



Town of Holly Ridge

# Mayor's Message

FEBRUARY 9, 2026



Happy Monday, everyone. I hope everyone survived the snow days. It is now called the storm of 2026, which nearly set a record for snowfall. We tried our best to communicate any news and updates during the event. Our Public Information Officer did a great job keeping citizens informed. Of course, we had unavoidable office, school, and business closures, as well as the Onslow County curfew in unincorporated areas. The Police and Volunteer Fire Departments did a great job with the calls and responses they encountered, and we genuinely appreciate their efforts. I hope we are past the snowstorms, and we start getting warmer temperatures, but we have learned a lot. The lessons are invaluable in dealing with this kind of unusual weather. The State of Emergency I declared was to protect the town and its citizens from unforeseen damage. That is standard practice for local government during significant events. We also received guidance from the State and Onslow County. The State of Emergency in Town was rescinded on Wednesday morning. I wish you all a great week ahead. God bless you and your family, our Town, our County, our State, and our great Country.

1. We have received several calls and questions regarding snow cleanup. We do not have snow removal equipment, as we rarely encounter such weather. The North Carolina DOT did its best to clean up the main roads, but it was a catch-up effort by all involved. At the end of the storm, we did, however, contract snow removal services to do their best to remove the residual snow and ice. We appreciate citizens' patience and cooperation during the past week.
2. On Behalf of the Town, I attended the **Business Alliance of Southeastern** North Carolina (BASE). **The keynote was the Speaker of the House of Representatives, Mr. Destin Hall (R)**, who discussed the following points:
  - NC is one of the most popular states for business and residential growth.
  - The House of Representatives continues to work on issues that would make it easier to attract businesses to North Carolina and the Southeastern region, by increasing employment opportunities.
  - The House of Representatives is encouraging the growth of all counties and municipalities.
  - They are working on ensuring that the tax rates remain the same or lower.
  - State lawmakers are focusing on Public Safety.
  - They are encouraging local governments to implement consistent land use plans and zoning ordinances
  - The State is working with North Carolina DOT for road improvements
  - There is a great demand across the state for workforce and affordable housing

- Southeastern NC is one of the fastest-growing areas of the state
- The state is encouraging local governments not to prevent growth
- The state is working to support infrastructure development to support growth
- They have a great team of representatives working hard on behalf of North Carolina's citizens.

During the meeting, I met with Senator Michael Lee, the State Senator for Pender County, and, as with Senator Lazzara in Onslow County, they want to support the local County and municipalities in meeting their needs. Senator Lee is an essential connection if we potentially have areas in Pender County. I will follow up with Senator Lazzara to continue supporting us with our North Carolina DOT needs, as well as to explore various funding opportunities.

I met separately with the Speaker of the House, who was a wealth of knowledge. Representative Hall, in partnership with Representative Carson Smith, is working with us on funding various projects, since Holly Ridge is one of the fastest-growing municipalities in Southeastern NC. He has invited me to continue working with Representative Smith to seek funding for various projects we have proposed.

I also met Senator Tillis' representative, Mr. Grayson Overholt. He indicated that the Congressional Direct Funding Application will open soon, and we will have the opportunity to apply for funding for our projects. Although Senator Tillis is leaving office, we have the remainder of the year to potentially have him approve some of our projects based on our adopted Strategic Plan, which we submitted to the Senator. We are also doing the same with Senator Budd's office and representatives.



*(Here I am pictured with the NC Speaker of the House)*

3. We had an additional meeting with the development team and the Eastern Carolina Council (ECC) for Economic Development to discuss Grant opportunities to support our projects.
4. This week, the Town Manager and I are meeting with Pender County to discuss the potential impact of any annexations if approved by the Town Council.
5. Here are some important dates that are coming up:
  - a. **Regular Town Council meeting tomorrow on 2/10 at 6:30 PM** in the Community Center.
  - b. **Public Information Meeting with the project Ajax developer on 2/11 at 6:00 PM** in the Community Center, and the format is as follows:
    - i. The developer representative will be there to answer questions
    - ii. Public attendees who wish to ask questions directly to the developer are asked to sign in at the welcome table.
    - iii. Those who do not wish to come to the podium can fill out a question card and submit it to Town Staff to be read and answered.
    - iv. Attendees who signed up to ask questions or speak will be called to the podium in the order in which they signed up.
    - v. Attendees will ask their questions, and the appropriate person will respond.
    - vi. If there are follow-up questions, the timer will be set to three minutes for both the additional questions and responses from the appropriate person.
    - vii. At the end of those three minutes, discussions will stop, and the next attendee will be called to the podium.
    - viii. If you have additional questions following your three minutes, we urge you to write those questions on the cards provided and turn them in to the Town Staff.
    - ix. We will stay at the meeting until all questions are answered.
    - x. **Please Note: This IS NOT A DEBATE - This is a Q&A Session.**
    - xi. The Town Manager and I will respond to any questions that are not development-related, such as schools, infrastructure, Transportation, taxes, etc.
  - c. **Special Town Council Meeting to Hold Public hearings on 2/19 at 6:00 PM** in the Community Center. Public Hearings will be held on the following items: Annexation, Zoning Request, Concept Plan, and Development Agreement.
6. I will have office hours this week on Tuesday and Thursday, 1–4 p.m. I am available to discuss any subjects by appointment, by phone at 336-865-0884, or by message. We do appreciate citizens' interest in the management of our great Town. We may disagree on issues, but we are open to discussing and hearing from you. We appreciate your confidence and support. God Bless you, and God Bless our Town, County, State, and our great Country.

*Mayor Pete Parnian*