



Town of Hilton Head Island
**Gullah Geechee Land & Cultural
Preservation Task Force Meeting**
Monday, July 11, 2022, 1:00 p.m.

AGENDA

The Gullah Geechee Land & Cultural Preservation Task Force meeting will be held in-person at Town Hall in the Benjamin M. Racusin Council Chambers.

1. Call to Order

2. FOIA Compliance – Public notification of this meeting has been published, posted, and distributed in compliance with the South Carolina Freedom of Information Act and the requirements of the Town of Hilton Head Island.

3. Roll Call

4. Approval of Agenda

5. Approval of Minutes

a. Regular Meeting of June 6, 2022

6. Appearance by Citizens

Citizens may submit written comments via the [Town's Open Town Hall Portal](#). The portal will close at 4:30 p.m. on Friday, July 8, 2022. Comments submitted through the portal will be provided to the Task Force and made part of the official record.

7. Discussion Items

a. Draft Gullah History and Cultural Education Program for Town Employees and Officials – Recommendation requested

b. Critical Path Discussion on Gullah Geechee Report 16 Top Priority Recommendations

c. Update on Historic Districts Overlay District

d. Case Study discussion

8. Staff Report

a. Mid-Island Redevelopment District update

b. Historic Neighborhood Design Studio Report

c. Home Safety and Repair Program update

d. Sewer Connection Program update

9. Adjournment

Please note that a quorum of Town Council may result if four (4) or more of their members attend this meeting.

Please note that a quorum of the Planning Commission may result if five (5) or more of their members attend this meeting.



The Town of Hilton Head Island
**Gullah Geechee Land & Cultural
Preservation Task Force
Meeting Minutes
June 6, 2022, 1:00 p.m.**

Present from the Task Force: Chairman Lavon Stevens, Vice Chairman Palmer E. Simmons, Tom Henz, John Campbell, Ibrahim Abdul-Malik

Absent from the Task Force: Shani Green (excused)

Present from Town Council: Alex Brown

Present from Town Staff: Missy Luick, Principal Planner; Anne Cyran, Interim Comprehensive Planning Manager; Karen Knox, Senior Administrative Assistant

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1. **Call to Order** – Chairman Stevens called the meeting to order at 1:05 p.m.
 2. **FOIA Compliance** – Public notification of this meeting has been published, posted, and distributed in compliance with the South Carolina Freedom of Information Act and the requirements of the Town of Hilton Head Island.
 3. **Roll Call** – as noted above.
 4. **Approval of Agenda**

Chairman Stevens asked for a motion to approve the agenda as presented. Mr. Henz moved to approve. Mr. Campbell seconded. The motion passed unanimously by a vote of 5-0.
 5. **Approval of Minutes**
 - a. Meeting of March 7, 2022
 - b. Meeting of May 2, 2022

Chairman Stevens asked for a motion to approve both the Minutes of March 7, 2022 and May 2, 2022. Mr. Simmons moved to approve both sets of Minutes. Mr. Campbell seconded. The Minutes of March 7, 2022 and May 2, 2022 were unanimously approved by a vote of 5-0.
 6. **Appearance by Citizens**

Public comments concerning agenda items were to be submitted electronically via the Open Town Hall HHI portal. There were no comments of record.
 7. **Discussion Items**
 - a. **Draft Gullah History and Cultural Education Program for Town Employees and Officials – Recommendation requested.**

Missy Luick stated it is recommended the Gullah Geechee Land & Cultural Preservation Task Force review the proposed Draft Gullah History and Cultural Education Program for Town Employees and Officials and recommend the Program for implementation. The program is designed as an education program for Town employees and Officials with an understanding of Hilton Head Island's Gullah history and culture. Initially this program would be available to All Staff and then after that to new employees. We would also record the program so those who could not attend could still watch it.

Chairman Stevens stated he first would like to recognize and thank staff for the work they are doing and to recognize the past work that was done by Dr. Sheryse DuBose who has since resigned. I know this educational piece is something Dr. DuBose worked very hard on. I thank the staff for stepping up and filling in until we find a replacement.

The Task Force had the following comments: would like to see something on the recognition of the economic life of the Gullah people. Part of what is often overlooked is how the communities were able to survive. What were the economic platforms that allowed them not just to sustain themselves, but to thrive as a community for many years prior to later development; such a wonderful project and great idea for the program to be recorded and perhaps put it on the Town's website; with Dr. Campbell and Dr. Cohen being involved, I am hoping they will certainly be able to tell the stories that might be omitted.

Chairman Stevens asked for a motion to accept the Town of Hilton Head Island Gullah History and Cultural Education Program for Town Employees and Officials. Mr. Henz moved to approve. Mr. Campbell seconded. It was recommended that the Task Force be able to see the presentation before it is presented to Staff and Officials. Miss Luick said they could work that into how we roll it out and do a test run with the Task Force. The motion was unanimously approved by a vote of 5-0.

b. Property Development Challenges in the Historic Neighborhoods – Continued discussion

Missy Luick stated that this matrix was shared with you last month and I understand the discussion was not yet complete. There is a team of staff that meets every other week to go through projects in our Historic Neighborhoods and we discuss the challenges with each of those particular cases. The Task Force made the following comments and inquiries: sewer connection continues to be a challenge; the cost of landscaping is estimated to be between \$10,000-\$20,000 is a problem; clarification on how long has a landscape plan been a requirement; clarification on how many projects have come through the Design Studio; clarification as to how many residents still need to tap into sewer; clarification that since bike paths have come through our neighborhoods it has changed the density and an applicant was told that the bike path changed the density.

Following the discussion, Ms. Luick responded to the comments and concerns above as follows: there is a Sewer Connect Program that will offer additional assistance for people who do not meet the requirements of Project Safe. The program will allow \$200,000 in financial assistance for sewer connections. We can do the landscape plan through the Design Studio that meets the requirements for the landscape tables we have, but that does not alleviate the actual cost to plant. It eliminates at least the cost of the professional services to create a landscape plan that is approvable. When the Family Compound and Family Subdivision Application Programs were pulled into the LMO, there was minimum

landscaping requirements that were part of those amendments. Since the Design Studio's inception there have been 35 projects come through – not all have advanced – some were withdrawn. Ms. Luick stated that changes have been made to the Design Studio procedures to help address and offer additional staff assistance to help move projects forward. Internally we are talking about these challenges and barriers and are working on ways to solve those problems. We look at this list with the Historic Neighborhood Team that we have and through the Design Studio process we have been able to identify a lot more of these barriers and come up with possible solutions to alleviate some of the barriers or at least offer assistance to help landowners move the project forward. 5% of the properties in Hilton Head PSD area currently do not have public sewer connections. Every property has the ability to connect to sewer at this point. Ms. Luick advised she will look into the bike path/density issue.

Chairman Stevens acknowledged the presence of Joyce Wright who is a former member of the Task Force. We are hoping at some point in the near future she might be able to rejoin the Task Force.

c. Status of Gullah Geechee Report 16 Top Priority Recommendations

Missy Luick advised that in your agenda packet was the Status of Gullah Geechee Report 16 Top Priority Recommendations. In that report there was a table of contents. It grouped the Top 16 projects in order of completeness. The first projects were at 100% and then the four remaining projects that were not yet complete were toward the end of the document. On your desks today, was a more detailed Workplan of where we stand with these projects. Ms. Luick proceeded to review in great detail the status of the Gullah Geechee Report 16 Top Priority Project Recommendations with the Task Force as listed below, Comment/inquiries from Task Force listed below item.

1) PP-5: Family Compound/Family Subdivision

Questioned if there is still such a thing as a Minor Subdivision – the planning steps and requirements are still the same between a Minor Subdivision and a Family Subdivision. Will provide an analysis of the comparison of the Minor Subdivision vs. the Family Subdivision. We have more work to do on the Family Subdivision component through assessing the Ordinance on the books. We have indicated that there are some areas of clarification that are needed in some of what was drafted. We will gather additional feedback and report back.

2) PP-6: Allow Site Design Flexibility – no questions or comments

3) PP-2: Fast Track FC/FS Applications – no questions or comments

4) PP-3: Permitting and Design Studio

Questioned who the contact is at the Town regarding the Design Studio – everything should go through Missy Luick at this time.

5) PP-11: Fund for Delinquent Taxes

Questioned where the fund to help is coming from – is it coming directly from the Town or are we pointing them in the direction of another resource – NIBCAA was identified as the Agency who would work with the Community Foundation of the Lowcountry to establish that fund. The Town would provide communications and collaborations. At this point NIBCAA does not feel that they are in a position to pursue this. The Town is

providing communication and education about those topics. We will continue to be ready if NIBCAA does want to pursue the fund.

6) PP-12: Educational Meetings/Workshops

Commented initially it was mentioned having a place or a resource center where citizens in the community could come and get information on their own beyond putting on the Workshops and doing the programs. We can look at adding resource center type documents to our website.

7) CP-1: Promote Heritage Library

Questioned how many people are participating – Linda Piekut from Heritage Library stated they have established the Center and we have just finished our second client with two additional clients in the pipeline.

8) CP-17: Outreach with Gullah Churches – no questions or comments

9) HP-1: Heirs' Property Family Research Project - no questions or comments

10) HP-2: Coordinate with Heirs' Property Organizations – no questions or comments

11) HP-3: CHPP Satellite Office

Questioned whether this should be marked 100% complete – We will put this at 75% and will update the outcome with the Task Force

12) HP-4: Fund to Clear Property Titles

Questioned whether this should be marked 100% complete – We will have a conversation regarding can this program be initiated, if not, why not and report back.

13) CP-7: Educate Town Officials and Employees – discussed above – no additional questions or comments

14) CP-14: Establish Open-Air Gullah Market

Commented that perhaps something might be established in the new Town Park, the Mid-Island Tract; clarification as to whether in this Plan is there anything set up for Pop-up Shops. This is an important part of what happens in the culture. I am not aware that this is in the Plan, but certainly can look at Special Events and what the approvals are for it.

15) PP-14: Temporary and Seasonal Signs – no questions or comments

16) PP-4: Establish an Overlay District – see discussion below.

d. Update on Historic Neighborhoods Overlay District

Missy Luick stated there was an amendment that was drafted that included an Overlay and included creating an RM-6 Zoning District. It went through Committees and Commissions with Public Hearings. The Overlay component with the RM-6 portion of it did not proceed. We did proceed with the Family Compound and Family Sub-Division Amendments. The elements of the Overlay were not taken forward. The current focus is to examine issues that have been identified as challenges to development in the Historic Neighborhoods. Staff identified these challenges while working with property owners through the Historic Neighborhoods Permitting and Design Studio. We will continue to share these observations

with the Task Force and will look at additional Code modifications. There are some big picture Planning efforts coming up – the Island Wide Conditions and Trends Assessment and the Growth Framework and Island Master Plan. Some of the themes that were identified in the Overlay may be able to be addressed through some of our ongoing work with the barriers and challenges and will be able to implement some of those.

Chairman Stevens thanked Missy for stepping in during this period of transition as well as the rest of the staff for the work that you have done and taking the time to give us a clearer understanding about where we are. Going forward I would like to reassess how we score these items and how they are marked. I am asking members of the Task Force to do the same thing. Chairman Stevens stated we are depending on some other resources and outside organizations to help us move some of these things along. I believe we should think about how we proceed with that. If we continue with some of those organizations, we want to hear from them. We might want to consider another path. I would like to have a conversation with NIBCAA and perhaps have them come in and give us a report.

Chairman Stevens stated he appreciates the work staff is doing and understand we are in a period of transition until we find someone else to fill the Historic Neighborhoods Administrator position. In the early days we called that position a liaison and that is what we are still hoping to find. It would be very helpful if we continue to do better with the communication piece with getting information out to the community.

8. Staff Report

Missy Luick stated she plans on giving a Design Studio Report monthly and will have it updated next month to show the number of projects completed. Juneteenth is coming up and the Town is going to have two booths – The Office of Cultural Affairs will have a booth as well as the Community Development Department in coordination with the CIP Group. Ms. Luick stated she briefly talked about the Sewer Connect Program earlier that has a total of \$200,000 available for sewer connection. The Home Safety and Repair Program has \$400,000 available. Those are available for home repairs and for abatement for demolition of uninhabited or unsafe structures. The third item of eligibility are for removal of hazardous trees. There is a cap of \$15,000 per improvement or repair to a particular person. There are also income qualifications for it. All the program details will be rolled out through our Communications arm shortly. I will be the Administrator of both programs.

The Task Force advised that the Gullah Museum will be sponsoring an Event on July 2, 2020.

9. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 3:10 p.m.

Submitted by: Karen Knox, Secretary

Approved: [DATE]



TOWN OF HILTON HEAD ISLAND

Memo

TO: Gullah Geechee Land & Cultural Preservation Task Force
FROM: Missy Luick, Community Planning Manager
VIA: Shawn Colin, AICP, Assistant Town Manager Community Development
DATE: June 28, 2022
SUBJECT: Gullah History and Cultural Education Program for Town Employees and Officials

Recommendation: That the Gullah Geechee Land & Cultural Preservation Task Force review the proposed Gullah History and Cultural Education Program for Town Employees and Officials and recommend the Program for implementation.

Summary: Staff has drafted a program to provide Town employees and officials with an understanding of Hilton Head Island’s Gullah history and culture. The program will consist of an hour-long orientation program and quarterly events and presentations for ongoing education and enrichment. The program was reviewed and recommended for implementation by the Gullah-Geechee Land & Cultural Preservation Task Force on June 6, 2022, but staff is bringing it back to the Task Force for final review. Discussion at the June 6, 2022 meeting included the addition of economic activities within topics of focus which has been added to the syllabus. The Task Force also requested that the orientation education program to be first presented to the Task Force for review and feedback prior to implementation to Town employees and officials which will be planned as a step prior to launching the program. The program is before the Task Force again for final review and approval.

Background: In 2019, Town Council approved 16 Top Priority Projects from the *Gullah Geechee Preservation Project Report* that were identified by the Gullah Geechee Land & Cultural Preservation Task Force. This program aligns with Recommendation CP-7, “To establish a program to educate Town officials, area schoolteachers, and others on Gullah culture so that they can better understand the culture and more effectively interact with the Island’s Gullah Citizens.”

Attachment:

- A. Gullah History and Cultural Education Program for Town Staff and Officials
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TOWN OF HILTON HEAD ISLAND

Gullah History and Cultural Education Program

For Town Employees and Officials

Program Purpose and Description

The purpose of this program is to provide Town of Hilton Head Island employees and officials with an understanding of Hilton Head Island's Gullah history and culture to establish effective communication and service.

The program will consist of an hour-long orientation program, and quarterly events and presentations for ongoing education and enrichment. This program aligns with recommendation CP-7 of the Gullah Geechee Culture Preservation Project Report, which is to, "Establish a program to educate Town officials, area schoolteachers, and others on Gullah culture so that they can better understand the culture and more effectively interact with the Island's Gullah citizens."

Gullah History and Culture Orientation Program

Target Start: 4th Quarter 2022

This introductory program will focus on Gullah history, culture, land use challenges, and policy amendments for Gullah landowners. The program contents will be developed with assistance from community historians Dr. Emory Campbell and Dr. Louise Cohen, as recommended by the Gullah Task Force. The presentation will include audiovisual and interactive elements to engage the audience. Program participants will receive a list of recommended resources for further information.

The one-hour program will be presented quarterly by the Historic Neighborhoods Preservation Administrator. As the program is refined, staff will create a video of the presentation, which will be available to those who cannot attend in person.

Topics of Focus

- Settlement of Gullah People on Hilton Head Island
Participants will learn about the importance of comparing United States coastal area with West African geography, specific skills of West Africans that led to a thriving South Carolina economy, the Gullah Heritage Corridor, and the Freedmen Settlement of Mitchelville.
- Economic Activities
Participants will learn about past and present Gullah economic activities and economic contributions to the region. Past activities such as fishing, shrimping, quilting, agriculture, and current activities such as operating local businesses are some of the economic activities that will be discussed and celebrated.



TOWN OF HILTON HEAD ISLAND

Gullah History and Cultural Education Program

For Town Employees and Officials

- Gullah Culture
Participants will learn about the Gullah cultural connection with the land. Cultural topics that are still celebrated include language, music, spiritual ties, arts and crafts, and local delicacies.
- Settlement into Fourteen Historic Communities on Hilton Head Island
Participants will learn how overall Gullah-owned land was acquired, where the Native Islanders settled on Hilton Head Island and the unique aspects of each neighborhood, small businesses established for economic-sustainability, the challenges to retaining Gullah-owned property, and the remaining acreage of Gullah-owned property on Hilton Head Island.
- Challenges to Native Island Land Retention and Sustainability
Participants will learn about the construction of the bridge in 1956, impacts to Gullah property owners with the incorporation of the Town of Hilton Head Island, the influx of development, establishment of a limited-services government, and the loss of Native Island properties.
- Proposed Public Policy Initiatives for Historic Neighborhoods
Participants will learn about the Gullah Geechee Land & Cultural Preservation Task Force, the Gullah Geechee Culture Preservation Project Report, and the Gullah Preservation Initiatives for property protection and cultural preservation. Participants will learn about the policies that have been implemented and their efficacy in resolving challenges that impact the Gullah Community. Policy initiatives include establishing Family Compound and Family Subdivision development options, creating the Family Heritage Research Project, establishing a community education program for Gullah residents, establishing addressing change notification protocol for properties in the Historic Neighborhoods, and establishing connections with other resources that aid the Gullah community.

Ongoing Education and Enrichment Events

Target Start: 4th Quarter 2022

A tour or presentation will be offered at least once a quarter. These events will be scheduled and promoted well in advance to allow as much participation as possible. Presentations will be recorded for those unable to attend in person. Staff will develop additional opportunities such as seasonal or special events and to address emerging topics such as changes to the Land Management Ordinance.



TOWN OF HILTON HEAD ISLAND

Gullah History and Cultural Education Program

For Town Employees and Officials

Proposed Tours and Presentations

- Explore Mitchelville
Participants will tour the Historic Mitchelville Freedom Park and learn about the First Settlement for Freedmen in the United States.

- Visit the Gullah Museum
Participants will tour the Gullah Museum and attend a lecture by Dr. Louise Cohen, Historian and Gullah Museum founder, on being raised in the Gullah culture on Hilton Head Island.

- Take a Gullah Heritage Mobile Tour
Participants will attend the Gullah Heritage mobile tour and learn about the history and culture of Gullah people on Hilton Head Island, Gullah Families, Gullah neighborhoods, and historical areas such as the one-room schoolhouse and the first Freedman's Village.



TOWN OF HILTON HEAD ISLAND

Historic Neighborhoods Permitting & Design Studio

June 23, 2022 Report



Note: To preserve residents' anonymity, details of the services provided are described generally.

Residents Served

Oct 2021-June 2022- Services provided to 36 residents and their families
18 completed cases
2 withdrawn
11 waiting on applicant
3 waiting on Town CIP program implementation
2 under review

Issues Addressed

Staff assisted residents with a wide range of issues:

- Drafted concept site designs.
- Discussed resolutions to access issues, including access relocation.
- Drafted concept site access designs (to create or relocate access easements or rights-of-way)
- Drafted landscape plans meeting LMO requirements.
- Discussed application requirements for Family Subdivision, Family Compound, Subdivision and Small Residential Plan Review applications.
- Discussed density requirements.
- Assisted with street name applications.
- Discussed property line boundary adjustments and the Plat Stamp application process.
- Discussed conversion of Development Plan Review applications to Family Compound applications and conversion of conventional subdivisions to Family Subdivisions.
- Corrected addresses.
- Discussed flood elevation requirements.
- Reviewed and assisted with dirt road paving requests.

Collaboration

Providing these services required collaboration with Town staff from several departments, including Development Review & Zoning, Urban Design, Stormwater, Engineering, Natural Resources, Legal, Building Inspections, Capital Improvement Projects Division, and Fire Rescue.

Staff also collaborated with outside agencies and nonprofits, including Palmetto Electric, Hilton Head Public Service District, and Deep Well.



TOWN OF HILTON HEAD ISLAND

Memo

TO: Gullah Geechee Land & Cultural Preservation Task Force
FROM: Missy Luick, Community Planning Manager
VIA: Shawn Colin, AICP, Assistant Town Manager Community Development
DATE: June 28, 2022
SUBJECT: Gullah Geechee Report 16 Top Priority Recommendations Update

Recommendation: That the Gullah Geechee Land & Cultural Preservation Task Force discuss an outline or identify an agreed upon critical path to advance the projects from the *Gullah Geechee Preservation Project Report*.

Summary: Staff would like to discuss establishing a critical path to advance projects from the *Gullah Geechee Preservation Project Report*. At the meeting, staff will present critical path action steps to achieve implementation or advancement of all projects. Examples of action steps will include, but not be limited to LMO amendments for Mid-Island Redevelopment Area Plan, LMO amendments to implement recommendations in the *Gullah Geechee Preservation Project Report*, sustainable zoning standards for Historic Neighborhoods, development of resource page for development assistance programs and Heirs' Property organizations and assistance programs, creation of standard operating procedures documents to ensure ongoing programs (such as, but not limited to Design Studio, education programs, outreach with Gullah churches, and temporary sign programming) are folded into Town staff or partner organization operations, and establishment of Gullah Market.

Implementation Schedule:

- July 11- Meet with Task Force to establish critical path action step work plan for completion of 16 Top Priority Projects from the *Gullah Geechee Preservation Project Report*.
 - Aug 1- Meet with Task Force to:
 - Staff to update Task Force on critical path work plan progress.
 - Aug- Staff to review non-priority (other 21) projects in the *Gullah Geechee Preservation Project Report* and add them to the critical path workplan.
 - Sept 12- Meet with Task Force to:
 - MKSK to present update on Mid-Island Redevelopment district and park plans.
-

-Review of updated critical path work plan (that includes all projects) and update on implementation progress.

Oct 10- Meet with Task Force to:

- Preview of Gullah History and Cultural Education Program
- Staff to update Task Force on critical path work plan progress.

Nov 7- Meet with Task Force to:

- Staff to update Task Force on critical path work plan progress.

Dec 5- Meet with Task Force to:

- Staff to update Task Force on critical path work plan progress.

Background: In 2019, Town Council approved 16 Top Priority Projects from the *Gullah Geechee Preservation Project Report* that were identified by the Gullah Geechee Land & Cultural Preservation Task Force.