



***For Immediate Release –April 24, 2023***

## **Florence Mayor Receives Honor of Being a Riley Mayors’ Design Fellow**

### **Media Contacts:**

Mayor Teresa Myers Ervin – 843-665-3170 or [tervin@cityofflorence.com](mailto:tervin@cityofflorence.com)

**FLORENCE, SC** – Today, the City of Florence announces Mayor Teresa Myers Ervin is a fellow of The Riley Mayors’ Design Fellowship as a member of the 2023 cohort. The mayor was one of six mayors in the state of South Carolina to complete the cycle. The fellowship aims to equip South Carolina mayors with the tools necessary to implement projects that have a positive impact on their communities and is the brainchild of former Charleston, S.C. Mayor, 1975 - 2016, Joseph P. Riley Jr., who is credited with the growth of the Lowcountry city.

“I was honored to have been chosen to be a fellow of The Riley Mayors’ Design Fellowship. To have been nominated was an honor all by itself,” said Mayor Myers Ervin. “I love Florence and had a vision for Florence as mayor. When I received buy-in from citizens, business leaders, the faith community, and fellow public servants, I knew together we can make the vision a reality. Thanks to this program, it let me know we are on the right track with a few improvements to be made to get to our destination, moving Florence forward together.”

Each mayor chosen as a fellow is nominated to participate in the prestigious program. For Mayor Myers Ervin the intense process started February 2022 which included research and fieldwork based on interviews and discussions with the mayor, her staff, stakeholders, and residents. In addition, the mayor was asked to propose a current design and development project that would become the focus of the workshop session on Florence, S.C., where a resource team of experts in design and development provided feedback, insight, technical advice, and ideas.

According to fellowship officials, Mayor Myers Ervin was chosen to participate in the program due to her holistic approach to address the social needs of the Florence community through the Mayor’s Coalition for Humanity, organized in four prongs – clearinghouse for organizations to collaborate, community and downtown development through public and private partnerships, expanding current green initiatives, and developing new job sources to induce career opportunities and livable wages - that would lead the way to progress.

While convening, Mayor Myers Ervin presented the challenges and opportunities of her focus project. From this presentation, she received feedback as well as information on relevant design and planning topics from a group of expert faculty for which she returned to Florence, S.C. equipped with the resources to enact positive change.

Headed by the College of Charleston's Joseph P. Riley Jr. Center for Livable Communities and Clemson University's Master of Resilient Urbans Design Program, the premise of the program, according to Mayor Riley, is to give town and city leaders the understanding of their opportunity and responsibility of wisely guiding the future of their communities. Mayors are asked to reframe their very important tasks of creating jobs, promoting safety, and supporting communities as design opportunities. The program equips South Carolina mayors with the tools necessary to implement projects that will be a positive impact on their communities.

Supporting the program is THE BOUDREAUX GROUP, Municipal Association of South Carolina, and South Carolina Arts Commission.

Mayors Myers Ervin is the second mayor from Florence, S.C. to receive the honor of being a fellow, with the first being former Mayor Frank Willis. Other 2023 called members were Mayor Stephen Murray of Beaufort, Mayor Quendolyn Etheridge of Ridge Spring, Mayor Rockey Burgess of Williamston, and Mayor Mike Fuesser of York.

###