

**Gullah-Geechee Land and Cultural Preservation Task Force**  
**Meeting Minutes**

November 16, 2018 – 1:00 PM  
Council Chambers – Town Hall

Task Force Members present: Lavon Stevens, Shani Green, Joyce Wright, Caroline McVitty, Theresa White

Town Council present: None

Town Staff present: Jennifer Ray, Carolyn Grant, Shawn Colin, Charles Cousins

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- Chairman Stevens called the meeting to order at 1:05 PM.
- The agenda for today's meeting was approved by consent.
- Chairman Stevens gave opening remarks on the purpose of the meeting and then turned things over to Phil Walker of The Walker Collaborative. Mr. Walker discussed items that have been accomplished, conceptual strategies to address concerns, and the schedule of this project moving forward.
- Following his presentation, the Task Force members were given an opportunity to comment on the conceptual strategies presented and the following were received: other organizations promote Gullah businesses year round but are not well known (Black Chamber), property taxes area a County-wide issue, community re-investment act – is there more they can do?, Mitchelville is on the National Register, Section 106 review may not save historic resources, transfer of development rights (TDR) may be tough on the island other than through a PD-2, we need to be careful to not isolate Gullah culture – we should partner with other organizations and help the culture survive, cemetery access should be addressed especially for cemeteries within gated communities, suggest a field or satellite office closer to the island for the Center for Heirs Property, another visit with Victoria Smalls here would be helpful, and the 278 expansion needs to be reviewed for the potential loss of Gullah lands.
- Chairman Stevens opened the meeting for public comment and the following were received: cultural preservation - we need more to promote Gullah culture, we made several mistakes along the way – Gullah businesses could have promoted but have now gone away, we are at a point where we are trying to go back and fix things and that is difficult, the Chamber's role is not just promotion – Hilton Head has resources and programming - Black Chamber has programming but not resources – those two should work together, authenticity of culture particularly with food – USCB hospitality campus could play a role, public policy – TDR something we need to consider, property tax delinquency is a hardship – Town/County should lobby at state level but can get local help as well similar to Community Foundation's SAFE Program (grants), addressing heirs property is a need not a want, deeding property to family important – process needs to be simplified and regulations/implications should not be a deterrent, LLC can be a useful tool but not unless you have cleared up heirs property issues, and business may not be seen off highway – without a sign people may not know they are there.
- Chairman Stevens adjourned the meeting at 2:39 PM.

Submitted by: Jayme Lopko  
Meeting date: November 16, 2018  
Approved: December 17, 2018