

**MINUTES OF  
REGULAR CITY COUNCIL MEETING  
LORIS CITY HALL – COUNCIL CHAMBERS  
MONDAY, MAY 5, 2025 – 6:00 P.M.**

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

**CALL TO ORDER:**

The council meeting was called to order by Mayor Suggs at 6:00 pm on Monday, May 5, 2025.

**INVOCATION:**

The invocation was given by Councilman Hardee.

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Mayor Suggs.

**ROLL CALL**

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

**MINUTES:**

**A. APRIL 7, 2025 – REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING**

The minutes of the April 7, 2025, regular city council meeting were presented for approval. A motion was made by Councilman Padgett, seconded by Councilwoman Gerald, to approve the minutes of the April 7, 2025, regular council meeting. Mayor Suggs and all members voted favorably. Motion passed.

## **COMMUNICATIONS:**

### **A. MAYOR'S REPORT:**

Mayor Suggs reported that the Meet the Mayor and Council event held at Watson Park on Tuesday, April 29<sup>th</sup> was attended by approximately fifty persons who got to see the improvements that have been made at that facility. The meeting room is now available to be rented by the public and improvements will continue at the park. gave a summary of recent events, including a status update for the Watson Park facility. He attended the Horry County League of Cities meeting held on Thursday, April 17<sup>th</sup> and hosted by the City of Myrtle Beach. The next quarterly meeting will be July 24<sup>th</sup> and will be hosted here in Loris. Cleanup continues on the old Loris High School site and should be completed in a few weeks. Yesterday, Sunday, May 5<sup>th</sup>, the Loris Garden Club dedicated the Thelma B. Suggs butterfly garden located at the American Legion Hut on West Main Street. Mrs. Suggs was the first president of the Loris Garden Club when organized in 1952. It was a very nice event that was well attended. Mayor Suggs reported that progress continues the Pinewood Drive Sewer Project, which is being funded by a grant from the state. He mentioned the successful Small Town Big Show car show hosted by the Loris Chamber of Commerce that was held on Saturday April 19, 2025.

### **B. ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT:**

Interim Administrator Neighbours advised Council that the April 30<sup>th</sup> year-to-date financial report was completed and a copy had been distributed to each councilmember. Also, the preparation of the 2025-2026 fiscal year budget is continuing.

### **C. COMMITTEE REPORTS:**

1. **Public Safety Committee**--Councilman Hardee, chairman of the Public Safety Committee provided a brief update to Council regarding the Public Safety Committee meeting held on May 1, 2025, and will have more to discuss during the business portion of the meeting regarding a proposed police and fire training facility.

### **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 to add, but she was available should Council have further questions.
2. **FIRE** – Chief Jerry L. Hardee and Fire Marshal Robert Rudelitch were in attendance. Chief Hardee reported that fire safety inspections were continuing in the community. Fire

Marshal Rudelitch reported that the fire department received a Volunteer Strategic Assistance Grant (V-Safe Grant) in the amount of \$14,000.00 from the State Fire Marshal's office. The grant will be used to purchase new portable radios for the department which will improve communication on a fire scene. Also, through efforts of Loris Fire Department the City of Loris has been recognized as a Fire Safe South Carolina Community for the year 2024. The award will be presented on Friday, June 13<sup>th</sup> at the Myrtle Beach Convention Center and is awarded to Fire Departments that work to reduce the risk of fire and promote fire safety in their community. Mayor Suggs asked if the smoke detector and carbon dioxide detector programs were still being promoted by the department. Fire Marshal Rudelitch advised the programs are ongoing and anyone needing a detector may fill out a form and the detector will be installed free of charge by the fire department.

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. **RESOLUTION 04-25: A RESOLUTION TO RECOGNIZE THE LORIS HIGH SCHOOL BASKETBALL TEAM AND COACH ANDREW EADS:** Mayor Suggs thanked Coach Eads for attending the meeting and congratulated him, his staff and players for a great season. Mayor Suggs read in its entirety the resolution honoring the Loris High School Basketball Team and Coach Andrew Eads and his coaching staff. A motion was made by Councilman Padgett, seconded by Councilwoman Gause to approve the resolution. Mayor Suggs and all members voted favorably to approve the resolution. Motion passed. Coach Eads spoke about his players and their hard work and accomplishments this season.
- B. **FIRST READING OF ORDINANCE 01-25: AN ORDINANCE GRANTING UNTO 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.** Planning and Zoning Director, Meredith Holmes, read Ordinance 01-25 by title only. Attorney John Zilinsky explained that this was a renewal of the existing franchise agreement that has been in existence since at least the 1960's. The ordinance is for a thirty (30) year renewal term. Anna Strickland of Santee Cooper was in attendance and thanked the City of Loris for the long-term partnership and the willingness to continue working together. A motion was made by Councilman Hardee, seconded by Councilwoman

Coleman, to approve on first reading ordinance 01-25. Mayor Suggs and all members voted favorably. Motion passed.

**C. FIRST 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] (J.T. COX, CO-OWNER).** 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 Hardee, seconded by Councilwoman Sykes, to approve on first reading ordinance 01-25. Mayor Suggs and all members voted favorably. Motion passed.

**D. FIRST 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] (L. SMITH, AGENT).**

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 Hardee, seconded by Councilwoman Sykes, to approve on first reading ordinance 01-25. Mayor Suggs and all members voted favorably. Motion passed.

**E. CONSIDER ANNEXATION PETITION (A-202504-002): A PETITION REQUESTING ANNEXATION OF 359.97 COMBINED TOTAL ACRES INTO THE CORPORATE LIMITS OF THE CITY OF LORIS AS R-1.7 (RESIDENTIAL) LOCATED EAST OF HERITAGE ROAD (S-26-568), SOUTH OF LORIS LIONS ROAD (S-1305), AND WEST OF HIGHWAY 66 (S-26-66) [PIN: 185-00-00-0018 & -0041] (G3 ENGINEERING, AGENT).**

City hall was filled to capacity with citizens interested in this potential annexation. At the request of several citizens, Mayor Suggs allowed public input regarding the annexation petition. Numerous citizens spoke, most of who are not city residents, but are residents of the unincorporated area near the property being considered for annexation. Mr. Felix Pitts also spoke on behalf of the landowner regarding development plans for the property. Mayor Suggs reminded those in attendance that a vote to accept the petition was not a vote to annex the property, nor a vote to zone the property. A vote to accept the petition simply referred the matter to the Planning Commission so that additional information could be gathered to determine if the annexation would be beneficial to the city. Further, the Planning commission would have to hold a Public Hearing and make a recommendation to city council. City council would then vote to approve or disapprove the annexation. The annexation can only be approved by ordinance. An ordinance requires two public readings and approval by a majority of council at each reading. After much public discussion, with many citizens expressing their concerns and opposition to development of the property, a motion was made by Councilman Padgett, seconded by Councilwoman Gerald, to accept

the petition for annexation and refer it to the city Planning Commission as required by city ordinance. Mayor Suggs and all members voted favorably. Motion passed.

**F. RECEIVE PLANNING COMMISSION REPORT: RE: REZONING REQUEST FOR 1.19 ACRES LOCATED ON U.S. HIGHWAY 701 SOUTH [PIN: 186-08-04-0002] (GARY W. LONES ET. AL, OWNERS).**

Planning and Zoning Director Meredith Holmes explained that there had been discovered a discrepancy between what is shown on the official city zoning map and the zoning ordinance that was adopted at the time the above referenced property was annexed into the city in 2003. The map shows the property being zoned commercial (C-2), but the actual ordinance indicates that the property was zoned residential (R-1). In order to correct the discrepancy, the city attorney recommended that a rezoning of the property be done. That process has now been completed by the planning commission and the Planning Commission's Report recommends that the property be rezoned and receive a commercial zoning designation (C-2). Mayor Suggs explained that the only action for council to take at this meeting is to receive the report of the Planning Commission and set the matter for a public hearing as required by the city zoning ordinance.

**G. RECEIVE DISCUSSION OF POSSIBLE CONSTRUCTION OF A JOINT TRAINING FACILITY FOR THE LORIS POLICE AND FIRE DEPARTMENTS.**

Mayor Suggs indicated that the concept of a joint training facility had been discussed by the Public Safety Committee meeting on May 1<sup>st</sup>, and asked Councilman Hardee, Chairman of the Public Safety Committee, to update the council on this concept. Councilman Hardee indicated that the idea to develop a joint Police-Fire training facility was initially discussed a few years ago. The concept is to utilize the city-owned property off of Highway 701 South near Bonnie Bay Road that was once the city dump. A weapon firing range and fire department training area are the focus of the concept for this facility. Councilman Hardee reminded council that this is in its early stages and more research is being done by both the police and fire departments to determine if the concept is feasible. No cost estimates or time-frame has been established and this is a long-term project. Councilman Hardee stated that the Public Safety Committee voted at its May 1<sup>st</sup> meeting to endorse the concept. Mayor Suggs stated both the police and fire departments had begun gathering information and requested that council endorse the concept and encourage the police and fire departments to continue their research and planning. A motion was made by Councilman Hardee, seconded by Councilwoman Gause, to endorse the concept of developing a joint training facility for the police and fire departments at the former site of the city dump off of Highway 701 South near Bonnie Bay Road. Mayor Suggs and all members voted favorably. Motion passed.

**H. AUTHORIZATION TO OBTAIN A BOUNDARY AND TOPOGRAPHICAL SURVEY OF THE OLD LORIS HIGH SCHOOL CAMPUS PROPERTY ON BROAD STREET.**

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Mayor Suggs indicated that the surveys were part of the continuing project to clean up the site and are necessary to make new use of the property. Price quotes have been obtained from two local land surveyors regarding surveys to combine the various parcels, and establish the boundary and a survey the topography. Planning and Zoning Director Meredith Holmes advised council that all individual surveying price quotes received do not exceed the purchasing authority of the city administrator. A motion was made by Councilman Hardee, seconded by Councilwoman Gause, to authorize Interim City Administrator Angel Neighbours to enter into contracts to have the appropriate surveys of the old Loris High School property conducted. Mayor Suggs and all members voted favorably. Motion passed.

#### **PUBLIC & PRESS COMMENTS:**

Lynn Greco stated her concerns regarding the arrest and guilty plea of former city employee Keith Massey and asked whether the city was investigating any possible issues that may have arisen during his employment with the city and asked about the status of the Hospitality Tax Fund Audit. Mayor Suggs indicated that the city shared her concerns but could not comment about any investigation that may or may not be in progress at this time.

#### **EXECUTIVE SESSION:**

Mayor Suggs indicated that an executive session was necessary to discuss one personnel matter and one update on a contractual matter. A motion was made by Councilwoman Gause, seconded by Councilman Padgett, to enter executive session to discuss a personnel matter and a contractual matter. Mayor Suggs and all members voted favorably. Motion passed.

Upon returning from executive session, a motion was made by Councilman Hardee, seconded by Councilwoman Coleman to exit executive session and reconvene in open session. Mayor Suggs and all members voted favorably. Motion passed.

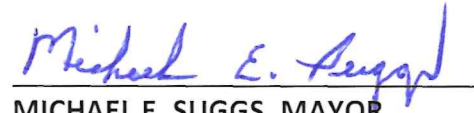
Mayor Suggs announced that in executive session council discussed a personnel matter and received an update on a contractual matter and that no action and no vote was taken in executive session.

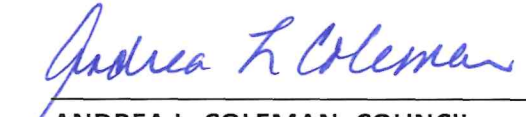
#### **ADJOURNMENT:**

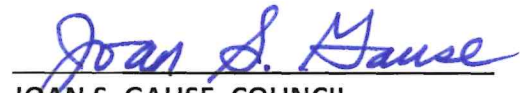
A motion was made by Councilman Hardee, seconded by Councilwoman Gause to adjourn. Mayor Suggs and all members voted favorably. There being no further business the meeting was adjourned at 8:34 P.M.

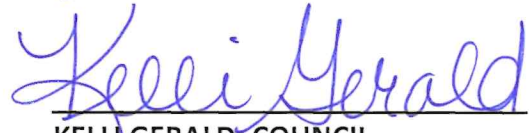
ATTEST:

  
ANGEL NEIGHBOURS

  
MICHAEL E. SUGGS, MAYOR

  
ANDREA L. COLEMAN, COUNCIL

  
JOAN S. GAUSE, COUNCIL

  
KELLI GERALD, COUNCIL

  
LEWIS C. HARDEE, JR., COUNCIL

  
CARROLL D. PADGETT, JR., COUNCIL

  
TONYA F. SYKES, COUNCIL