

Gullah-Geechee Land and Cultural Preservation Task Force
Meeting Minutes

January 8, 2018 - 1:00 PM
Council Chambers – Town Hall

Task Force Members present: Lavon Stevens (Chairman), Martha Davis, Ibrahim Abdul-Malik, Joyce Wright, Shani Green, Caroline McVitty, Palmer Simmons, Teresa White (by phone)

Town Council Members present: Tom Lennox

Community Development Staff present: Jayme Lopko, Charles Cousins

- Chairman Stevens called the meeting to order at 1:04 PM.
- The agenda for today's meeting and the minutes from the December 11, 2017 meeting were accepted by general consent.
- Chairman Stevens introduced Maria Walls, the Beaufort County Treasurer. Ms. Walls went over the definition of heirs property, the timeline for property tax notification, delinquency, and tax sale, and common misconceptions about the tax sale. The Task Force and Ms. Walls discussed the process for bidding at a tax sale, the process for redeeming a property sold at the tax sale, and the property tax payment installment plan.
- Chairman Stevens opened the meeting for public comment and the following were received: what is the forfeited land commission and what happens to property they own, does the tax sale take away covenants and restrictions, does a tax sale clear title to the property, and State statute allows for a portion of the property to be sold to pay taxes – can that be done here.
- In response to public comments, Ms. Walls discussed the forfeited land commission and what it does with land that comes under their ownership. Ms. Walls stated that tax sales do not take away covenants and restrictions nor does it clear title to the property. Ms. Walls also stated that although there is a statute that allows for the sale of a portion of a property to pay the taxes, there is no record it being done in the County and would be a complicated process.
- Jayme Lopko updated the Task Force on discussions with the Center for Heirs Property Preservation regarding a seminar or clinic on the Island as part of the Gullah Celebration. Ms. Lopko will continue discussions with the Center and provide another update at the next meeting.
- Chairman Stevens adjourned the meeting at 2:50 PM.

Submitted by: Jayme Lopko
Meeting date: January 8, 2018
Approved: January 22, 2018