

Guest column: Southport Mayor Dr. Joe Pat Hatem

City focuses on goals, priorities

With the completion of the Board of Aldermen's first workshop and the first Board of Aldermen meeting of 2022, I would like to thank the city staff, the board, and our citizens for this cooperative effort. I list below some of the goals and strategic priorities for Southport.

Strategic priorities:

■ **Funding:** Without adequate monetary resources, Southport, as is true for any municipality, will not be able to accomplish the goals set forth in our Capital Improvement Projects. The city is engaged in multiple funding initiatives.

■ **Supporting our business community:** In a speech to the American Society of Newspaper Editors, January 17, 1925, President Calvin Coolidge said, "The chief business of the American people, is business." It is important for the city to have a strong economy and a strong business community, our unique shops and restaurants and other businesses that help to make Southport a vibrant community.

■ **Impact analysis of new developments:** The city has signed letters of intent for traffic, infrastructure, and economic impact analysis with respect to Indigo Plantation Expansion Project.

■ **Historic preservation:** From our cemeteries, Fort Johnston, The Whittler's Bench, Yacht Basin, historic homes and neighborhoods to the 1922 Fire Engine, Southport preserves and proclaims its historic heritage from the fishing village to the film industry and our city budget will reflect this.

■ **Projects Goals:** Investment in infrastructure.

■ **Waterfront stabilization/erosion control.**

■ **Regionalization of sewer system with Brunswick County and eventual merger.**

■ **Storm water:** This will need to be a city wide solution as well as will require emergent intervention such as on West Bay Street in front of the Whittler's Bench parking lot area, Oliver's on the Waterfront, the Riverside Motel and the Pilot Tower to protect buildings and vehicles from tidal and heavy rain flooding with improved drainage. This project has been submitted to CAMA and is scheduled to start in February.

■ **Burying power lines.**

■ **Roads: paving.**

■ **Improving, repairing, and building city parks:** Work is beginning on Taylor Field and repair, maintenance and renovation is scheduled for all parks.

■ **City dock:** Completion of the second phase of the project in 2022.

■ **PEAs (Pedestrian Economic Areas):** City officials recently met with NCDOT and specific crosswalks were discussed and delineated, especially for crossing Howe Street to safely attend events in Franklin Square Park. We have funding for a crosswalks on Moore and on Howe streets.

■ **Yacht Basin:** Where memories are made and safety is a priority.

■ **Tourism:** Our economic engine.

■ **Pump stations:** Repair and replacement.

■ **Speeding in Southport:** Mitigation measures.

■ **Building/Facilities maintenance.**

■ **Sidewalks:** City-wide connectivity to include bike paths and walking and jogging trails.

■ **Traffic:** Improved signage with all truck traffic and all ferry traffic - unless stopping in town to dine or shop, use Rob Gandy Blvd.

■ **Mosquito control protocol.**

■ **Investment in our city employees:** training, equipment, technology, and competitive salary.

■ **Public health:** Protect the health of our citizens, environment, economy; prevention in all aspects of city government; and promotion of ideas, interventions, and investments that will bring success to our city.

■ **Kayak launch.**

■ **Gratitude to volunteers and cooperation with civic organizations:** most recently, many thanks to those who donated to Matthew's Ministry this month; and to those who will promote "Night to Shine," sponsored by the Tim Tebow Foundation

which provides a virtual Prom Night for people with special needs ages 14 and older, with a "Shine-Thru" event on Saturday, February 5, and a virtual event on Friday, February 11, (visit www.bcnighttoshine.com to register).

■ **Street lights.**

■ **Entry corridor.**

■ **Street sweeper purchase.**

■ **Safety throughout our city with strong fire and police departments and Emergency Medical Services.**

■ **Hurricane and FEMA preparedness.**

■ **City Hall:** repaired on the outside and ready to serve on the inside.

■ **Community Building:** improved marketing, better technology for meetings, possible need for expansion.

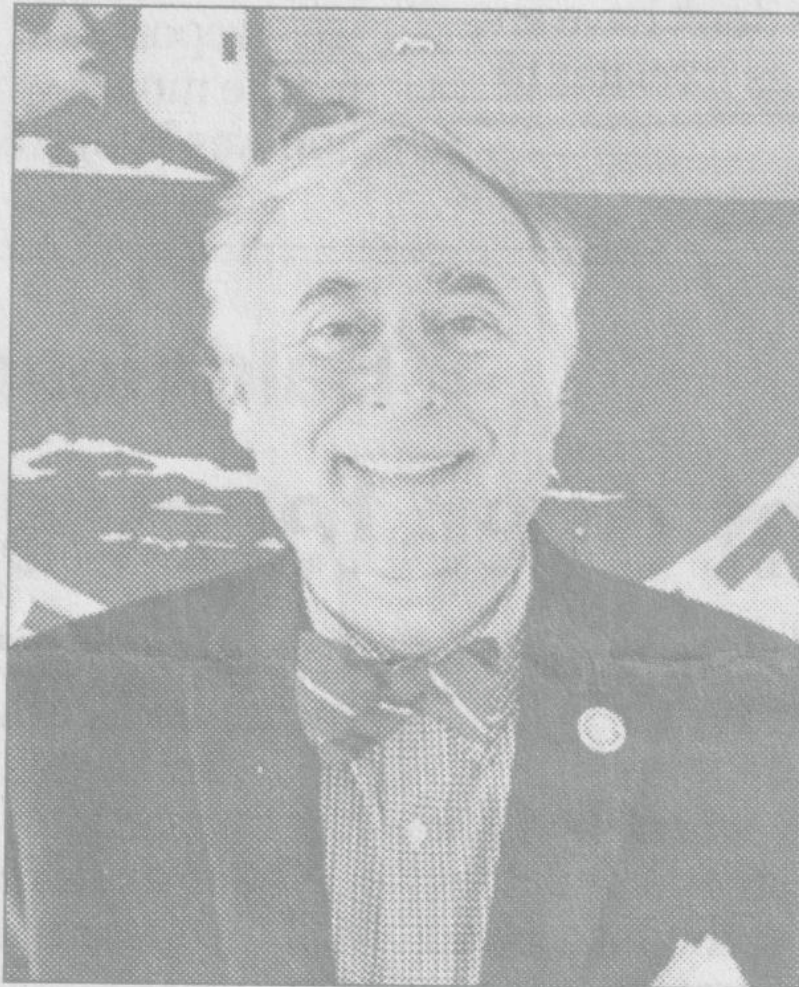
■ **Parking deck across from Fire Station:** Doshier Hospital parking lot with an electric trolley to take tourists downtown.

■ **Commemorating and celebrating our history and heritage.**

■ **Protecting our tree canopy and open space.**

■ **Communication:** within city government and with our citizens through city newsletter, "Southport Connected," Mayor's Updates, public comment and public hearings where the citizens have a voice, workshops, and neighborhood meetings with the Mayor.

■ **Budget:** That supports the services, projects, and goals of our city and our citizens.



Mayor Dr. Joe Pat Hatem

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