

Gullah-Geechee Land and Cultural Preservation Task Force
Meeting Minutes
October 1, 2018 – 1:00 PM
Council Chambers – Town Hall

Task Force Members present: Lavon Stevens, Shani Green, Joyce Wright, Martha Davis, Caroline McVitty

Town Council present: David Bennett

Town Staff present: Jayme Lopko, Jennifer Ray, Carolyn Grant, Shawn Colin, Angie Stone, Josh Gruber

- Chairman Stevens called the meeting to order at 1:04 PM.
- The agenda for today's meeting and the minutes from the August 20, 2018 meeting were approved by consent.
- Joyce Wright gave an update on the Gullah Resource Center. A draft of the proposed content of the Gullah Resource webpage was sent via email to the Task Force. Task Force members were asked to review this information and provide any changes/additions to Joyce or Carolyn Grant.
- There is no update on the heirs' property identification. The Task Force discussed a timeline for completing this.
- Jayme Lopko updated the Task Force on the progress of the Gullah-Geechee Culture Preservation Project and discussed the recent visit from The Walker Collaborative team. The Task Force and the public discussed and commented on the following topics from the first visit of the consultant team: scope of the project, resolution of old issues/history, implementing some of what has already been recommended, cannot have culture without land, heirs' property resolution is limited and labor intensive – legal issues, getting feedback from consultant team on key issues based on what they heard, community trust issue, Task Force helping gather information for case studies one-on one, heirs' property identification important and should set a goal of getting one neighborhood done before consultant returns, communication of what Task Force is doing important, some may not have understood their role in stakeholder meetings, time of stakeholder meetings may have impacted ability to participate, implementation concerns – how will this be different, US 278 widening impact on Stoney community – how much is enough, consultant team did not show an understanding of heirs property – seemed unprepared, Gullah culture existed before the Town and the Town infringed on that with rules – this needs to be studied and understood, Town provided a list of materials for the consultant, property taxes go up based on development – need to communicate ways to assist community with taxes, need clear communication with the community and what to expect at the end game, consultant should study the history of the Island all the way back to was to understand how we got here, and no landscape medians in US 278 in Stoney and Chaplin – Gullah continue to be overlooked.
- Angie Stone, the Town's Human Resources Director, updated the Task Force on the Gullah Liaison Job Description. Ms. Stone gave a brief history of how the position came to be and how the job description has evolved. After discussion on the timeline for filling the position, Chairman Stevens asked for a motion from the Task Force. Caroline McVitty made a motion that as a Task Force we support the position now titled Historic Neighborhoods Preservation Administrator, which would allow staff to move forward to advertise the position to fill it. Martha Davis seconded the motion and the motion passed by a vote of 4-1-0.
- Chairman Stevens opened the meeting for public comment on items unrelated to today's agenda and the following was received:

- Shani Green commented that she is excited about the Historic Gullah Neighborhoods signs going up around the island.
- Chairman Stevens adjourned the meeting at 2:41 PM.

Submitted by: Jayme Lopko
Meeting date: October 1, 2018
Approved: November 5, 2018