

## Mayor's Update: January 2022

I am honored and humbled to have been reelected to serve another term as Mayor of the City of Southport. The opportunity for public service is a higher calling and I am ready to meet the challenges of the office as we work together in building on the foundation of the past two years.

I want to thank the citizens who supported me during this past election as we move Southport in "The Best Way Forward." I am not Superman, but I can be Clark Kent, the mild-mannered reporter, who also is the mild mannered doctor and southern gentleman mayor who has the experience, knowledge, and qualifications, to serve as your Mayor.

I am grateful to current board members Alderman John Allen, Alderman Lowe Davis, Alderman, Alderman Tom Lombardi, and Mayor Pro Tem Karen Mosteller, for their expertise that has brought much success to this board and will continue to do so, and I welcome new board members Mr. Rich Alt and Mr. Robert Carroll and the experience they will bring to the Board of Aldermen. Together, we will continue to achieve many accomplishments for the City of Southport.

I want to share with you a part of my VISION for the City of Southport, and I use the acronym V-I-S-I-O-N.

V—Southport is VIBRANT: July 4<sup>th</sup> Festival; Wooden Boat Show; Spring Festival; Summer Market; Doshier Memorial Hospital; Vintage Car Shows; Southport Historical Society; N.C. Maritime

Museum; Harper Library; The State Port Pilot; Our Business Community; Southport Garden Club; Southport City Government and all city departments including our Fire, Police Department and Emergency Services to our staff in City Hall; Captain Charlie's Children's Fishing Tournament; City Dock; City Gym; Downtown Southport Inc.-DSI; Kiwanis Club, Rotary Club, Southport –Oak Island Chamber of Commerce; Yacht Basin restaurants and businesses; and of course a vibrant ABC Store. Most recently: Winterfest 2021—a collaborative effort of the City of Southport and DSI-- Downtown Southport Inc. The Departments of Tourism, Public Services, Parks and Recreation, with the Southport Garden Club, created a Winter Wonder Land with the Candy Cane Garden Party in Keziah Park. A Hallmark Moment was created with the Mayor's Christmas Tree Lighting. The Light up the Night Christmas Parade and visit with Santa, what a spectacular evening, the fire station overflowing with families and children waiting to see Santa. Pet pictures with Santa sponsored by the Department of Animal Protective Services, the Winter Craft Festival in Franklin Square Park, and ending with holiday lights on the river, the Christmas Flotilla.

There is so much more I could say, the point, we are a vibrant city and our city government has a role to play in the vibrancy and the festiveness of the seasons, and in the commemorative ceremonies such as the flag lowering at waterfront park to the 9/11 ceremony each year at our fire station and this also includes the celebration in 2022 of the 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of

the Model T Fire Truck, the 230<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the founding of Smithville now Southport, the 65<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the publication of “The Old Man and the Boy by Robert Ruark, the 100<sup>th</sup> Birth Anniversary of artist and photographer, Art Newton, and the commemoration of the 80<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the sinking of the John D. Gill and the heroic response from the citizens of Southport and Doshier Memorial Hospital when World War II reached our shore.

V-stands also for –VOLUNTEERISM —the Southport community volunteers—civic organizations such as the Lions Club who place the U.S. Flags on Holidays, DSI, who helps to sponsor our festivals, SOS –Sisters of Southport, to the many volunteers who serve on city committees such as the Beautification, Parks and Rec, and Forestry Committees, the Planning Board and the Board of Adjustment, thank you for your service and to all who volunteer in our city, including at the Visitors Center and at Doshier Memorial Hospital. It is important to the success of our city.

I INVESTMENT, including Investment in INFRASTRUCTURE. Our Waterfront and Waterfront Stabilization—how fortunate to have state legislators, Senator Bill Rabon, and Representative Charles Miller who advocate for Southport in assisting in this important funding.

Investing in our roads-paving beginning with Howe Street, which is fully funded thanks to our legislators, sidewalks and crosswalks in working with NCDOT, which the city has funding

for, all our parks-Keziah to Kingsley, our sewer and lift stations, burying power lines, our city facilities, regionalization of our sewer system, storm water, our budget and INVESTMENT in our board workshops-beginning this month, January 11<sup>th</sup> at the Community Building, where we prioritize our strategic INITIATIVES and set goals short and long term; INVESTMENT in historic preservation-Potter's Seafood, the last remaining working dock, developing a historic district within our city, our Live Oak Tree Canopy, our cemeteries, the Weather Tower, Yacht Basin and dredging to investing in safety not only in the Yacht Basin, but throughout our city, our entry corridor, improved signage so trucks are using Rob Gandy Boulevard and not Howe Street, speed calming devices—SSS – Stop Speeding in Southport, hurricane and FEMA preparedness...INVESTMENT in our city employees and staff to make sure they are being paid a competitive salary and that they have the continuing education, training, equipment, and technology to be successful.

INFORMATIVE- working with the Department of Tourism and Communication I have produced Mayor's Updates for online viewing as well as in The State Port Pilot. We will continue to improve the technology of communication within our city, with our citizens, such as the continued use of Southport Connected, and improve the technology and the access of INFORMATION in city meetings and on our city website.

S SOUTHPORT SOUTHERN Charm and Welcoming Hospitality. I am here to SERVE, whether at city hall or the hospital. I am so honored to work with our city employees, the city manager, city attorney, and the board of aldermen in implementing the policies and providing the necessary SERVICES to the citizens of Southport. Southport is STRATEGIC in every aspect and every endeavor.

Part of my job as Mayor is to assist in the SUCCESS of our City Manager. If the City Manager is successful, this will permeate throughout our city government. And I will work with each Alderman, together and individually to ensure their success in representing their wards and will be there for and SUPPORTIVE of all our City Department Heads and City Employees. SUCCESS also depends on wise counsel from our City Attorney, Mr. Mike Isenberg. And part of our joy of living in Southport are the SALUBRIOUS BREEZES that were described by Joshua Potts in 1786.

I INCLUSIVE—we welcome diversity, the proclaiming of the history of the African American Community and in honoring Rev. King each year; we are inclusive in welcoming our tourists and visitors and are INCLUSIVE in listening to the voices of our citizens; INVOLVEMENT in our community; INTROSPECTIVE—Southport Spirituality, INTELLECTUAL endeavor; INSIGHTFUL; ICONIC—Whittler’s Bench, Fort Johnston, our waterfront on the banks of the Cape Fear River; our historic heritage from the fishing village to the film industry; INOVATIVE; INDUSTRIOUS—

our economic engine of tourism, our business community—shops and restaurants.

O OUTSTANDING in everything we do. Original—Southport is unique and decisions should be made with respect to our unique character. OPEN—we are open for business, and we protect our Open Space as noted in our Unified Development Ordinance in preserving the open space in the Yacht Basin.

We have ORDINANCES to help guide us in the challenges of growth and new developments that have been presented to the city. There is a process, beginning with our City Staff and the City Planner/Systems Development Specialist, the Planning Board and their committees, Public Hearings, and ultimately to the Board of Aldermen, with more public comments and public hearings. This process takes months before the Board of Aldermen have to vote on a project.

Change, growth, and development are coming to Southport and to Brunswick County. It is our job to help guide it in the best direction for our city and our citizens while working with the developers in reaching that goal. We work in cooperation with our Brunswick County Commissioners, in meeting the infrastructure needs and in moving growth in the right direction.

We work with Federal, State, and County Government to assist in funding these infrastructure projects related to growth and development as well as looking at all streams of revenue—from grants and other mechanisms to assist in finding the funds to

support our city and how we want our city to look in the next two decades—OUTSTANDING or adequate and average.

N NEIGHBORS and NEIGHBORHOODS. We are grateful for our neighbors and friends and it is the character of all our neighborhoods that gives Southport its village atmosphere and charm. And whether a Christmas Golf Cart Parade or Camden's Christmas Cookie Stand, it begins with our neighbors and neighborhoods.

As your Mayor, as a doctor, as a public health advocate, I will continue the same leadership principles of prevention, promotion, education, and strategic analysis and planning, that promotes the health of our citizens, our city, our environment, our economy and that preserves the historic character of our city. We have met the challenges of the pandemic together and it is still with us, with a new variant, Omicron, that is more transmissible and daily cases are now four times what they were a year ago.

This is a pandemic of the unvaccinated in that data from one large hospital revealed that 97% of COVID-19 infected adult patients on life support, were unvaccinated. The best solution to this pandemic and the best way to avoid serious illness from COVID-19 is to be fully vaccinated—two vaccines and one booster shot, which I have overwhelmingly recommended, and to continue the public health measures that I have emphasized over the past two years.

I want to close with how proud I am of our city and our city employees, from the staff in City Hall to our grounds crew in Public Services and how grateful and honored I am to serve as your mayor.

The Annual Awards Banquet of the Southport Fire Department was held last month and as Mayor I was invited to attend and asked to speak. To be among the men and women of this department and to listen to their achievements and acts of heroism was a special gift and in particular to participate in recognizing thirty years of service to the Fire Department by two of its members: Fire Chief Charles Drew, who continues his family legacy of Fire Fighters, his father and grandfather both members of the department, and Police Chief Todd Coring, who while working for Parks and Recreation was invited to a training session and subsequently asked to join the department. I salute them both for this wonderful achievement of three decades of service.

One of my overriding goals as Mayor is the enhancement of the quality of life, the preservation of the human spirit for all our citizens and it is my solemn pledge that we continue to work towards this goal together.