



**CITY OF SOUTHPORT
BOARD OF ALDERMEN – REGULAR MEETING
COMMUNITY BUILDING
223 E BAY ST, SOUTHPORT NC 28461
June 2, 2026 | 6:00 PM**

Present Members:

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

Absent Members:

Staff Present: City Manager Noah Saldo, City Clerk Tori Deviney, Public Information Officer ChyAnn Ketchup, Planning Services Director Maureen Meehan, Police Chief Todd Coring, Fire Chief Charles Drew, Battalion Chief Ralph Treadway

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. Agenda

1. Southport Appearance Commission

Mayor Hatem announced that the purpose of the meeting was to conduct the public hearing on the proposed Local Historic District Overlay Map Amendment and Design Standards. He noted that the previous Town Hall

meeting had been an opportunity for dialogue between staff and citizens, while this meeting was a formal public hearing.

City Manager Noah Saldo reviewed the public hearing procedures, explaining that each speaker would be allotted three minutes in accordance with the Board's Rules of Procedure and applicable state law. He stated that Planning Services Director Maureen Meehan would present the item before the Clerk called speakers and read written comments submitted for the record.

Planning Services Director Meehan stated that the Board was conducting its second public hearing on the proposed Local Historic District Overlay. She explained that the first advertised public hearing had been held on July 10, 2025, and that numerous Historic Preservation Commission meetings, joint meetings with the Board of Aldermen, and public input sessions had occurred since that time. She advised that revisions had been made to the proposed design standards in response to public comments and that the Historic Preservation Commission had formally recommended approval of both the proposed overlay map and the accompanying design standards.

Public Comment

Susan Delaney, 304 West West Street

Ms. Delaney stated that many citizens had already presented compelling reasons to oppose the proposal and that additional speakers would do the same. She said she believed several Board members had already decided how they intended to vote but urged them to represent the wishes of the citizens rather than their personal preferences. She stated that if residents were allowed to vote directly, she believed the proposal would be overwhelmingly rejected and asked the Board to vote against the Historic District Overlay.

City Clerk Deviney read a letter from Davis Herring, Jr., who stated that although he now lived outside the city limits, his family continued to own property within the proposed district. Mr. Herring shared his family's history in Southport and expressed opposition to the Historic Preservation Commission and the proposed overlay. He stated that Southport's historic character had been preserved through the pride of its residents rather than regulations, expressed concerns about potential reductions in property values and tax base, questioned whether affected property owners had received proper notification, criticized the treatment of citizens during Historic Preservation Commission meetings, and voiced concerns about potential litigation and associated taxpayer expense.

Mimi Vargo, 230 North Caswell Avenue

Ms. Vargo stated that she opposed the proposed Historic District Overlay. She expressed concerns regarding representation throughout the

development of the proposal, noting that many commission members did not reside within the proposed district while several residents who had applied were not appointed. She stated that although public comments had been accepted during meetings, meaningful dialogue had been limited and alternative approaches had not been fully considered. Ms. Vargo stated that property owners who would be directly affected should have greater representation and questioned whether regulations should be imposed when a majority of affected property owners opposed them.

City Clerk Deviney read a letter from Carter John Herring Childs, M.D., who expressed opposition to the proposed Historic District Overlay. Dr. Childs stated that Southport's history was defined by its people rather than its buildings and argued that the community had historically preserved itself through cooperation rather than regulation. He expressed concerns regarding additional financial burdens on homeowners, compared the City's actions to ignoring the concerns of patients, and urged the Board to reject the proposal in order to avoid further division within the community.

Kathy Dudley, 105 North Caswell Avenue

Ms. Dudley stated that she opposed the proposed overlay. She questioned the exclusion of portions of the Yacht Basin from the proposed district while subjecting other property owners to additional regulations. She expressed concerns regarding inconsistent application of preservation efforts, potential financial burdens associated with repairing historic features, the absence of references to hurricane-rated windows within the standards, and the level of representation of district residents during the drafting process.

City Clerk Deviney read a letter from Catherine Hufham, a Historic Preservation Commission member, expressing support for the proposed Historic District Overlay and Design Standards. Ms. Hufham stated that the standards were intended to preserve Southport's historic character while guiding compatible new construction and redevelopment. She stated that the guidelines would not function as homeowners' association rules or regulate personal lifestyle choices but would instead help preserve the architectural character that distinguishes Southport. She acknowledged concerns regarding regulation but stated that preserving the City's historic resources required thoughtful design standards.

Rich Alt, 6165 Cottage Creek Road

Mr. Alt stated that he opposed the proposal. He questioned the legal interpretation of down-zoning statutes, stated that a large majority of affected property owners opposed the overlay, and expressed concerns regarding the City's administration of the Historic Preservation Commission process. He cited examples of what he believed were inconsistent enforcement practices and urged the Board not to place additional regulatory authority in a process he believed had demonstrated administrative deficiencies.

City Clerk Deviney read a letter from Jim Lawson, 222 Caswell Avenue, who expressed concerns regarding increasing traffic, community division, and the complexity of the proposed regulations. Mr. Lawson stated that he had found the volume of documents difficult to review and questioned the necessity of the proposal, the perceived lack of opposition during earlier stages of the process, and the composition of the Historic Preservation Commission.

Lane Cooke, 306 North Atlantic Avenue

Ms. Cooke spoke in support of establishing the Local Historic District and Historic Preservation Commission. She stated that she and her husband intentionally purchased a historic home because they valued preservation. Ms. Cook explained that while neighboring property owners had historically maintained the character of the area, she believed future preservation should not rely solely on good fortune. She noted Southport's continued growth and stated that the proposed district would help protect the historic character of neighborhoods surrounding Franklin Square park and other historic resources.

City Clerk Deviney read a letter from Jack Hamilton, 114 North Caswell Avenue, who opposed the proposed overlay. Mr. Hamilton stated that as a real estate professional and property owner within the district, he believed the proposal infringed upon homeowners' property rights and attempted to solve a problem that did not exist. He stated that homeowners had voluntarily preserved the district's historic character and urged the Board to reject the proposal.

James Carroll, 202 West Nash Street

Mr. Carroll stated that he owned multiple properties within the proposed district and reviewed renovations previously completed on the Ports of Call building. He stated that many of those improvements would not have been permitted under the proposed design standards. Mr. Carroll also discussed the subjectivity of compatibility and congruence standards, expressing concern that future Historic Preservation Commissions could interpret the standards more rigidly over time in order to reduce legal risk, thereby limiting flexibility for future property improvements.

City Clerk Deviney read a letter from Stuart Callari encouraging the Board and community to work together to preserve Southport's historic character. The letter stated that the proposal consisted of guidelines intended to preserve the City's character rather than impose homeowners' association-style restrictions and urged support for the Historic District before the community lost its unique identity.

Betsy Carroll, 202 West Nash Street

Ms. Carroll stated that she and her husband owned several properties within

the proposed Historic District and therefore had a vested interest in the proposal. She stated that all residents cared about Southport and its history but believed the debate centered on differing views of how the City's character should be preserved. Ms. Carroll argued that adopting broad regulations in response to a limited number of design concerns was an overreaction and that historic preservation should remain a shared community value rather than a government mandate. She compared the proposed regulations to homeowners' association restrictions, stating that private property owners should not be subject to similar requirements through local government. She further stated that Southport's history reflected continual adaptation and evolution, allowing families and businesses to meet changing needs while preserving the community. Ms. Carroll also expressed concern that the City was imposing aesthetic regulations on private property owners while public infrastructure and signage created visual clutter, urging the Board not to adopt the proposed overlay.

City Clerk Devviney read a letter from Doug and Dama Apperson of 319 East Moore Street expressing opposition to the proposed Historic District Overlay. The letter acknowledged the importance of preserving Southport's history and character but expressed concerns that additional regulations could limit homeowners' freedom to maintain and improve their properties, impose financial burdens, affect property values, and diminish the community's organic character. The authors stated that existing development regulations were sufficient and urged the Board to reject the proposal.

Dane Coker, 208 North Lord Street

Ms. Coker stated that she and her husband had chosen Southport as their permanent home because of its beauty, sense of community, and neighborly spirit. She stated that while future development could not be guaranteed, citizens should be trusted to continue maintaining and improving their properties without additional oversight. Ms. Coker expressed concerns regarding the creation of a quasi-judicial board and the possibility of expanded regulations in the future. She concluded by urging the Board to vote against the Historic District Overlay, stating that additional regulations were unnecessary.

City Clerk Devviney read a letter from Barry Allmon, 212 North Rhett Street, requesting that the Board vote against the Historic District Overlay and proposed Design Standards. Mr. Allmon expressed concerns regarding the City's ability to consistently administer and enforce the proposed regulations, citing what he believed were previous inconsistencies in the enforcement of the Unified Development Ordinance and permitting processes. He questioned the administration of subjective design standards, expressed concern that precedent-setting decisions could create future legal

challenges, and stated that the application process could discourage homeowners from making improvements. Mr. Almond urged the Board to allow property owners to continue maintaining their homes without additional regulatory oversight.

Gwen Tanner, 315 North Caswell Avenue

Ms. Tanner stated that she and her husband, Jamie Deal, owned Mad River Construction and had lived and worked in Southport for nearly 30 years, including more than 20 years within the proposed Historic District. Ms. Tanner referenced numerous homes and renovation projects completed by their company throughout Southport, stating that each had been designed to reflect the historic character of the community because both the builders and homeowners desired that outcome, not because regulations required it. She stated that many of those projects would not have been permitted under the proposed Design Standards, which she described as overly restrictive and limiting practicality and creativity. While acknowledging that those supporting the proposal were motivated by a desire to preserve Southport's historic character, she expressed concern that preservation should not come at the expense of private property rights and urged the Board to vote against the Historic Preservation Commission proposal.

City Clerk Deviney read a letter from Edward Glenn expressing support for the proposed Historic District Overlay. Mr. Glenn stated that Southport faced increasing development pressure as one of the fastest-growing areas in the state and argued that the issue before the Board was whether the City would remain recognizable as it continued to grow. He stated that Southport's historic homes, walkable streets, maritime character, and sense of place distinguished the community and should be protected. The letter asserted that a Historic District would help guide compatible growth rather than prevent development and cited communities including Beaufort, New Bern, Edenton, and Wilmington as examples where historic preservation had strengthened local economies, tourism, investment, property values, and community identity. Mr. Glenn urged the Board to preserve Southport's historic character while allowing continued prosperity and investment.

Bob Gardner, 108 North Caswell Avenue

Mr. Gardner stated that he and his wife resided within the proposed Historic District and opposed the proposed ordinance. Mr. Gardner stated that the proposal sought to address concerns over the possibility of future incompatible development rather than an existing problem. He argued that current property owners already maintained the historic character of the district and that the proposal would unnecessarily regulate those properties by placing decisions under the authority of an appointed committee. Mr. Gardner further stated that a majority of affected property owners had expressed opposition to the proposal and urged the Board to respect those views. He also referenced a November 2025 letter from legal counsel

asserting concerns regarding potential conflicts with state law related to down-zoning and stated that litigation could result if the ordinance were adopted. He urged the Board to consider both the expressed concerns of affected property owners and the legal issues raised before taking action.

City Clerk Deviney read a letter from Southport native, Travis Children, expressing opposition to the proposed Historic District regulations. The letter stated that while preserving Southport's history and character was important, property owners should retain the ability to improve and develop their property with only reasonable regulations in place. The author argued that Southport's transformation had occurred through organic investment rather than burdensome government regulation and cited examples of properties that had evolved over time into successful businesses and attractions. The letter further stated that many structures within the proposed district were not historically significant and expressed concern that the proposed regulations would impose unnecessary restrictions on property owners.

Bob Menches, 406 Clarendon Avenue

Mr. Menches stated that although his property was located just outside the proposed Historic District, he was concerned about the potential future expansion of the district. He expressed concern that nothing within the proposal prevented future Historic Preservation Commissions from expanding the district boundaries to include additional neighborhoods and historic resources. Mr. Menches also compared the proposal to previous right-of-way discussions, stating that he believed both addressed problems that did not currently exist. He stated that local property owners had consistently maintained Southport's character without formal design standards and expressed concern that the proposal would further divide the community.

City Clerk Deviney read a letter from John and Heidi Lazinski, 222 East Moore Street, who stated they had intentionally chosen to move to Southport because of its existing character rather than a formally regulated Historic District. Drawing upon their experience living in various communities, including historic districts, the letter expressed concern that homeowners' insurance premiums and coverage could be adversely affected by the adoption of the proposed Historic District. The authors stated they had confirmed with their insurance agent that coverage changes and premium increases could occur. They also expressed concern regarding recent new construction they believed was incompatible with the historic character of downtown while noting that existing homeowners had voluntarily maintained and improved their properties without additional regulation.

Holly Segalla, 2435 Lake Ridge Drive

Ms. Segalla stated that although she believed property owners should consider the interests of their neighbors, she was also concerned about the

possibility of litigation should the proposal be adopted. She stated that she appreciated the level of public involvement and expressed hope that the community could continue working together to develop a solution acceptable to all parties.

City Clerk Deviney read a letter from Paul Swenson, 706 North Atlantic Avenue, expressing opposition to the proposed Historic District Overlay. Mr. Swenson stated that after personally surveying homes within the proposed district, he observed that homeowners had consistently maintained, renovated, or restored their properties in a manner compatible with Southport's character without the need for additional regulations. He questioned the necessity of creating a Historic District and expressed concerns regarding increased governmental oversight, quasi-judicial review, and the potential limitations that compatibility standards could place on future additions or new construction. Mr. Swenson concluded by stating that preserving Southport's character had resulted from the community itself rather than regulatory requirements.

Larry Ashley, 637 Wild Rose Way

Ms. Ashley, speaking on his own behalf and not as a representative of the Planning Board or Cemetery Committee, stated that the purpose of a Historic District was not to freeze Southport in time but rather to guide inevitable future change in a manner that preserved the City's historic character. He discussed the role of planning in preparing for future growth and compared the proposal to other long-range planning efforts, including infrastructure improvements for storms. Mr. Ashley encouraged attendees to consider the proposal from the perspective of protecting their own investments, noting that existing zoning regulations could not regulate architectural design. He expressed concern that without a Historic District, future property owners could significantly alter or replace historic structures in ways incompatible with surrounding neighborhoods and stated that the proposed Historic District would provide a mechanism to help preserve Southport's unique character.

City Clerk Deviney read a letter from Tal West, announcing his resignation from the Historic Preservation Commission effective June 30, 2026, with the hope that a resident of the proposed Historic District would fill his position. Mr. West thanked the Board of Aldermen for his appointment and expressed appreciation for his fellow Commission members. He shared his background in history, public service, and historic preservation and reflected on lessons learned during his time as an elected official. Mr. West stated that his vision for the Historic Preservation Commission had focused on celebrating Southport's history through historic district signage, interpretive markers, and recognition of significant historic figures and locations rather than imposing burdens on residents.

Dana Hamilton, 114 North Caswell Avenue

Ms. Hamilton stated that after listening to the evening's comments, she believed everyone shared the same goal of preserving Southport's historic character and small-town atmosphere. She stated that because residents already valued and maintained the community's character, the proposed Historic District Overlay was unnecessary and attempted to solve a problem that did not exist. Ms. Hamilton, speaking as a realtor, stated that people intentionally chose Southport because of its history and charm. She also referenced a detached garage recently constructed on her property, stating that while it had been designed to complement the existing home and neighborhood, portions of the project may not have been permitted under the proposed Design Standards. She concluded by stating that Southport residents had consistently demonstrated their ability to preserve the City's character without additional regulations.

City Clerk Deviney read a letter from Allison Fox, 407 West Brown Street, urging the Board to allow Southport to remain the community it had always been. The letter opposed creating regulations that would apply to only a small percentage of property owners, stated that the proposal had divided the community, and encouraged the Board to vote against the Historic District Overlay.

Carl Ward, 231 North Caswell Avenue

Mr. Ward stated that numerous homes throughout the proposed district had been successfully renovated or rebuilt in ways that enhanced Southport's historic character. Speaking as a retired general contractor, he expressed concern that many of those improvements, including renovations to his own home, would not have been permitted under the proposed Design Standards. Mr. Ward questioned whether homeowners would continue to have the flexibility to make compatible improvements and expressed concern regarding statements made during Historic Preservation Commission meetings about what would be permitted. He concluded by stating that the proposal had become increasingly divisive within the community.

City Clerk Deviney read a letter from Scott Fitzgerald, 316 West Moore Street, expressing opposition to the proposed Historic District Overlay. Mr. Fitzgerald stated that during the ten years he had lived within the proposed district, he had observed homeowners consistently investing in and improving their properties in ways that enhanced Southport's historic character without government regulation. He questioned the need for the Historic District, describing it as a solution in search of a problem, and expressed concern that the City was disregarding the wishes of many affected property owners. The letter also questioned whether property owners subjected to additional regulations would receive any form of compensation or tax relief for the increased costs and restrictions associated

with the proposed Historic District.

Kathy Cabral, 308 West West Street

Ms. Cabral stated that while both supporters and opponents of the proposal shared the goal of preserving Southport's historic character, they differed on how best to achieve that objective. She expressed concerns regarding the creation of an unelected quasi-judicial body, the interpretation of subjective design standards, and the potential financial burdens imposed upon homeowners. Ms. Cabral stated that increased regulations could discourage property owners from maintaining or improving their homes, resulting in unintended deterioration rather than preservation. She further stated that residents within the proposed district had already established the character the Historic Preservation Commission sought to preserve through their own investment and stewardship, without regulatory oversight, and urged the Board to vote against the proposal.

City Clerk Deviney read a letter from Benjamin H. Doshier, co-owner of 205 West Moore Street, expressing concern regarding the proposed Historic District Overlay. Mr. Doshier stated that while he appreciated efforts to preserve Southport's historic character, he believed the proposed regulations could diminish private property rights, limit owners' ability to improve their properties, and negatively affect property values. He urged the Board to carefully consider the interests of affected property owners before adopting the proposal.

William Delaney, 315 Brunswick St

Mr. Delaney stated that he had lived and worked in Southport since 1985, operating a land surveying and engineering business and previously serving two terms as an alderman. He explained that he had been contacted several years earlier regarding service on the Historic Preservation Commission and had expressed his support for protecting private property rights. Mr. Delaney stated that, based upon his experience with the City's history and boundaries, he believed the Board should carefully consider the rights of property owners while evaluating the proposed Historic District Overlay.

City Clerk Deviney read a letter from Vernon Ray Martin, Jr., owner of property at 111 South Howe Street and 113 North Howe Street. Mr. Martin stated that he had owned property in Brunswick County for many years and had admired the way downtown property owners had maintained and invested in their homes, helping create the Southport of today. While recognizing their stewardship, he expressed opposition to the proposed Historic Preservation Commission, stating that property owners should not be required to obtain approval or guidance from a governing body before making repairs or improvements to their own property.

Eric Lappala, 215 West Moore Street

Mr. Lappala stated that he had provided the Board with a written presentation summarizing his concerns. He expressed the belief that Southport's historic character had developed organically through the efforts of its residents and that the existing approach had been successful. Mr. Lappala described the restoration of his historic home, including the removal of brick veneer to expose original clapboard siding, reconstruction of a portion of the home to accommodate an addition, relocation of the front entrance, installation of historically compatible hurricane-rated windows, and other improvements completed to preserve the home's historic appearance. He stated that many of those improvements would not have been permitted under the proposed Design Standards, despite enhancing the property's historic character. He concluded by urging the Board not to impose additional regulations on a process he believed was already working effectively.

City Clerk Deviney read a letter from Susan and Everett Moore, owners of 318 East Bay Street, expressing opposition to the proposed Historic District Overlay. The letter stated that after owning several historic homes in Southport over nearly three decades, they had consistently maintained each property's historic character without regulatory requirements. They expressed concern that future improvements to their current home would require approval through a quasi-judicial process, creating delays and limiting their ability to maintain their property. They stated that Southport's historic character had been preserved for generations through the efforts of responsible property owners rather than restrictive regulations.

Woody Wilson, 502 West Brunswick Street

Mr. Wilson stated that he appreciated the time and effort the Board of Aldermen had devoted to the proposal. He encouraged the Board to base its decision upon the comments received from residents, noting that the majority of speakers opposed the Historic Preservation Commission. Mr. Wilson urged the Board to resolve the issue by voting against the proposal so the community could move forward.

City Clerk Deviney read a letter from Tommy Harrelson expressing concern about increasing governmental regulation. Mr. Harrelson stated that he had participated in the renovation of several historic homes in Southport and believed homeowners had consistently preserved the community's historic character without formal oversight. He stated that while he had previously supported the concept of a historic commission, he had since concluded that additional governmental control was unnecessary and urged the Board to reject the proposal.

Bob Holben, 114 West Moore Street

Mr. Holben stated that he supported the views expressed by many property owners within the proposed Historic District. He explained that he and his

wife resided in the historic Julius Newton House and valued Southport's history because of their personal connection to the community rather than governmental regulation. Mr. Holben stated that while he appreciated the extensive work that had gone into preparing the proposed Design Standards, he believed the proposal overlooked the homeowners who had invested in preserving the district. He noted that examples used within the Design Standards included photographs of his own home and neighboring properties that, in his opinion, would not comply with the proposed standards. Drawing on his engineering background, he described the proposal as impractical and encouraged the Board to trust residents to continue preserving Southport's character without additional regulation.

City Clerk Deviney read a letter from Jim Chirico expressing opposition to the proposed Historic District Overlay. Mr. Chirico stated that while he appreciated the committee's efforts to preserve Southport's history and character, he believed the proposal would impose unnecessary restrictions upon property owners, increase costs, complicate permitting, and potentially affect property values. He urged the Board to balance preservation goals with private property rights, economic vitality, and limited governmental intrusion by rejecting the proposed Historic District.

Pat Kirkman,

Ms. Kirkman began her remarks by expressing appreciation to the members of the Historic Preservation Commission for their service over the previous three years. She recognized the Commission members by name and thanked them for the time and dedication they had devoted to the process. Ms. Kirkman offered particular recognition to Chairman Charles Drew for his leadership and service to the Commission.

City Clerk Deviney read a letter from Joe and Marty Laughlin, 410 East Moore Street, expressing opposition to the Historic Preservation Commission and its proposed regulations. The letter objected to additional governmental oversight and described the proposal as creating a process similar to a restrictive homeowners' association. The authors also expressed concern regarding additional review requirements for property improvements, referenced examples of deteriorating historic properties in other communities that they attributed to restrictive preservation requirements, and questioned the necessity of the proposal given the current condition of homes within the proposed district.

Brian Quinn, 316 West Brunswick Street

Mr. Quinn stated that after decades working in real estate development and construction, he had chosen to make Southport his home because of its historic character. He described restoring several homes within the proposed district, including replacing a deteriorated structure while preserving a mature live oak tree and renovating additional historic properties in a manner

he believed respected Southport's architectural character. Mr. Quinn stated that many residents who were not native to Southport nevertheless deeply valued and respected the City's history. He expressed the opinion that the proposed Historic Preservation Commission would increase governmental control over private property rather than preserve history and urged the Board to reject the proposal.

City Clerk Deviney read a letter from Cathy Rogers, 211 North Caswell Avenue, expressing opposition to the proposed Historic Preservation Commission and additional regulations affecting homeowners within the proposed Historic Overlay District. Ms. Rogers stated that while preserving Southport's character was important, homeowners should retain the right to maintain, improve, and adapt their properties without additional governmental oversight. She expressed concern that increased regulation could discourage investment, delay repairs, increase costs, and create unnecessary burdens for property owners. The letter encouraged the Board to pursue voluntary preservation efforts, education, and incentives rather than additional mandates and urged the Board to vote against the proposal.

The Board recessed the meeting for approximately ten minutes. Upon reconvening, Mayor Hatem observed that the comments received reflected a shared desire to preserve Southport's historic character despite differing opinions regarding the proposed method. He noted that a majority of those in attendance appeared to oppose the Historic Preservation Commission and asked whether any additional individuals wished to address the Board before the public hearing concluded. After additional speakers indicated their desire to be heard, the public hearing continued.

Sherol Lappala, 316 West Brunswick Street

Ms. Lappala stated that many residents had devoted significant time to participating in the Historic Preservation Commission process and encouraged the Board to hear all remaining speakers before making a decision. Ms. Lappala described improvements she and her husband had made to their home, including the addition of a second-story porch, which she believed would not have been permitted under the proposed Design Standards. She expressed concern that subjective standards, such as determining whether a project was "congruous," could result in inconsistent decisions. Ms. Lappala stated that the proposed regulations were overly rigid, would increase maintenance costs, and would create unnecessary governmental oversight of homeowners seeking to make routine improvements.

City Clerk Deviney read a letter from Lynn Meekins, 207 North Caswell Avenue, expressing concern regarding the proposed Historic Preservation Commission. The letter stated that while preserving Southport's historic character was important, homeowners had already demonstrated their

commitment to maintaining older homes and should be viewed as partners in preservation rather than subjected to additional regulation. Ms. Meekins expressed concern that the proposed regulations would increase costs, create delays, and make maintaining historic homes more difficult, and urged the Board to reject the proposal.

Mary Bullard, 309 East Moore Street

Ms. Bullard stated that she supported preserving Southport's history and character but did not believe the Historic Preservation Commission, in its proposed form, was the appropriate method. She expressed concern that additional oversight would increase costs, delay property improvements, and require homeowners to seek approval for reasonable changes to their own properties. Ms. Bullard also questioned whether homeowners within the proposed district were adequately represented in the process and noted that many supporters of the proposal did not reside within the affected area. She urged the Board to balance historic preservation with property rights and local representation and encouraged the Board to consider the views of the residents most directly affected by the proposal.

City Clerk Deviney read a letter from Kay Jollif expressing opposition to the proposed Historic District Overlay. Ms. Jollif stated that Southport's appeal had always been rooted in the independent spirit of its residents and neighborhoods rather than formal regulation. She recalled the varying appearance of homes when she moved to Southport in 2001 and stated that the community's character had continued to flourish without additional restrictions. She urged the Board to preserve Southport's spirit rather than impose new regulatory requirements and requested that the proposed Historic District Overlay be denied.

Gabriel Azzato, 609 North Atlantic Avenue

Mr. Azzato stated that his concerns centered on the structure of the proposed Historic Preservation Commission as a quasi-judicial body and the potential legal risks associated with its operation. He discussed the importance of maintaining both actual and perceived impartiality in quasi-judicial proceedings and expressed concern that active City employees serving on such a board could create the appearance of bias. Mr. Azzato stated that although he had no concerns regarding the integrity of individual staff members, he believed the proposed structure could expose the City to legal challenges and additional costs. He urged the Board to consider the legal and fiduciary implications of the Commission's composition before taking action.

City Clerk Deviney read a letter from Peggy Todd, 209 Short Street, expressing opposition to the proposed Historic District Overlay as currently drafted. Ms. Todd stated that she and her husband had chosen Southport because of its historic character and would have supported a proposal

focused on preserving the overall appearance of the community without regulating items such as fencing, landscaping, and specific repair materials. She recommended that the Board reject the current proposal and direct the Historic Preservation Commission to develop a revised version with greater representation from homeowners within the proposed district.

Bonnie Bray, 515 Quartermaster Dr

Ms. Bray, a member of the Historic Preservation Commission, addressed the Board and stated that she wished to clarify several points regarding the Commission's work and the proposed Design Standards. Ms. Bray reviewed the history of the Commission's creation and appointment process, noting that many Commission members either resided within the proposed district or had longstanding ties to Southport. She stated that a significant portion of the Design Standards consisted of historical background information rather than regulatory provisions and explained that numerous categories of routine maintenance and minor work would not require a Certificate of Appropriateness. Ms. Bray also defended the work of City staff and encouraged residents to review the meeting minutes and the proposed standards in their entirety.

City Clerk Deviney read a letter from Jim Todd, 209 Short Street, expressing support for preserving Southport's history while opposing the Historic Preservation Commission as currently proposed. Mr. Todd stated that he believed a preservation board could be appropriate if its authority were more limited and provided greater protections for affected homeowners. He concluded that, given the choice between approving the proposal as written or rejecting it, he supported voting against the ordinance in its current form.

Larry Cabral, 308 West West Street, presented an updated map illustrating properties within the proposed Historic District that he stated opposed the Historic Preservation Commission. He asserted that the majority of affected property owners opposed the proposal, citing previous maps, yard signs, and public participation as evidence of that position. Mr. Cabral also stated that whether Commission members had longstanding ties to Southport was not relevant to whether they should regulate the property of others. He further referenced statements made by candidates during prior election campaigns regarding the Historic Preservation Commission and requested that any elected official changing his or her position publicly explain the reasons for doing so.

City Clerk Deviney advised the Board that all submitted correspondence had been read and noted that if any email had been inadvertently missed, it had not been intentional.

City Clerk Deviney read a final letter from Hayler and Robbie Osborne, owners of the Southport Bank Building at 112 East Moore Street, expressing

opposition to the proposed Historic Preservation Commission. The letter stated that Southport property owners had demonstrated responsible stewardship of their properties without additional governmental oversight and expressed the opinion that another layer of bureaucracy was unnecessary.

Susan Holth, 307 East Moore Street

Ms. Holth stated that while her family's history in Southport was not as extensive as some, she had called Southport home since 1970. She expressed concern regarding the language contained within the proposed Design Standards, noting the repeated use of the terms "shall" and "required" rather than "guidance." Ms. Holth stated that the document functioned as a regulatory framework rather than a set of recommendations and argued that it would unnecessarily limit property owners' flexibility. She urged the Board to reject the proposal.

Jim Brown, 114 South Howe St

Mr. Brown stated that he had lived in Southport for 51 years and owned a home within the proposed Historic District. He expressed support for historic preservation, stating that he believed it was necessary to maintain the value and integrity of historic properties.

Debbie Barnes, 425 West West Street

Ms. Barnes stated that Southport's historic area had become more attractive over the past 30 years through renovations and new construction completed by individual property owners rather than through regulation. She suggested that revisions to the Unified Development Ordinance could accomplish the City's preservation goals without creating a Historic District Overlay. Ms. Barnes also expressed concern that the proposed regulations could discourage restoration of historic homes, increase maintenance costs, and contribute to neighborhood changes experienced by other historic communities.

Siegfried De Smidt, 319 West Brunswick Street

Mr. De Smidt stated that he strongly opposed the proposed Historic District Design Standards and quasi-judicial enforcement process. Mr. Smidt stated that homeowners had preserved Southport's historic character through their own efforts and deserved the Board's trust. He expressed concern that the proposed standards were vague, overly restrictive, and could increase costs, legal disputes, and governmental control over private property without demonstrating a clear public need. He urged the Board to reject the proposal while thanking the Historic Preservation Commission members for their work.

John Bove, 305 East West Street

Mr. Bove, speaking as a Southport resident and not on behalf of the

Planning Board, stated that while most citizens shared the goal of preserving Southport's historic character, he believed an effective Historic District was necessary to prevent gradual erosion of that character over time. He stated that incompatible redevelopment could occur one property at a time and that existing zoning regulations could not prevent demolition or construction that complied with the Unified Development Ordinance but conflicted with the surrounding historic context. Mr. Bove expressed support for the proposed Historic District as the most effective means of preserving Southport's historic character for future generations.

Fred Fiss, 216 North Atlantic Avenue

Mr. Fiss stated that he supported the Historic Preservation Commission and Historic District Overlay. He expressed disappointment with efforts to oppose the proposal and stated that he believed a local Historic District was an important tool for preserving Southport's historic fabric and identity. Mr. Fiss referenced both the CAMA Land Use Plan and the Comprehensive Plan as supporting preservation efforts and argued that future property owners and developers might not share the same commitment to preserving Southport's historic character. He concluded by stating that the Design Standards were intended as guidelines that allowed reasonable flexibility when appropriate.

Steve Harney, 207 Clarendon Avenue

Mr. Harney stated that he strongly opposed the proposed Historic District Ordinance based upon his experience living in multiple historic districts. He expressed concern that the proposal had divided the community and encouraged the Board to consider the views of the residents and property owners who would be directly affected. Mr. Harney also stated that he believed the proposal could result in litigation and suggested that the community work together to develop voluntary preservation efforts rather than adopt the proposed ordinance.

With no additional speakers present, Mayor Hatem declared the public hearing closed.

He thanked the citizens, Board members, City Manager, City staff, Police Chief, and all those in attendance for their participation and for their shared commitment to the City of Southport.

E. Adjourn

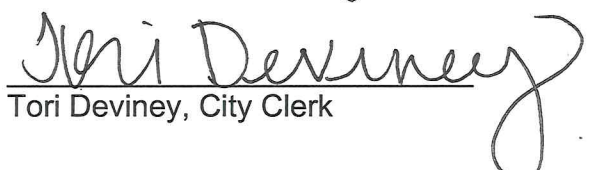
A motion was made by Alderman Carroll and seconded by Alderman Kelley to adjourn. The motion carried unanimously.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:03 pm.



Dr. Joseph P Hatem, Mayor

Attest:



Tori Deviney, City Clerk

