

**MINUTES OF
REGULAR CITY COUNCIL MEETING
LORIS CITY HALL – COUNCIL CHAMBERS
MONDAY, JUNE 2, 2025 – 6:00 P.M.**

PRESENT:	MAYOR	MICHAEL E. SUGGS
	COUNCIL	ANDREA L. COLEMAN JOAN S. GAUSE KELLI D. GERALD LEWIS C. HARDEE, JR. CARROLL D. PADGETT, JR. TONYA F. SYKES
PRESENT:	INTERIM ADMINISTRATOR	ANGEL R. NEIGHBOURS
PRESENT:	ATTORNEY	JOHN C. ZILINSKY

CALL TO ORDER:

The council meeting was called to order by Mayor Suggs at 6:00 pm on Monday, June 2, 2025.

INVOCATION:

The invocation was given by Councilman Padgett.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Mayor Suggs.

ROLL CALL

The roll was called by Planning and Zoning Director Meredith Holmes.

COMMUNICATIONS:

A. MAYOR’S REPORT:

Mayor Suggs reported that during May the preparation of the 2025-2026 fiscal year budget had been a priority, and it is close to being finalized, and the city is on target to approve final reading prior to July 1st. Several projects to improve infrastructure are moving forward. The SCDOT project on Highway 701 is further along than the SC Highway 9 project, but both appear to be on

target for completion in a few months. The two main sewer line replacement and upgrade projects are moving forward as scheduled and are being funded by grants received from the state.

Wayne Fox from our Code Enforcement and Building Department, City Attorney John Zilinsky, and Mayor Suggs met with several Horry County officials, including County Councilmen Mark Causey and Danny Hardee, to discuss working together on major projects that affect both Loris and Horry County. One of the main topics was stormwater management and the need for easements from property owners along the major drainage ditches that flow through Loris. Mayor Suggs urged residents owning property along the ditches to contact Mr. Fox.

The City's Carillon system has been repaired and chimes each hour, and was used on Memorial Day to play a patriotic song each hour during the afternoon.

The Memorial Day Wreath Ceremony was Saturday, May 24th, at the State Theater Building. It was a very nice and solemn tribute to those who gave their lives defending our nation. Mayor Suggs thanked those city council members and city staff who attended and thanked Kevin Braswell for organizing the event, and thanked the Loris Historical Society for making the venue available.

Loris Chamber of Commerce Executive Director Samantha Norris reported that the Memorial Day Ceremony held on Saturday prior to Memorial Day was a nice event, and the speaker did a wonderful job reminding everyone of the true meaning of Memorial Day. Ms. Norris urged everyone to attend next year and would like to find ways to promote the event to increase attendance. The chamber will soon be filming commercials in the downtown area to promote Loris. Some upcoming events include the Annual Chamber Banquet, the Entrepreneur Fair, and Downtown Tuesdays, which are scheduled to be held during the summer, but not every Tuesday. Ms. Norris also reminded everyone to attend the Fundraiser scheduled for Tuesday, June 17th, from 6:00 pm until 8:00 pm to assist Tabor City Firefighter Donnie Strickland, who is battling health issues. The fundraiser will include a car cruise-in and a boot drive

B. ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT:

Interim Administrator Neighbours advised Council that the May 31st year-to-date financial report was completed and a copy had been distributed to each councilmember. The budget for fiscal year 2025-2026 is nearing completion. Administrator Neighbours gave an update on Phase 1 of the sewer line replacement project, which is nearing completion and is in the area from Pinewood Drive running to near the wastewater treatment plant on Bayboro Street. Phase 2 will begin soon and will run from Rogers Road to Bayboro Street. The project is being funded by a grant from the state. Also, Administrator Neighbours indicated that a Personnel and Finance Committee meeting will likely need to be scheduled during June.

C. COMMITTEE REPORTS:

There were no committee meetings scheduled since the May 5th council meeting.

D. DEPARTMENT HEAD'S REPORTS:

Mayor Suggs advised that written reports were prepared by each department and provided in the council meeting packet.

1. **CODE ENFORCEMENT & PLANNING** – Planning and Zoning Director Meredith Holmes stated that she had no additional information, other than that the department experienced one of its busiest months ever in May.
2. **FIRE** – Chief Jerry L. Hardee had no updates to the written report submitted to Council. Mayor Suggs asked if the smoke and carbon monoxide detectors were still available. Chief Hardee responded that the detectors are available free of charge and will be installed in citizens' homes by members of the fire department. Anyone in need of a detector may request one by completing an application. Applications are available at the fire department and city hall.
3. **POLICE** – Chief Gary Buley reported that he had no additions to his written report.
4. **PUBLIC WORKS** – No additions to the written report.
5. **RECREATION** – No additions to the written report.

BUSINESS:

- A. SECOND READING OF ORDINANCE 01-25: AN ORDINANCE GRANTING UNTO THE SOUTH CAROLINA PUBLIC SERVICE AUTHORITY, A BODY CORPORATE AND POLITIC, A FRANCHISE TO OWN, OPERATE, AND TO MAINTAIN WITHIN THE CORPORATE LIMITS OF THE CITY OF LORIS AN ELECTRIC UTILITY LIGHT AND POWER PLANT, TRANSMISSION AND DISTRIBUTION SYSTEM.**

Attorney John Zilinsky explained that this was a renewal of the existing franchise agreement that has been in existence since at least the 1960s. The ordinance is for a thirty (30) year renewal term. Anna Strickland of Santee Cooper was in attendance. A motion was made by Councilman Hardee, seconded by Councilwoman Gause, to approve on second reading Ordinance 01-25. Mayor Suggs and all members voted favorably. Motion passed.

- B. SECOND READING OF ORDINANCE 02-25: (A-202503-001) AN ORDINANCE TO ANNEX 0.58 LEGAL ACRES INTO THE CORPORATE LIMITS OF THE CITY OF LORIS AS R 1.4 (RESIDENTIAL)**

**LOCATED ON THE NORTHERN SIDE OF RUSS ROAD (COUNTY ROAD) PIN#: 177-10-01-0013
TMS#: 048-00-02-019 JOSEPH TANNER COX, ET. AL. OWNERS.**

Planning and Zoning Director Meredith Holmes read Ordinance 02-25 by title only and gave details of the property to be annexed. A motion was made by Councilman Padgett, seconded by Councilwoman Gerald, to approve on second reading Ordinance 02-25. Mayor Suggs and all members voted favorably. Motion passed.

C. SECOND READING OF ORDINANCE 03-25: (A-202504-001) AN ORDINANCE TO ANNEX 2.04 LEGAL ACRES INTO THE CORPORATE LIMITS OF THE CITY OF LORIS AS C-2 (COMMERCIAL, GENERAL) LOCATED ON THE SOUTHEASTERN CORNER OF U.S. 701 NORTH & FOX BAY ROAD (S-26-570) PIN#: 176-12-01-0009 TMS#: 048-07-02-090 L. SMITH, AGENT, OWNER THOMAS C. JOHNSON, TRUSTEE.

Planning and Zoning Director Meredith Holmes read Ordinance 03-25 by title only and gave details of the property to be annexed. A motion was made by Councilman Hardee, seconded by Councilwoman Sykes, to approve on second reading Ordinance 03-25. Mayor Suggs and all members voted favorably. Motion passed.

D. FIRST READING OF ORDINANCE 04-25: (PC-202502-001) AN ORDINANCE TO RE-ZONE 1.19 ACRES FROM R-1 (RESIDENTIAL) TO R-2 (GENERAL BUSINESS) LOCATED ON THE SOUTHEASTERN SIDE OF U.S. HIGHWAY 701 PIN#: 186-08-040002 TMS#: 048-00-04-003.

Planning and Zoning Director Meredith Holmes read Ordinance 04-25 by title only and gave details of the property to be rezoned. This property was annexed into the city in 2003 as R-1 (Residential), but on the official zoning map, the property has been shown as C-2 (General Business) since at least 2009. A public hearing was held on May 29th. A motion was made by Councilwoman Gerald, seconded by Councilwoman Coleman, to approve on first reading Ordinance 04-25. Mayor Suggs and all members except Councilwoman Sykes voted favorably. Councilwoman Sykes voted against the motion to rezone the property to C-2 (General Business). Motion passed, 6-1.

E. FIRST READING OF ORDINANCE 05-25: AN ORDINANCE TO ADOPT A BUDGET FOR THE CITY OF LORIS, SOUTH CAROLINA, FOR THE FISCAL YEAR 2025-2026, BEGINNING JULY 1, 2025, AND ENDING JUNE 30, 2026.

Mayor Suggs reported that the budget for the 2025-2026 fiscal year is balanced and will be finalized prior to the June 30th deadline. A public hearing on the budget will be held on June 26th. A motion was made by Councilwoman Gause, seconded by Councilman Padgett, to approve on first reading Ordinance 05-25. Mayor Suggs and all members voted favorably. Motion passed.

F. RESOLUTION 05-25: A RESOLUTION ADOPTING A SECTION 504 GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE AND REASONABLE ACCOMMODATIONS POLICY FOR THE CITY OF LORIS.

Interim Administrator Angel Neighbours gave an overview of the 504 Grievance Procedure and explained that this was a policy that each municipality was mandated to have in place and that the city's policy had not been updated in several years. The 504 Grievance Policies are established to ensure compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). A motion was made by Councilman Hardee, seconded by Councilwoman Gerald, to approve Resolution 05-25. Mayor Suggs and all members voted favorably. Motion passed.

G. RECEIVE PLANNING COMMISSION REPORT: RE: (A-202504-0025) STATUS OF PETITION FOR ANNEXATION OF 359.97 COMBINED TOTAL ACRES LOCATED EAST OF HERITAGE ROAD (S-568), SOUTH OF LORIS LIONS ROAD (S-1305), AND WEST OF HIGHWAY 66 (S-666) PIN#: 185-00-00-0018 TMS#: 059-00-01-026 & PIN#: 185-00-00-0041 OWNER: HERITAGE LAKES HOLDING VENTURES, LLC.

The Planning Commission presented a written report indicating that the Commission had voted to defer the matter indefinitely at the request of the developer. City Council received the report as information and will take no action until a further recommendation, if any, is received from the Planning Commission.

H. AUTHORIZATION TO APPROVE CONTRACT WITH HORRY COUNTY REGARDING MUNICIPAL COURT SERVICES AND APPOINTMENT OF COUNTY MAGISTRATE TO SERVE AS MUNICIPAL JUDGE.

Mayor Suggs reported that for many years the city had utilized the services of a county magistrate as municipal judge through a contractual arrangement with Horry County. The current city Judge, Magistrate Aaron Butler, has reached the mandatory retirement age of 72 and must retire this year. The Personnel and Finance Committee met to discuss the continuation of a contract with Horry County and had a recommendation for Council. Councilwoman Gerald, a member of the Personnel and Finance Committee, reported that Magistrate William N. Hutson was willing to serve as Loris Municipal Court Judge, and the committee met with him regarding the position and recommended that he be approved as our next municipal judge. A motion was made by Councilwoman Gerald, seconded by Councilman Padgett, to continue the contractual arrangement with Horry County allowing a magistrate to serve as Loris Municipal Judge and that Magistrate William N. Hutson be appointed as Loris Municipal Judge effective upon the retirement of Judge Butler and further that Interim Administrator Angel Neighbours be authorized to signed the contract with Horry County. Mayor Suggs and all members voted favorably. Motion passed.

I. DISCUSSION AND AUTHORIZATION OF EXPENDITURE OF HOSPITALITY FUNDS FOR THE REPAIR AND/OR PURCHASE OF HOLIDAY/SEASONAL DECORATIONS FOR DOWNTOWN.

Mayor Suggs informed Council that during the summer months the holiday decoration vendors have sales and items can be purchased at savings not available as the holidays get closer. Also, the City finds each year that some of the decorations have issues that need to be repaired. To address the purchase of additional decorations and be in a position to save money from summer sales prices, Mayor Suggs stated that he believed that it would be prudent to authorize an amount of money from the Hospitality Tax fund to be made available for the purchase of additional decorations and/or to repair our existing decorations. After some discussion by Council, it was agreed that a budget not to exceed \$30,000.00 would be established at this time for the purchase and/or repair of holiday and seasonal decorations for downtown. A motion was made by Councilman Hardee, seconded by Councilwoman Gause, to authorize a maximum expenditure of \$30,000.00 from the Hospitality Tax fund for the purchase and/or repair of holiday and seasonal decorations, and that Interim Administrator Angel Neighbours be authorized to make the expenditures as needed. Mayor Suggs and all members voted favorably. Motion passed.

PUBLIC & PRESS COMMENTS:

Stacie Lane of Highway 701 North, Loris, wanted to make everyone aware that Horry County is proposing to relocate the ambulance/medic unit from its Pinewood Drive station in the heart of Loris to a proposed new fire station in the Goretown Community outside of the city. She urged City Council and local residents to discuss this matter with Horry County officials in hopes that they will reconsider and allow the ambulance to remain stationed inside the city limits.

Joseph Gay of 3508 Hardee Avenue, Loris, expressed his concerns that Hardee Avenue was a dirt street, but the surrounding streets were paved. He also asked about cleaning ditches that he believed were not large enough to accommodate the needed drainage. He also asked about the possibility of more frequent police patrols in his neighborhood. Mayor Suggs explained that the majority of the streets within the city are owned either by Horry County or the State of South Carolina, and thus, they are primarily responsible for addressing paving needs. Mayor Suggs indicated to Mr. Gay that he had talked to members of the County Transportation Committee about the possibility of securing funding to do some paving within the city. Police Chief Buley responded regarding the police patrols and indicated that he would address increasing patrols with his officers.

Todd Harrelson of 3806 Liberty Street, Loris, stated that when he served as mayor that he had discussions with Horry County regarding locating the county ambulance in the Loris Fire Station. Mayor Suggs and other members of council who served with Mr. Harrelson responded that they had no knowledge of the matter, and the issue had never been brought before a committee or the full council for any discussion. Mr. Harrelson responded that Fire Chief Hardee told the county that he would not allow the ambulance in the fire station, and the discussions stopped. Chief Hardee responded emphatically that he had never been approached by Mr. Harrelson about locating an ambulance in the fire station, nor invited to any meetings that may have been held with county officials and had no input in any discussions. He requested that the county

officials be invited to a meeting to verify this. Mayor Suggs stated that the fire chief works at the direction of City Council, and if the issue had come before Council, the fire chief would have to carry out the decision of Council.

EXECUTIVE SESSION:

Mayor Suggs announced that there were no items to be discussed in executive session.

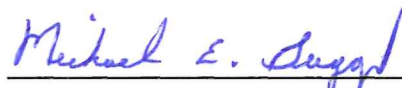
ADJOURNMENT:

A motion was made by Councilwoman Gause, seconded by Councilman Hardee, to adjourn. Mayor Suggs and all members voted favorably. There being no further business the meeting was adjourned at 6:37 P.M.

ATTEST:



ANGEL R. NEIGHBOURS
INTERIM CITY ADMINISTRATOR



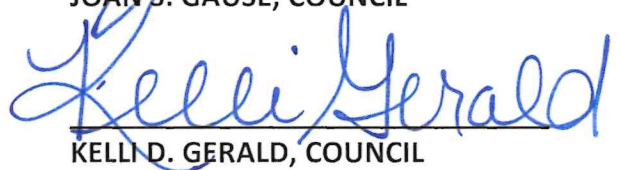
MICHAEL E. SUGGS, MAYOR



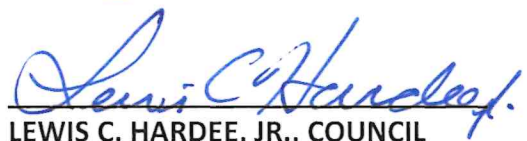
ANDREA L. COLEMAN, COUNCIL



JOAN S. GAUSE, COUNCIL



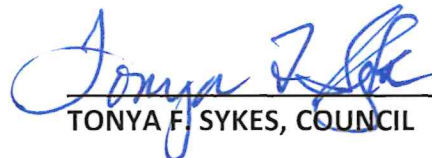
KELLI D. GERALD, COUNCIL



LEWIS C. HARDEE, JR., COUNCIL



CARROLL D. PADGETT, JR., COUNCIL



TONYA F. SYKES, COUNCIL