



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

Monday, August 26, 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 – July 15, 2019**
- 5. Discussion Items**
 - a. Fire Hydrants Update
 - b. Review of recommendations for the Gullah Geechee Preservation Project Report
 - c. Delinquent Tax List
- 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**

July 15, 2019 at 1:00 pm
Living Lab – Town Hall

MEETING MINUTES

Present From the Committee: Lavon Stevens, Palmer Simmons, Ibrahim Abdul-Malik, Martha Davis, Joyce Wright

Present from Town Staff: Sheryse DuBose, Jayme Lopko, Jennifer Ray

Town Council Members Present: Tamara Becker, Thomas Lennox

1. Call to Order

Chairman Stevens called the meeting to order at 1:04 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 June 17, 2019 meeting were approved by consent.

4. Unfinished Business - none

5. New Business

Josh Gruber provided information concerning the more than 1500 fire hydrants on mainly the north end of Hilton Head Island that are in the public service district (PSD). Mr. Gruber explained the program between the Fire Department and PSD is geared towards the installation of new hydrants in the areas where there is a gap in coverage, in addition to gaining access to existing hydrants that may be blocked by fences and other obstructions. Mr. Gruber also addressed clarifying the language concerning the waiver for new homes exceeding the 1000-foot proximity to a fire hydrant. He further stated that any home on the island in need of fire protection will receive the best quality service available.

Chairman Stevens had questions concerning the progress of the Gullah Geechee Preservation Project Report Recommendations. Sheryse DuBose stated that staff was in the process of reviewing the 34 recommendations. Jennifer Ray further clarified that all 34 recommendations were passed by the Planning Commission and would need to be presented to the Public Planning Committee.

Chairman Stevens brought forth for discussion the Gullah Geechee Task Force meeting twice a month instead of once a month. Jayme Lopko clarified that the Task Force adopted the 2019 calendar as meeting the first and third Mondays each month. The exceptions would be in August, as a result of the special-called Public Planning Committee meeting on August 19th and

in September, as Labor Day is on September 2nd. Ibrahim Abdul-Malik discussed the possibility of meetings taking place in the community.

Joyce Wright made the motion to have a schedule brought forward on the first and third Mondays of every month, with exceptions to August and September 2019, and to be able to take some of the meetings out into the public outside of the Town Council Chambers. The motion was seconded by Ibrahim Abdul-Malik. The motion passed unanimously, 5-0-0.

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 and none were received.

7. Adjournment

Chairman Stevens adjourned the meeting at 2:15 PM.

Submitted by: Sheryse DuBose

Meeting Date: July 15, 2019

Gullah Geechee Culture Preservation Project Report
Staff Response August 2019

| Cultural Preservation |
|--|
| Research, Education, and Interpretation |
| <u>CP-1</u> Promote the use of the Heritage Library Foundation’s resources with the Island’s Gullah People to encourage them to research their history and genealogy. <u>Gullah Geechee Task Force/Planning Commission Response</u> Agree with this recommendation (Short Term). <u>Staff Response</u> Staff would work to determine if the Heritage Library is able to provide services for free or at a reduced cost as well as research opportunities to partner with other organizations (Short Term). |
| <u>CP-2</u> Initiate a major fundraising effort to expand cultural programs that teach traditional Gullah ways and support the physical development of key interpretive sites. <u>Gullah Geechee Task Force/Planning Commission Response</u> Agree with this recommendation. The Historic Neighborhoods Preservation Administrator (HNPA) should assist the Senior Grants Administrator (Long Term). <u>Staff Response</u> Staff recommends creating a list of grants to address expanding cultural programs (Short Term). The Town’s Office of Cultural Affairs (OCA) and the HPNA will support the Senior Grants Administrator in researching and executing fundraising efforts (Long Term). |
| <u>CP-3</u> Adapt and expand the interpretive themes from the Gullah Geechee Cultural Heritage Corridor (GGCHC) management plan as a framework for Gullah cultural interpretation on Hilton Head Island, and pursue accurate and consistent storytelling. <u>Gullah Geechee Task Force/Planning Commission Response</u> Agree with this recommendation. This could start with the Town’s OCA, but could evolve into something the neighborhoods or community organization can take over (Long Term). <u>Staff Response</u> Storytellers of the Gullah Geechee culture should be encouraged to relay their individual experiences in order to provide personal and different perspectives of the culture. OCA is currently involved with a historical panel representation aided by members of the Gullah Museum and the Mitchelville Preservation Project to ensure accurate presentation (Mid Term). |

Short Term (Up to 1 Year); Mid Term (1-2 Years); Long Term (2+ Years)

Cultural Preservation (cont.)

CP-4

Develop a self-guided tour of the Island’s Gullah sites utilizing multiple methods (hard copy maps, site markers, digital technology, etc.) to supplement existing guided tours so that a broader range of interpretative experiences can be available.

Gullah Geechee Task Force/Planning Commission Response

Agree with this recommendation. The OCA should work with the HNPA to create. There is also a recommendation for the Town Council to provide funding (\$25k) (Long Term).

Staff Response

The HNPA will work with the OCA to extend the already established cultural trail to include historically accurate Gullah Geechee sites that will also utilize digital technology (Long Term).

CP-5

Develop a graphically consistent wayfinding and wayside exhibit system throughout the Island to highlight sites tied to Gullah history and culture and to better orient visitors.

Gullah Geechee Task Force/Planning Commission Response

Agree with this recommendation. The OCA should work with the Historic Neighborhoods Preservation Administrator to create. There is also a recommendation for the Town Council to provide the funding for the design (\$5k) (Short Term).

Staff Response

Staff agrees that the OCA and HPNA would work together on the wayfinding and exhibit system. A sign plan would be established by Town staff to ensure that wayfinding signs are cohesive with other designs for signage and include nature-blending colors (Short Term).

Cultural Preservation (cont.)

CP-6

Establish a program for local students to conduct oral history interviews of elderly Gullah citizens to document their way of life in earlier eras before this important information is lost.

Gullah Geechee Task Force/Planning Commission Response

Agree with this recommendation. HNPA should lead this effort with assistance from the OCA. Paid training is needed to ensure the story is consistent. Recommend Town Council provide funding for training (\$10k) (Short Term).

Staff Response

Projects should be established for school-aged children with parental guidance to question older relatives. Because a relationship has already been established between the child(ren) and older Gullah Geechee relatives, this would establish a comfortable setting for passing along the story. Additionally, the storytelling provides the ability for the older Gullah Geechee Islanders to foster cultural ties with the younger generations, which coincides with recommendation CP-8. Staff recommends utilizing the Heritage Library, Penn Center, and the Mitchelville Preservation Project to collect and digitize the personal histories. The HNPA would assist in coordinating this project (Long Term).

CP-7

Establish a program to educate Town officials, area school teachers, and others on Gullah culture so they can better understand the culture and more effectively interact with the Island's Gullah citizens.

Gullah Geechee Task Force/Planning Commission Response

Agree with this recommendation. HNPA should lead this effort with assistance from the OCA and Gullah organizations on the island, not just the Gullah Museum (Short Term).

Staff Response

Staff will identify Gullah Geechee citizens to formulize a cultural and historical training module. Staff recommends including Gullah Geechee history and culture training sessions for new hires and newly elected positions for the Town of Hilton Head. The HNPA would assist in this effort (Short Term).

Gullah Geechee culture and history also needs to be included in the South Carolina educational standards as a part of the curriculum for South Carolina History. Civil War/Reconstruction curriculum for United States History should include the history of the Mitchelville Settlement and the current preservation efforts of the Mitchelville Preservation Park. The HNPA would assist in this effort (Long Term).

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| <p>Cultural Preservation (cont.)</p> <p><u>CP-8</u> Utilize interactive approaches to interpretation to better engage current and potential new audiences, particularly young people.</p> <p><u>Gullah Geechee Task Force/Planning Commission Response</u> Agree with this recommendation. HNPA should lead this effort with assistance from the OCA (Short Term).</p> <p><u>Staff Response</u> OCA will lead in the technology efforts that are currently underway for better interaction. Staff can assist in publicizing its availability (Short Term).</p> |
| <p>Heritage Tourism</p> <p><u>CP-9</u> Coordinate promotion of the Island’s Gullah-related attractions with state and regional cultural heritage organizations to attract more visitors to the Island’s Gullah sites.</p> <p><u>Gullah Geechee Task Force/Planning Commission Response</u> Agree with this recommendation. The Chamber’s Visitor and Convention Bureau (VCB) should promote more than just the Gullah Celebrations (Short Term).</p> <p><u>Staff Response</u> This recommendation should be referred to the Hilton Head Island – Bluffton Chamber of Commerce (Short Term).</p> |
| <p><u>CP-10</u> Promote the Gullah culture and the cultural resources more prominently within the Island’s overall tourism market to attract more visitors to the island and, in particular, to the Island’s Gullah sites.</p> <p><u>Gullah Geechee Task Force/Planning Commission Response</u> Agree with this recommendation. The VCB should conduct year-round promotion of the Gullah culture. Recommend Town Council provide funding to the Beaufort County Black Chamber to assist with the promotion of Gullah heritage tourism (Short Term).</p> <p><u>Staff Response</u> This recommendation should be referred to Hilton Head Island – Bluffton Chamber of Commerce or the Beaufort County Black Chamber of Commerce (Short Term).</p> |

Short Term (Up to 1 Year); Mid Term (1-2 Years); Long Term (2+ Years)

Cultural Preservation (cont.)

CP-11

Provide technical and financial support to businesses whose products and/or services are strongly tied to Gullah culture to increase their odds of sustained success.

Gullah Geechee Task Force/Planning Commission Response

Agree with this recommendation (Short Term)

Staff Response

While the Beaufort County Black Chamber of Commerce offers technical and financial support for Gullah Geechee businesses, their services are limited due to funding. Staff recommends working with the Native Island Business and Community Affairs Association (NIBCAA) who can provide support to implement this recommendation (Mid Term).

CP-12

Establish a Gullah authenticity certification program by which businesses with authentic Gullah services and products can utilize an adopted logo that conveys their status as being certified based on adopted criteria.

Gullah Geechee Task Force/Planning Commission Response

Agree with this recommendation (Short Term)

Staff Response

This recommendation should be referred to the Gullah Geechee Cultural Heritage Corridor Commission. Staff also recommends that NIBCAA be involved in this program (Long Term)

CP-13

Utilize information from the recently-drafted Economic and Fiscal Impact Study for Beaufort County and the Arts 7 Economic Prosperity 5 report to refine strategies to more effectively promote Gullah heritage tourism for Hilton Head Island.

Gullah Geechee Task Force/Planning Commission Response

Agree with this recommendation (Short Term)

Staff Response

This recommendation should be referred to the Hilton Head Island – Bluffton Chamber of Commerce, Beaufort County Black Chamber of Commerce, and NIBCAA to implement (Short Term).

Cultural Preservation (cont.)

CP-14

Establish an open-air market as a pilot program to sell food, arts, and crafts tied to Gullah culture as an economic development initiative for the island’s Gullah community.

Gullah Geechee Task Force/Planning Commission Response

Agree. HNPA should lead with assistance from NIBCAA and assistance with promotion from the OCA. The HNPA should further discuss this with the Gullah community and Task Force before a location is determined (Short Term).

Staff Response

Staff recommends establishing the open air market at a small Town of Hilton Head location such as the Squire Pope Community Center, with the focus being on promoting the event. The Town of Hilton Head Island would be in charge of applications for prospective vendors at minimal cost. In understanding that the open air market is not a flea market, but a market for promoting Gullah Geechee culture and establishing economic development opportunities for said community, the following provisions should be stipulated:

1. Vendors must live within the established Gullah Geechee Historic Neighborhoods.
2. Wares are restricted to:
 - a. Foods that are homegrown/freshly caught and/or Gullah Geechee traditional dishes;
 - b. Authentic Gullah/Geechee handmade arts and crafts;
 - c. Other authentic products of Gullah Geechee tradition.

Dates and times for the open air market will be advertised on the Town website and on social media sites in addition to utilizing other media sources. Larger venues can be explored as participation and interest grow for the event. The HNPA with assistance from NIBCAA would work towards establishing the open air market (Short Term).

Preservation Planning

CP-15

Conduct a comprehensive inventory of cultural resources related to Gullah history and culture on Hilton Head Island to better accommodate future preservation planning for Gullah history and culture.

Gullah Geechee Task Force/Planning Commission Response

Agree with this recommendation. Recommend Town Council provide funding for the comprehensive inventory of cultural resources (\$15k). This may be just an enhancement of what we already have in place (Long Term).

Staff Response

Staff will evaluate the need for an outside consultant to conduct the cultural inventory of Gullah history and culture for Hilton Head Island (Long Term).

Cultural Preservation (cont.)

CP-16

Prepare a comprehensive and detailed cultural preservation plan for the island in general, but to include a focus on Gullah historic and cultural preservation, to expand upon potential preservation benefits of this project.

Gullah Geechee Task Force/Planning Commission Response

Agree with this recommendation. Recommend Town Council provide funding for a cultural preservation plan for the Island (\$50k) (Long Term)

Staff Response

Staff will evaluate the need for an outside consultant to prepare the cultural preservation plan that includes a focus on Gullah Geechee historic and cultural preservation (Long Term).

CP-17

Recognize the Island’s Gullah-associated churches as an important facet of Gullah culture, particularly regarding leadership and communications, to ensure that they are actively involved in all future Gullah-related initiatives.

Gullah Geechee Task Force/Planning Commission Response

Agree with this recommendation (Short Term).

Staff Response

Staff understands the leadership and communication role of the Gullah Geechee Churches and they will be regarded in any outreach that impacts the aforementioned community (Short Term).

CP-18

Identify an entity to match land owners in the historic Gullah neighborhoods with applicable private developers to increase the land owners’ odds of success with selling or developing their property.

Gullah Geechee Task Force/Planning Commission Response

Agree with this Recommendation (Short Term)

Staff Response

Staff will direct Gullah Geechee property owners in the historic communities to South Carolina Real Estate Association (SCREA), the Urban Land Institute (ULI), Commercial Real Estate Development Association (NAIOP) and the National Association of Home Builders (NAHB) mentioned in the Preservation Project Report for the purpose of providing education. Staff recommends the possibility of also utilizing NIBCAA to support this effort (Mid-Term).

Cultural Preservation (cont.)

CP-19 Task Force Recommendation/Planning Commission Approval¹

Recognize the Island's Gullah-associated cemeteries as an important facet of Gullah culture to ensure that they are preserved (Short Term).

Staff Response

Staff understands that the Gullah Geechee cemeteries are important and will research the legal means to ensure preservation (Short Term).

Continued on next page.

¹ CP-19 is a recommendation directly from the Gullah Geechee Land and Cultural Preservation Task Force. Short Term (Up to 1 Year); Mid Term (1-2 Years); Long Term (2+ Years)

Public Policies

Developmental Approval Process

PP-1

Allow waivers for development application fees and establish a grant program to assist property owners to pay for specific development impact fees for sites within the proposed Historic Gullah Neighborhoods Conservation Overlay District.

Gullah Geechee Task Force/Planning Commission Response

Agree with this recommendation. Recommend the Land Management Ordinance (LMO) be changed to waive application fees for the Overlay District. Recommend Town Council establish a fund to assist primarily single-family applicants of low-income status with impact fees (Mid Term).

Staff Response

Staff will establish criteria to waive fees for development applications for properties that are within the proposed Historic Gullah Neighborhoods Conservation Overlay District. Before adjusting/waiving impact fees can be considered, the limitations with state law need to be researched (Long Term).

PP-2

“Fast Track” the review process for development applications within the proposed Historic Gullah Neighborhoods Conservation Overlay District to decrease the land owners’ time and costs associated with development.

Gullah Geechee Task Force/Planning Commission Response

Agree with this recommendation (Mid Term).

Staff Response

Staff agrees with the recommendation (Long Term).

PP-3

Utilize the Town’s newly-created Historic Neighborhoods Preservation Administrator position to work closely with property and business owners in the proposed Historic Gullah Neighborhoods Conservation Overlay District to help them navigate Town regulations related to land use, development, and businesses.

Gullah Geechee Task Force/Planning Commission Response

Agree with this Recommendation (Mid Term)

Staff Response

Staff agrees with the recommendation (Long Term).

Public Policies (cont.)

Land Use and Development Standards

PP-4

Designate a Historic Gullah Neighborhoods Conservation Overlay District for all delineated historic Gullah neighborhoods that can serve as the vehicle for many of this report's recommendations.

Gullah Geechee Task Force/Planning Commission Response

Staff needs to test design standards to see what could be achieved on Gullah properties (Mid Term).

Staff Response

Staff could consider creating a Historic Gullah Neighborhoods Conservation Overlay District to address the issues in the LMO that impact properties in terms of zoning, buffers, setbacks, and density requirements. These improvements *may or may not* include:

1. Prior to establishing the overlay district, and where possible, rezone the properties in the Gullah Geechee Historic Districts from RM-4 to RM-8 in order to raise the allowable density requirements. Currently the LMO requires that RM-4 zoning allows four dwelling units (DU) per net acre (6 DU are allowed for lots that are at least 3 acres and 8 DU if the lot area is at least 5 acres). RM-8 zoning allows 8 units per acre. Rezoning the properties to where higher densities are allowed addresses the need to place multiple homes on smaller lots, which is a characteristic of single family neighborhoods in the historic communities.
2. Reducing buffers and setbacks 20 to 10 feet may be considered on internal roads within small subdivisions.
3. Establishing open space is not a requirement for small subdivisions, however increasing the allowable impervious surfaces may be taken under consideration in the proposed overlay district.
4. Height of the structures may compensate for lack of allowable width on the small lots, however height may not exceed 45 ft., which is allowable in RM-8, Marshfront (MF), and Stoney (S) historic districts.

As a public benefit, applicants who wish to develop within the proposed Historic Gullah Neighborhoods Conservation Overlay District would be encouraged to donate to the Town easements or ROW in order to provide adequate infrastructure to serve development in the area (Long Term).

Public Policies (cont.)

PP-5

Add Family Compound provisions to LMO to be applied to the proposed Historic Gullah Neighborhoods Conservation Overlay District to avoid triggering the full range of LMO requirements and fees for small-scaled family, “paper subdivisions.”

Gullah Geechee Task Force/Planning Commission Response

Agree. Additional opportunities are as follows:

1. To add flexibility, create a waiver from design standards similar to what exists for nonconformities.
2. Increase the number of lots permitted before a major subdivision is required. This would take away infrastructure and open space requirements. Look at a possibility of a sliding scale.

(Mid Term)

Staff Response

Staff may consider adding a Family Compound provisions to the LMO with the following requirements:

1. The property has been owned by a single family for no less than 50 years.
2. Family is defined as spouse; parent(s) and their child(ren); a group of persons related by blood; a group descended from a common ancestor, as in extended family. Persons dwelling in the family compound as defined by proposed compound standards must be related to the property owner by blood, marriage, or adoption.
3. The property can be subdivided without infrastructure with the condition that there is an easement to access the property.
4. The property may be sold or leased to someone within the family.
5. The property cannot be sold or leased for 5 years to someone outside of the family after being established as a family compound.
6. After 5 years, if the property is sold to someone outside of the family, it is the responsibly of the family selling the property to upgrade the infrastructure to meet LMO requirements.

(Mid Term)

Public Policies (cont.)

PP-6

Provide greater flexibility for required road ROWs and drainage easements within the proposed Historic Gullah Neighborhoods Conversation Overlay District to make the development of some properties more viable.

Gullah Geechee Task Force/Planning Commission Response

Agree in part. There is no negative impact from drainage easements so they should not be included in this recommendation. Right-of-way takes away land and density in already developed areas (ex. Where dirt exists). Recommend Town Council support changing the LMO to not take away density when property for a right-of-way (ROW) is donated to the Town
(Mid Term).

Staff Response

Currently, the LMO defines a small lot division as having from two to five homes and only requires an access easement. The placement of an additional home on lots that already have five homes requires the owner to upgrade the easement to at least a 40-foot right-of-way, accommodating buffers and setbacks. In addition to the expense, property owners are concerned that establishing a ROW will impact the allowable density for the property negating the ability to place an additional home. The Community Development Department is currently in the process of amending the requirements, which specify that lot density will be not be impacted when a ROW is required to place additional homes as a stipulation in the Dirt Road Paving Program (Mid Term).

PP-7

Adopt Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) to be applied to the proposed Historic Gullah Neighborhoods Conservation Overlay District to avoid too much development in Gullah neighborhoods, while allowing land owners to benefit financially from their development potential.

Gullah Geechee Task Force/Planning Commission Response

Agree with this recommendation (Long Term)

Staff Response

Further research by staff is required to assess how transferring the development rights of property will ultimately impact the property owner, as well as impact the development of the Island overall. Additional legal council may be involved in the implementation of this recommendation (Long Term).

Public Policies (cont.)

PP-8

Utilize a program to purchase development rights from willing property owners within the proposed Historic Gullah Neighborhoods Conservation Overlay District to preserve ownership of land in historic Gullah neighborhoods, while allowing land owners to benefit financially from their development potential.

Gullah Geechee Task Force/Planning Commission Response

Agree. Families will not lose their land and they will receive funding for density sold; however, they will lose that density for future development potential (Mid Term).

Staff Response

Further research by staff is required to assess how selling the development rights of property will ultimately impact the property owner, as well as impact the development of the Island overall. Additional legal council may be involved in the implementation of this recommendation (Long Term).

PP-9

Amend the Town’s Design Guide, as applied to portions of the Corridor Overlay District that are within the proposed Historic Gullah Neighborhoods Conservation Overlay District, to better reflect the design tradition of the Gullah culture.

Gullah Geechee Task Force/Planning Commission Response

Agree with this recommendation (Mid Term)

Staff Response

In preserving the historic characteristics of Hilton Head Island, staff recommends pre-approved design guidelines within the proposed Historic Gullah Geechee Neighborhoods Overlay District that addresses authentic materials, colors, and other details that are characteristics of Gullah Geechee culture to be determined and addressed in the Town of Hilton Head Island Design Guide. These historic designs also should be determined and included as a part of the Town LMO requirements (Mid Term).

PP-10

Explore the potential to base property values for tax assessment purposes in historic Gullah neighborhoods on the land’s current use rather than market value to reduce the tax burden and enhance the ability of owners to retain their property.

Gullah Geechee Task Force/Planning Commission Response

Agree with this recommendation (Long Term).

Staff Response

Staff would defer to this recommendation to the Beaufort County Tax Assessor (Long Term).

Public Policies (cont.)

PP-11

Establish a fund to help property owners avoid losing their property to delinquent tax sales as a way to protect Gullah land ownership on Hilton Head Island.

Gullah Geechee Task Force/Planning Commission Response

Agree with this recommendation. NIBCAA is needed on the island and they can partner with Community Foundation of the Low Country (CFL) to create this fund. The HNPA should assist with providing information and communication (Short Term).

Staff Response

Staff agrees with this recommendation. In addition, the HNPA can work with NIBCAA to assist with implementation (Short Term).

Other Issues

PP-12

Establish a program to educate Gullah residents and others on a wide range of policy issues that impact their lives, including property taxation, land use and development, and heirs property so they can prosper more socially and financially.

Gullah Geechee Task Force/Planning Commission Response

Agree with this recommendation. Continue the current program and expand as needed (Short Term).

Staff Response

Staff agrees with this recommendation (Short Term).

PP-13

Ensure that local financial institutions are meeting the requirements of the federal Community Reinvestment Act (CRA) to make loans for economically challenged people and properties to provide greater financial opportunities within the proposed Historic Gullah Neighborhoods Conservation Overlay District

Gullah Geechee Task Force/Planning Commission Response

Agree with this recommendation (Long Term).

Staff Response

Staff refers this recommendation to NIBCAA (Long Term).

Public Policies (cont.)

PP-14

Establish a program providing temporary and seasonal signs that are compliant with Town regulations to be used within the proposed Historic Gullah Neighborhoods Conservation Overlay District to expand economic opportunities for Gullah residents and businesses.

Gullah Geechee Task Force/Planning Commission Response

Agree with this recommendation (Mid Term)

Staff Response

Staff recommends developing temporary wooden seasonal signs that are in compliance with the Town sign ordinance. The signs will be stored and distributed to Gullah businesses from the NIBCAA offices. Staff will also be responsible for processing temporary sign applications for prospective Gullah businesses (Mid Term).

Heirs' Property

HP-1

Utilize the Heritage Library Foundation as a potential first step for Gullah families towards clearing title to their property to overcome heirs' property issues.

Gullah Geechee Task Force/Planning Commission Response

Agree with a change in wording: Utilize the Heritage Library Foundation as a potential resource for Gullah families toward clearing title to their property to overcome heirs' property issues (Short Term).

Staff Response

Staff agrees with utilizing the Heritage Library Foundation as a resource to clear title to property. Staff recommends researching additional sources for information and assistance. The HPNA will assist in coordinating this process (Short Term).

HP-2

Leverage a range of local, state, and national organizations involved with addressing heirs' property issues to maximize the Island's potential to address the issue.

Gullah Geechee Task Force/Planning Commission Response

Agree with this recommendation (Mid Term).

Staff Response

Staff agrees with this recommendation (Mid Term).

Heirs' Property (Cont.)

HP-3

Encourage the Center for Heirs Property Preservation (CHPP) to open a satellite office in Beaufort County to make their resources more readily available to Hilton Head Island's Gullah community.

Gullah Geechee Task Force/Planning Commission Response

Agree with this recommendation (Short Term)

Staff Response

The Center for Heirs' Property Preservation (CHPP) is a non-profit organization based in Charleston, SC that serves Allendale, Bamberg, Beaufort, Berkley, Charleston, Clarendon, Colleton, Dorchester, Hampton, Georgetown, Jasper, Orangeburg, Sumter, and Williamsburg counties. For property owners who do not exceed the lower income requirements, the organization will conduct land title searches, prepare necessary legal documents, schedule land surveys, request legal hearings, and represent land owners in court. Once a month, CHPP sends staff to Beaufort to work with property owners that meet their lower income requirements.

Staff can assist with enabling land owners with heirs' property that meet the income requirements to obtain information and assistance from the CHPP staff in Beaufort (Short Term).

Staff recommends creating an heirs' property resource center locally to be convenient to property owners who are unable to make the trip to Beaufort and as a way to also assist property owners of all income brackets (Long Term).

HP-4

Task Force Recommendations/Planning Commission Approval²

The Task Force recommends that NIBCAA work with the CFL to set up a fund to help pay for the cost of clearing title to heirs' property (Short Term).

Staff Response

Staff agrees with this recommendation (Mid Term).

² HP-4 is a recommendation directly from the Gullah Geechee Land and Cultural Preservation Task Force. Short Term (Up to 1 Year); Mid Term (1-2 Years); Long Term (2+ Years)