

Alderman Carroll asked what actions would be taken if the property owner failed to complete the required repairs within the established timeframe. He inquired whether the matter would return to the Board for further action, including potential demolition.

Code Enforcement Officer Mabe stated that the Board would have the option to pursue either demolition or repairs if compliance was not achieved.

City Attorney Herman explained that under the proposed ordinance, the City's authority would be limited to completing repairs if the owner failed to comply, with the associated costs placed as a lien on the property. He noted that any action beyond repair, such as demolition, would require adoption of a separate ordinance.

Alderman Davis asked what would occur if the Board wished to take a different course of action after the six-month period.

Alderman Carroll clarified that the ordinance before the Board pertains specifically to repairs, and that if the owner fails to comply, the City would proceed with completing the repairs.

City Attorney Herman further explained that under the City's minimum housing code, determinations between repair and demolition are generally guided by a cost threshold, typically based on whether repairs exceed 50 percent of the property's value. He stated that if repair costs exceed that threshold, demolition may be considered; however, such action would require additional authorization. He emphasized that adoption of the current ordinance would authorize only repairs and ensure the matter is properly recorded, providing notice to the property owner.

Alderman Mosteller reiterated concerns that the property owner had been notified of violations for over two years and noted that the property is owned by an investment group. She also stated that the eviction process for tenants could take several months, potentially impacting the timeline for compliance.

Alderman Carroll responded that eviction proceedings do not prevent a property owner from making repairs and emphasized the importance of consistent and equitable enforcement of the City's ordinances. He noted that

the Board had previously granted a six-month timeframe for another property and suggested a similar approach for consistency.

Alderman Davis stated that she did not view the situations as equivalent, noting that the previous property owner had appeared before the Board and provided reasonable explanations, while the current property owner had not. She expressed concern that the property owner had ample time to address the violations but had made limited progress.

Code Enforcement Officer Mabe stated that the property owner was not present at the meeting and introduced Code Enforcement Officer Boaz, who had been in communication with the property owner.

Code Enforcement Officer Boaz provided additional context, explaining that the current owner only recently assumed responsibility following the death of the previous owner and has since begun communicating with staff and taking steps toward compliance.

Alderman Davis stated that the situation differed from the previous case and expressed concern about the length of time the violations had persisted. She proposed a shorter timeframe of three months for compliance.

Alderman Carroll amended his motion to adopt the repair ordinance with a three-month timeframe. The motion was seconded by Alderman Spencer.

Mayor Hatem confirmed the amended motion and second.

Mayor Hatem called for a vote. The motion carried unanimously.

2. Alleyway Discussion
City Manager Noah Saldo

Mayor Hatem introduced Item 2, Alleyway Discussion, and recognized City Manager Noah Saldo.

City Manager Saide stated that, at the request of Alderman Davis during a prior meeting, staff compiled a comprehensive packet of information regarding alleyways within the City. He explained that the information included historical presentations, identification of existing and former alleyways, and past actions taken by the Board, such as alley closures or modifications.

He noted that some alleyways have been maintained or utilized by adjacent property owners over time, though the City has retained ownership. He stated that the compiled information was provided to the Board for review

and that staff was available to answer questions. He also noted that Planning Director Meehan could assist with questions related to prior presentations.

Alderman Carroll expressed appreciation for the information compiled and stated that the purpose of the discussion was not to take action but to ensure that the Board and the public have a clear understanding of the City's historical approach to alleyways.

Alderman Davis provided a summary of her research, stating that she reviewed Board of Aldermen meeting minutes dating back to March 2005 to identify past actions and discussions related to alleyways.

She stated that, since that time, the Board has approved only two alleyway closures. The first involved a portion of an alley behind the fire station, where closure was necessary due to setback constraints associated with construction. The second involved a portion of an alley within an undeveloped subdivision known as Smith and Weeks near 11th Street, which is now known as Fisher's Landing. She explained that the subdivision had not been developed at the time and that the closure was determined to be in the public interest. She noted that then-Planner Thomas Lloyd advised that the closure would allow for alternative development with adequate access throughout the site and would not negatively impact ingress or egress for surrounding property owners.

Alderman Davis stated that, aside from those two instances, no additional alleyway closures have been approved in approximately 20 years. She noted that the issue of alleyways has been discussed periodically over time, often without clear resolution.

She referenced prior requests from residents, including a property owner seeking permission to clear and utilize an alley behind his home, which had become overgrown and unusable. She stated that the Board has, at times, allowed property owners to maintain adjacent alleyways.

Alderman Davis further noted that past discussions have often lacked clear direction, with matters being referred to the Planning Board without definitive guidance, resulting in continued uncertainty over time.

She also referenced prior work completed by former Assistant City Manager Dorothy Dutton, who compiled information identifying alleyway locations and conditions. She noted that this information was included in the current agenda packet for both Board and public review.

Alderman Davis stated that historically, alleyways were included throughout the City's original layout; however, many have disappeared over time, likely due to a lack of enforcement or formal management.

Director Meehan stated that the City's first Unified Development Ordinance (UDO) and zoning regulations were established in 2004.

Alderman Davis commented that changes in transportation and land use over time likely contributed to the diminished use of alleyways, noting that they were historically used for access by service vehicles such as delivery wagons. She stated that in some locations, former alleyways have become indistinguishable from adjacent private property.

Alderman Davis stated that the purpose of reviewing the compiled materials was to better understand the current status of alleyways and to determine how the Board wishes to address them moving forward. She outlined several questions for consideration, including the number of functional alleyways remaining, whether the City should retain them, and whether the City should take responsibility for clearing and maintaining them. She also noted that past practice has allowed adjacent property owners to clear and maintain alleyways under certain conditions, but emphasized the need for consistency in how such situations are handled.

Alderman Carroll expressed appreciation for the research and stated that the Board's historical position has generally been to retain alleyways as public rights-of-way while allowing limited use and maintenance by adjacent property owners. He suggested that a broader discussion is needed regarding the purpose of alleyways, including their potential role in stormwater management. He further stated that a key issue for the Board is how to address structures that encroach into alleyways or rights-of-way.

Alderman Davis suggested holding a public workshop to gather input from residents before making decisions on how to proceed. She referenced a past case involving a property owner who sought to improve a structure that encroached into a right-of-way and noted that the Board had previously determined that while existing encroachments may remain, they should not be expanded or enhanced.

Alderman Carroll asked City Attorney Herman what options the City has when structures encroach into alleyways or rights-of-way.

City Attorney Herman stated that, from a legal standpoint, the City could require removal of encroachments within its right-of-way; however, he noted that practical and policy considerations may make such action difficult, particularly where long-standing encroachments exist.

Alderman Mosteller stated that, based on prior review of mapping data, multiple potential encroachments exist throughout the City, though precise determination would require surveys. She noted that similar situations occur with front rights-of-way and suggested that long-standing encroachments have often been informally tolerated. She further stated that, consistent with

past Board actions, existing encroachments may remain but should not be expanded.

Alderman Davis reiterated that the matter should be addressed in a more focused setting, with public input including a set of questions, and stated that the Board should work toward establishing clear policy guidance.

Alderman Mosteller noted that staff materials indicated 2 additional alley abandonments prior to 2005, in addition to those previously mentioned.

City Attorney Herman confirmed that records reflect at least one alley abandonment in 1999 and another potentially occurring in the 1980s.

Alderman Gross stated that additional discussion and public input would be necessary and referenced North Carolina General Statute 160A-296, citing:

"A city shall have general authority and control over all public streets, sidewalks, alleys, bridges, and other ways of public passage within its corporate limits except to the extent that authority and control over certain streets and bridges is vested in the Board of Transportation. General authority and control includes but is not limited to all of the following: The duty to keep the public streets, sidewalks, alleys, and bridges in proper repair. The duty to keep the public streets, sidewalks, alleys, and bridges open for travel and free from unnecessary obstructions."

Alderman Davis noted that during prior discussions on alleyways, former City Attorney Mike Isenberg routinely referenced applicable state statutes governing public rights-of-way. She expressed concern that the issue has been discussed repeatedly over time without resolution.

Alderman Davis shared a historical observation, noting that North Caswell Avenue did not originally extend through its current alignment and that the area behind what is now Brunswick Community College was previously used as open space, which had been the subject of past debate regarding access and use.

J. Committee Reports

Mayor Hatem introduced Item J, Committee Reports.

Alderman Gross reported that the ABC Board met earlier in the week and that gross sales for the fiscal year to date (approximately nine months) are up approximately 4.37% compared to the same period last year.

He expressed concern regarding projected revenues to the City, stating that the City budget anticipated approximately \$583,000 in revenue from the ABC store,

while only approximately \$92,000 has been received to date. He stated that the ABC Board had initially planned to distribute approximately \$318,000 for the year.

Alderman Gross explained that, following an audit, the ABC Board's accountant and auditor recommended increasing the Board's capital reserve from approximately \$200,000 to between \$400,000 and \$500,000. He stated that this recommendation has impacted the amount available for distribution to the City.

He noted that he has been in discussions with the ABC Board and has encouraged a phased approach to increasing reserves, suggesting incremental increases rather than a single-year adjustment. He reported that the Board indicated the possibility of increasing the distribution to approximately \$200,000 for the current year but noted that this would still fall short of the City's budgeted expectations.

Alderman Gross stated that he will continue discussions with the ABC Board and provide updates as additional information becomes available.

Alderman Davis reported that the Historic Preservation Commission will reconvene on Monday at 4:00 p.m. at the Indian Trail Meeting Hall for a recessed meeting.

She stated that the Commission continues to work extensively on proposed standards, noting that members are working to balance preservation goals with practical considerations for property owners. She added that the Commission is coordinating with the State Historic Preservation Office to ensure compliance with applicable requirements.

Alderman Carroll reported that he had no update for Parks and Recreation but provided an update on the Forestry Committee.

He thanked the Board for the Arbor Day proclamation and recognition of the Friends of Franklin. He announced that the City's Arbor Day celebration will be held on April 25 at Franklin Square Park. He also noted that the Forestry Committee will meet on April 14.

Alderman Mosteller reported that the Planning Board is currently accepting applications for an alternate member position, with a deadline of April 22.

She also reported on the Beautification Committee's recent workday held on April 4, during which 22 volunteers participated in various projects, including maintenance of public seating, cleaning of historic markers, and replanting of garden areas.

Alderman Mosteller announced that the next beautification workday will be held on May 2 at 9:00 a.m., and that the Beautification Committee will meet on April 20 at 5:00 p.m. at the Indian Trail Meeting Hall.

K. Manager's Report

City Manager Saldo provided the following updates:

He reported that excavation for the weather tower footings began at Garrison Lawn and that concrete footers are scheduled to be poured the following day. He stated that the footers will cure for approximately one to two weeks before assembly of the weather tower begins on-site. He noted that the project is anticipated to be completed by the end of the month.

City Manager Saldo provided an update on the shoreline stabilization project, stating that consultants are finalizing construction and bid documents. He indicated that the project is expected to go out for bid within approximately two weeks, with bid review anticipated in late May and contract award expected at the Board's June meeting. He stated that this timeline would allow construction to begin in the fall. He also noted that private property owners conducting shoreline stabilization work along East Bay Street are progressing and are expected to complete their portion of the work in May.

City Manager Saldo reported that the City received confirmation from the North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) of funding for two intersection improvement projects focused on pedestrian safety. He stated that the improvements will be located at North Howe Street and Ninth Street, and North Howe Street and Leonard Street. He noted that NCDOT will manage both funding and construction for these projects.

City Manager Saldo expressed appreciation to Planning Director Meehan for her work in securing the funding and coordinating with NCDOT.

L. Mayor's Comments

Mayor Hatem noted that National Library Week will be observed April 19 through April 25 and encouraged residents to visit the Harper Library, ensure their library cards are up to date, and take advantage of available resources. He also noted that National Librarian Day will be recognized on April 16.

Mayor Hatem reiterated that National Arbor Day will be observed on April 24, with the City of Southport celebrating locally on April 25 at 11:00 a.m. at Franklin Square Park.

He recognized the Southport Fire Department for celebrating its 104th anniversary on April 2 and expressed appreciation for the service provided by first responders and City staff.

Mayor Hatem highlighted several upcoming community events, including:

- The Halifax Resolves 250th anniversary celebration on April 12
- Southport Spring Festival on April 18

He also provided an update on the water tower project, noting that construction is progressing with concrete work underway and that the project is expected to be completed in time for Fourth of July celebrations.

Mayor Hatem announced an upcoming Colonial Evening event scheduled for July 1 at the Southport Community Building. He stated that the event will feature colonial food, history, and music, with limited seating available. He encouraged residents to purchase tickets in advance through the North Carolina Fourth of July Festival website.

M. Staff Reports

Staff reports were included in the agenda packet.

1. Community Relations
2. Finance
3. Fire/ EMS
4. Permitting and Inspections
5. Planning Services
6. Police
7. Public Works

N. Board Comments

Alderman Spencer thanked Ms. Shirley Sullivan for her comments regarding emergency preparedness and evacuation concerns. He noted the challenges the City could face in the event of an emergency, particularly with traffic congestion near Sunny Point, and emphasized the importance of planning alternative evacuation routes. He discussed the need for improved directional signage and public education regarding traffic flow, specifically referencing the Leonard Street intersection as an opportunity to guide residents and visitors more effectively. Alderman Spencer also acknowledged the pressures of growth in surrounding

areas and the balance the City must maintain when considering expansion. He expressed appreciation for Ms. Sullivan's continued advocacy and engagement.

Alderman Davis agreed with the concerns raised and noted that similar discussions had occurred in past Board meetings. She referenced the development of Rob Gandy Boulevard as a prior effort to address evacuation concerns but expressed that it may not fully resolve current vulnerabilities, particularly in the event of flooding near the canal bridge. She suggested that alternative routes had been previously considered but not pursued and indicated that revisiting those discussions, including potential coordination with Duke Energy, may be worthwhile.

Alderman Mosteller provided several comments. She began by recognizing Chief Building Inspector Kiley Barefoot for his professionalism and recent achievement of Level III certifications in building, mechanical, and plumbing, along with a probationary electrical certification. She noted that these are the highest levels of certification and commended his dedication and value to the City.

Alderman Mosteller also reminded the public of North Carolina's property tax relief program for elderly or disabled homeowners. She explained that qualifying residents may receive a 50 percent reduction in property taxes and emphasized that applications must be submitted to the Brunswick County Tax Office by June 1, 2026.

She concluded by expressing appreciation for City staff across all departments, acknowledging their contributions to the community. She also encouraged residents to address concerns about staff through the City Manager rather than through public criticism, noting the importance of maintaining staff morale and a respectful community environment.

0. Closed Session NCGS 143-318.11

1. Motion to go into closed session pursuant to NCGS 143-318.11(a)(3) - *To consult with an attorney employed or retained by the public body in order to preserve the attorney-client privilege between the attorney and the public body, which privilege is hereby acknowledged.*

Mayor Hatem announced the next item as Closed Session pursuant to North Carolina General Statute 143-318.11(a) to consult with an attorney employed or retained by the public body in order to preserve the attorney-client privilege between the attorney and the public body.

A motion was made by Alderman Spencer and seconded by Alderman Carroll to enter Closed Session. There being no further discussion, the motion carried unanimously.

The Board entered closed session at 8:55 pm.

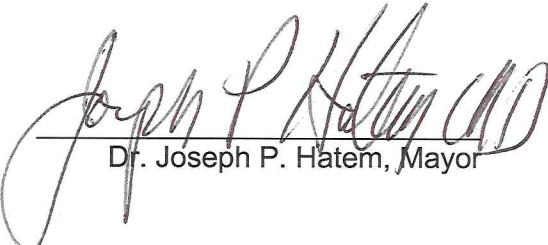
A motion was made by Alderman Spencer and seconded by Alderman Carroll to come out of Closed Session. There being no further discussion, the motion carried unanimously.

The Board came out of closed session at 10:17 pm.

P. Adjourn

Mayor Hatem called for a motion to adjourn. The motion was made by Alderman Carroll and seconded by Alderman Mosteller. The motion carried unanimously.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:17 pm.


Dr. Joseph P. Hatem, Mayor

(ATTEST)


Tori Deviney, City Clerk

