

Harrisburg council selects new town administrator

By Jonathan E. Coleman

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After more than an hour behind closed doors in executive session Monday, it took the Harrisburg Town Council less than two minutes to unanimously approve the hiring of a new town administrator.

Joel Davis, who celebrated his 41st birthday Wednesday, hopes to start as early as Monday. He replaces Carl Parmer, whose contract was bought out by the council earlier this year.

Davis comes to Harrisburg after serving four years as the assistant manager for the City of North Myrtle Beach. His compensation package, including benefits and an expense account, comes out to about \$120,000 per year, Mayor Tim Hagler said.

Despite the South Carolina ties, Davis considers his new post as something of a homecoming, having earned his bachelor's degree in political science and public administration from Elon University in Burlington, and a master's degree in public affairs from UNC Greensboro. Davis also worked as the Recreation and Parks director for Caswell County and as town manager in Spring Lake, before leaving for South Carolina.

"It's nice to be back home," Davis said.

Hagler said Davis was selected in large part because of his vast experience.

"We conducted an extensive search ... with assistance from Centralina Council of Governments, attracting more than 40 candidates," Hagler said. "Joel brings a wealth of innovative experience to the position, which made him the clear choice for administrator. His experience with growth management issues, strategic planning, finance and parks and recreation will move council's goals from vision to reality."

Davis said the town's potential, and its existing commitment to smart growth were two of the things that attracted him to the job.

"The city's got a lot of room to grow," he said. "I was really impressed with the smart growth principles they already have here in Town Center. It's really advanced."

After spending the rest of this week moving from North Myrtle Beach and getting settled, Davis said he's looking forward to working with the council and moving forward with town business.

"One of my roles as administrator will be to facilitate and assist mayor and council in achieving their vision and goals for the town," he said. "I look forward to collaboratively working with council, staff and citizens."

Davis will be honored with a welcome reception prior to the council's regular monthly meeting at Town Hall. The reception begins at 5:30 p.m.

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