

### Listen to the Professionals

Downtown Southport Inc. (DSI) is very interested in the restoration and maintenance of Franklin Square Park. DSI's Mission Statement is "Downtown Southport Inc. (DSI) is a non-profit organization dedicated to preserving the heritage and charm of downtown Southport. We encourage and support preservation projects, cultural activities, educational programs, tourism as well as responsible economic growth in the downtown area, making Southport a vital, vibrant year-round community for our citizens and guests.". This is evident in the fact that DSI has contributed \$12,500 to the Dept of Parks/Rec since 2013 for the sole purpose for the maintenance and upkeep of Franklin Square Park and the Garrison Lawn when the Garrison Lawn was used for events/festivals. DSI also budgeted \$5,000 to be used by the Dept of Parks/Rec for the maintenance and upkeep of Franklin Square Park in 2023. Scott Len, Southport Forestry Committee, and Justin Bennett, NCFS Forester met on August 16 and spent several hours assessing the trees in Franklin Square Park. This report can be obtained from Heather Hemphill, Director of Parks/Rec. One of the summary points from the report is, "There are no alarm bells going off. The state of the trees is more a function of their age than any contemporary impact from events". It is DSI's understanding that the City of Southport has contracted with Bartlett Tree Experts to provide arboricultural consulting services in the form of a Consultation for trees within Franklin Square Park. This consulting contract costs \$3,900. DSI is offering to provide the funds for this project. DSI will obviously comply with their findings regarding the welfare of Franklin Square Park. DSI would like for the Public and City Officials to listen to the Professionals regarding Franklin Square Park, and not listen to emotional concerns which are not fact-driven. Thank you.

Peggy Popelars | DSI President