



The Town of Hilton Head Island
**Gullah Geechee Land &
Cultural Preservation Task
Force Special Meeting**
Monday, November 4, 2019, 1:00p.m.
Benjamin M. Racusin Council Chambers
AGENDA

As a courtesy to others please turn off / silence ALL mobile devices during the meeting. Thank You.

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. **Approval of Agenda**
4. **Approval of Meeting Minutes** – September 16, 2019; October 14, 2019; October 21, 2019
5. **Discussion Items**
 - a. Discussion of Work Plan for Top Priority Gullah Geechee Report Recommendations
6. **Appearance by Citizens on Items Unrelated to Today’s Agenda**
7. **Staff Report**
8. **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.



Town of Hilton Head Island
**Gullah Geechee Land & Cultural Preservation
Task Force**

September 16, 2019 at 1:00 pm
Benjamin M. Racusin Council Chambers

MEETING MINUTES

Present From the Committee: Lavon Stevens, Palmer Simmons, Ibrahim Abdul-Malik, Caroline McVitty, Todd Theodore, Joyce Wright, Theresa White

Present from Town Staff: Sheryse DuBose, Jennifer Ray, Josh Gruber, Nicole Dixon, Missy Luick, Taylor Ladd

Town Council Members Present: Tamara Becker, Thomas Lennox, David Ames, Marc Grant

1. Call to Order

Chairman Stevens called the meeting to order at 1:05 PM.

2. FOIA Compliance

Public notification of this meeting has been published, posted, and mailed in compliance with the Freedom of Information Act and the Town of Hilton Head Island requirements.

3. Approval of Minutes

The agenda for today's meeting and the minutes from the August 26, 2019 meeting were approved by consent.

4. Unfinished Business - none

5. New Business

Josh Gruber presented the draft of the Fire Hydrant Liability Waiver for new-build construction outside 500 feet of a fire hydrant. It was explained that every effort would be made to save the property in case of a fire however, the homeowner would be waiving his/her right to sue the Town of Hilton Head, should their property be destroyed as a result of being outside of 500 feet of a fire hydrant. Josh Gruber will include an automatic sunset of the waiver when the owner meets the state fire code requirements.

Sheryse DuBose presented the list of top priority projects from the Gullah Geechee report recommendations. Chairman Stevens discussed the need to approach some of the projects right away. The Task Force stated concerns with the order of the projects as presented and expressed the desire for the Historic District overlay to be the first priority. The Task Force also believed that some of the projects that were labeled "long term" should be short term projects. Tabling the items was a suggestion with the final decision to present the top priorities to the Town Council as written. Once approved, a work plan would be created to include a time and needed resources to implement the projects.

The Task Force asked that the Delinquent Tax List received from The Town for the purpose of making people aware that they owe property taxes, include the amounts. Staff expressed

concern with freely disseminating information that could be perceived as an invasion of privacy. There was a question concerning with whether or not the amounts were included in the tax information distributed from the Town the previous year. Josh Gruber offered to provide the information for the link to get the needed information. David Ames shared a text from someone with difficulties paying property taxes and commented that the Task Force has the opportunity to resolve these issues.

Sheryse DuBose shared the process of what happens when property owners are delinquent in paying their taxes.

6. Appearance by Citizens on Items Unrelated to Today's Agenda

Chairman Sevens opened the floor to comments from the public on items unrelated to the agenda. Taiwan Scott commented that he is unable to renew his business license as a result of his property being non-conforming based on Land Management Ordinance guidelines. However, property taxes are still being paid in spite of the fact that the business is not being used.

Alex Brown made comments concerning issues with affordable and workforce housing, and how they can be beneficial to Gullah families.

7. Staff Report

Staff reminded the Task Force that the Quarterly Report needed to be presented at the September 11th Town Council Meeting. The Gullah Geechee Report Recommendations would also be decided at that meeting.

8. Adjournment

Chairman Stevens adjourned the meeting at 3:30 PM.

Submitted by: Sheryse DuBose

Meeting Date: September 16, 2019



Town of Hilton Head Island
**Gullah Geechee Land & Cultural Preservation
Task Force**

October 14, 2019 at 1:00 pm
Benjamin M. Racusin Council Chambers

MEETING MINUTES

Present From the Committee: Lavon Stevens, Ibrahim Abdul-Malik, Caroline McVitty, Martha Davis

Present from Town Staff: Sheryse DuBose, Jennifer Ray, Shawn Colin, Taylor Ladd, Josh Gruber

Town Council Members Present: John McCann, Tamara Becker, Thomas Lennox,

1. Call to Order

Chairman Stevens called the meeting to order at 1:06 PM.

2. FOIA Compliance

Public notification of this meeting has been published, posted, and mailed in compliance with the Freedom of Information Act and the Town of Hilton Head Island requirements.

3. Approval of Minutes

The agenda for today's meeting and the minutes from the September 16, 2019 meeting were unable to be approved by consent as there was no quorum present.

4. Unfinished Business - none

5. New Business

Two of four groups present drafts of the proposed work plan for the Gullah Geechee Report recommendations that were identified as being top priority. Ibrahim Abdul-Malik presented the proposed work plan for four recommendations under the heading, Economic Opportunities and Other. Discussed were the departments and organizations involved in implementing the projects that fell under that category, as well as proposed funding, sources of funding, and a timeline. The Task Force and the public had the opportunity to comment and ask questions after each recommendation was presented. Expressed were concerns about the proposed 2020 implementation start date for seasonal signs not being soon enough and the desire for the Town to relax the ordinance in order to enable the selling of goods on private property, both comments referring to recommendation PP-14. Ibrahim Abdul-Malik commented on using Gullah colors for signage. Alex Brown reiterated the need for specific education and training, referring to recommendation CP-7. Caroline McVitty presented the proposed work plan for Heirs' Property/Land Preservation, following the same format as the first group, which is to allow for Task Force and the public to comment and ask questions after presenting each of the recommendations. There was a question for HP-3 concerning the funding for a Center for Heirs' Property Preservation Satellite Office, and the fact that the organization is limited towards the people they are able to serve. Tom Barnwell stated that the Center Heirs' Property Preservation has a program where five acres or more can be given for timberland, but there is a problem on

Hilton Head Island where burning to clear the land is not allowed. Consequently, people cannot participate in the program because alternatives for land clearing is too expensive. Also referencing HP-3, Alex Brown expressed the need for an Heirs' Property template to follow when addressing clearing property titles. There was a question for CP-1 as to whom would own the genealogy research. Chairman Stevens stated that establishing the overlay district will allow the implementation for other projects. Chairman Stevens concluded the discussion by thanking the Task Force for their efforts on the work plan.

6. Appearance by Citizens on Items Unrelated to Today's Agenda – none

7. Staff Report

Sheryse DuBose discussed the sale of Beaufort County properties due to delinquent taxes that took place on October 7th. Some Heirs' Property buyers, mostly with property in the county, who stated that they were bidding to recover their property and clear the title, were able to recover their property. Other Heirs' Property owners, who were not as fortunate, were outbid by other buyers and will need to either recover their property from redemption or lose it to the highest bidder. Josh Gruber explained that active bidding by investment groups, hedge funds, and banks for Heirs' Property is the 12% return in one year if the redemption property is not recovered, is the best investment opportunity. Chairman Stevens stated the need for education concerning the payment of property taxes and how to avoid properties going into redemption.

8. Adjournment

Chairman Stevens adjourned the meeting at 2:47 PM.

Submitted by: Sheryse DuBose

Meeting Date: October 14, 2019



Town of Hilton Head Island
**Gullah Geechee Land & Cultural Preservation
Task Force**

October 21, 2019 at 1:00 pm
Benjamin M. Racusin Council Chambers

MEETING MINUTES

Present From the Committee: Lavon Stevens, Palmer Simmons, Caroline McVitty, Joyce Wright

Present from Town Staff: Sheryse DuBose, Jennifer Ray, Taylor Ladd, Shawn Colin

Town Council Members Present: Marc Grant, Tamara Becker

1. Call to Order

Chairman Stevens called the meeting to order at 1:05 PM.

2. FOIA Compliance

Public notification of this meeting has been published, posted, and mailed in compliance with the Freedom of Information Act and the Town of Hilton Head Island requirements.

3. Approval of Minutes

The agenda for October 14, 2019 and today's meetings and the minutes from the September 16, 2019; October 14, 2019, and October 21, 2019 meetings were unable to be approved by consent as there was no quorum present.

4. Unfinished Business - none

5. New Business

Two of four groups present drafts of the proposed work plan for the Gullah Geechee Report recommendations that were identified as being top priority. Joyce Wright asked for questions or comments from the Task Force and the public regarding the handout that contained the proposed work plan for the four recommendations under the heading Heirs' Property/Land Preservation and Understanding Property Regulations. Discussions were held concerning the proposed education for recommendation HP-4 and the funding proposals for recommendation PP-11. Councilman Grant proposed using federal grants to assist with the payment of delinquent taxes. Joseph Grant asked for clarification for recommendation HP-3 that was discussed during the October 14th meeting in terms of the plan to open a Satellite Office on Hilton Head Island. Tai Scott commented on recommendation PP-3 in seeking case studies of Gullah property and business owners who have sought assistance from the Town. Chairman Stevens stated that implementation of the recommendations is an education process and should not be strictly adhered based on the wording presented in the work plan. Also stated was the correlation between the proposed overlay district and the comprehensive plan re-write. Jennifer Ray clarified that Sheryse DuBose also assists citizens that are not necessarily within the historic areas, and that recommendation PP-3 will be adjusted to reflect this. Caroline McVitty presented each of the recommendations associated with the Historic Gullah Neighborhood Conservation Overlay District. The Task Force and the public had the

opportunity to ask questions and make comments. Alex Brown requested clarification in determining the elements included in establishing the proposed historic overlay district. Jennifer Ray added that the report called for higher densities, buffers and setbacks, and open space requirements. Tai Scott received clarification in terms of citizens not necessarily waiting for the establishment of the historic overlay district, but to seek assistance from the Town presently in order to address issues concerning their property. Marc Grant expressed caution in remaining consistent when proceeding to resolve property issues without a plan in place. Sheryse DuBose stated that Staff will present the work plan for the recommendations that were identified as top priority at the November 4th Task Force meeting. Jennifer Ray explained the process for voting on the order of the top recommendations using numbered, color-coded dots. Twelve, rather than sixteen recommendations were included to be voted upon, as the proposed overlay district encompassed four recommendations and PP-3 is currently ongoing.

6. Appearance by Citizens on Items Unrelated to Today's Agenda

Hannah Horne with the Hilton Head Island-Bluffton Chamber of Commerce stated the importance of historic districts on Hilton Head Island being counted for the 2020 Census. Dot Law stated that not everyone in the Gullah community has a physical address on file and that would need to be checked. Alex Brown asked for clarification as to when the work plan would be brought before Town Council. Jennifer Ray clarified that the work plan will be presented at the November 19th meeting prior to the Town Council retreat. Alex Brown also asked about the property redemption list to which Sheryse DuBose responded that Beaufort County would send the list when it is available.

7. Staff Report – none

8. Adjournment

Chairman Stevens adjourned the meeting at 2:47 PM.

Submitted by: Sheryse DuBose

Meeting Date: October 21, 2019

Gullah Geechee Culture Preservation Project Report Recommendations
Top Priority Recommendations Framework
October 2019

Recommendations	Strategies	Resources			Timeline	
		Departments/Organizations	Funding Sources	Funding Amount	Estimated Start	Project Duration
PP-4 Designate Historic Gullah Neighborhoods Conservation Overlay District	Consider creating a Historic Gullah Neighborhoods Conservation Overlay District to address issues in the LMO that impact properties in terms of zoning, buffers, setbacks, and density. Will require testing of design standards.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community Development Department (Historic Neighborhoods Preservation Administrator – Project Lead) Public Projects and Facilities Department 	N/A	N/A	Year 1, First Quarter	+/- 9 to 12 Months
PP-6 Provide greater flexibility for ROWs and drainage easements	Continue the process to amend LMO requirements to maintain current lot density when establishing ROW to place additional homes on lots as part of the Dirt Road Paving Program in conjunction with PP-4.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community Development Department (Historic Neighborhoods Preservation Administrator – Project Lead) Public Projects and Facilities Department Fire Rescue Department 	N/A	N/A	Year 1, First Quarter	+/- 9 to 12 Months
PP-2 “Fast Track” Development Review Process	Evaluate moving complete applications for development review within the established Historic Gullah Neighborhoods Conservation Overlay District to the front of the line, reducing the time and cost associated with development as part of PP-4.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community Development Department (Historic Neighborhoods Preservation Administrator – Project Lead) Public Projects and Facilities Department Palmetto Electric Water and Sewer 	N/A	N/A	Year 1, First Quarter	+/- 9 to 12 Months
PP-5 Add Family Compound Provisions to Land Management Ordinance	Evaluate implementation of a Family Compound within the identified Historic Gullah Neighborhoods Conservation Overlay district as part of PP-4.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community Development Department (Historic Neighborhoods Preservation Administrator – Project Lead) Public Projects and Facilities Department 	N/A	N/A	Year 1, First Quarter	+/- 9 to 12 Months

Notes: Updates to be provided quarterly
Timeline is tentative and subject to change
Year 1 (2020)
Year 2 (2021)
Year 3 (2022)

Recommendations	Strategies	Resources			Timeline	
		Departments/Organizations	Funding Sources	Funding Amount	Estimated Start	Project Duration
CP-17 Recognize Gullah Churches to be Source of Leadership and Communication	Coordinate with local Gullah churches to establish a communication strategy to gather information, assess needs, and disseminate information.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Historic Neighborhoods Preservation Administrator • Church Leadership • Church Parishioners 	N/A	N/A	Year 1, First Quarter	Ongoing
CP-14 Establish Open-Air Market for Gullah Products	Establish an open air market as a pilot program that will work to promote Gullah culture and create economic development opportunities for participants. Create and accept applications for potential vendors, provide vendor space, and promote the market on the Town website and social media as well as other media outlets.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Historic Neighborhoods Preservation Administrator • Native Island Business and Community Affairs Association (NIBCAA) • Office of Cultural Affairs (OCA) 	N/A	N/A	Year 1, First Quarter	Ongoing
CP-7 Program to educate Town officials, teachers, and others on Gullah history and culture	Establish a historical and cultural training program for new hires and newly elected positions within the Town of Hilton Head Island. Training may include videos, lectures, and tours to provide education on Gullah culture.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Historic Neighborhoods Preservation Administrator • Town of Hilton Head Human Resources Department • Gullah Museum • Penn Center • Historic Mitchelville Freedom Park • Gullah Geechee Cultural Heritage Corridor Commission • Hilton Head Island Historians • Office of Cultural Affairs • South Carolina State Department of Education • Other education resources 	Town of Hilton Head Island	+/- \$600	Year 1, Second Quarter	Ongoing
HP-4 NIBCAA to work with the Community Foundation of the Low Country (CFL) to create a fund to clear property titles	Evaluate the possibility of creating a fund through the CFL for the purpose of assisting members of the community with the cost to clear title.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Historic Neighborhoods Preservation Administrator • NIBCAA • CFL 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local Donors • Grants 	+/- \$5000	Year 1, Second Quarter	Ongoing

Notes: Updates to be provided quarterly
Timeline is tentative and subject to change
Year 1 (2020)
Year 2 (2021)
Year 3 (2022)

Recommendations	Strategies	Resources			Timeline	
		Departments/Organizations	Funding Sources	Funding Amount	Estimated Start	Project Duration
HP-2 Leverage local, state, and national organizations to address Heirs' Property	Contact organizations to identify potential programs to assist with Heirs' Property.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Historic Neighborhoods Preservation Administrator • Pan African Family Empowerment and Land Preservation Network (PAFEN) • South Carolina Legal Services (SCLS) • Heirs' Property Retention Coalition (HPRC) • South Carolina Appleseed Legal Justice Center (SCALJC) • Black Family Land Trust (BFLT) • Black Belt Justice Center (BBJC) 	N/A	N/A	Year 1, Third Quarter	Ongoing
PP-14 Program for temporary or seasonal signs to promote economic opportunities for Gullah businesses and residents	Develop temporary/seasonal signs that are compliant with the Town LMO that can be distributed upon request to Gullah businesses and residents through the NIBCAA Office. Process temporary sign applications for Gullah businesses.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Historic Neighborhoods Preservation Administrator • NIBCAA • OCA 	Town of Hilton Head Island	TBD based on sign cost and the number of signs needed.	Year 2, First Quarter	Ongoing
HP-1 Utilize Heritage Library as a first step to clear land title	The identified departments and organizations will work together to research strategies to clear land titles for Heirs' Property in conjunction with CP-1.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Historic Neighborhoods Preservation Administrator • Heritage Library • Additional resources related to clearing land titles 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Heritage Library • Charitable Foundations 	TBD based on the number of people who need service	Year 2, First Quarter	Ongoing
PP-12 Program to Educate Gullah Residents on Policy – Taxes, Land Use, Development	Continue program to conduct meetings and workshops to provide education on different issues that impact Gullah residents, both socially and financially	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Town of Hilton Head Island Staff (Historic Neighborhoods Preservation Administrator – Project Lead) • Beaufort County 	Town of Hilton Head Island	+/- \$1000	Year 2, Second Quarter	Ongoing

Notes: Updates to be provided quarterly
Timeline is tentative and subject to change
Year 1 (2020)
Year 2 (2021)
Year 3 (2022)

Recommendations	Strategies	Resources			Timeline	
		Departments/Organizations	Funding Sources	Funding Amount	Estimated Start	Project Duration
HP-3 Encourage Center for Heirs' Property Preservation (CHPP) to Open Satellite Office	This project will be implemented in two parts: Part 1 – Assist land owners with Heirs' Property that meet the income requirements set by the CHPP with obtaining information and assistance from the CHPP in Beaufort Part 2 – Evaluate creation of a local Heirs' Property resource center that benefits citizens of all income levels.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community Development Department (Historic Neighborhoods Preservation Administrator – Project Lead) Staff Attorney/Town Attorney CHPP Outside Legal Services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CFL Charitable Foundations Grants 	TBD based on staff and facility needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Part 1 – Year 2, Second Quarter Part 2 – Year 3, Second Quarter 	+/- 9 to 12 months
CP-1 Promote Heritage Library to research history and genealogy	The identified departments and organizations will work together to research strategies to clear land titles for Heirs' Property starting with research of family history and genealogy, in conjunction with HP-1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Historic Neighborhoods Preservation Administrator Heritage Library Additional resources related to history and genealogy research 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Heritage Library Charitable Foundations 	TBD based on whether costs can be mitigated	Year 2, First Quarter	Ongoing
PP-11 Fund for Delinquent Taxes	Evaluate the possibility of creating a fund through the CFL for the purpose of assisting land owners who are delinquent and unable to pay their property taxes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Historic Neighborhoods Preservation Administrator NIBCAA Beaufort County Tax Office CFL 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Charitable Foundations Grants Local Donors 	+/- \$1000	Year 2, First Quarter	Ongoing
PP-3 HNP to work with Gullah property and business owners to assist with Town Regulations	Continue to assist property and business owners with navigating Town regulations related to land use, development, and businesses.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community Development Department (Historic Neighborhoods Preservation Administrator – Project Lead) Public Projects and Facilities Department Fire Rescue Department 	N/A	N/A	June 2019	Ongoing

Notes: Updates to be provided quarterly
Timeline is tentative and subject to change
Year 1 (2020)
Year 2 (2021)
Year 3 (2022)