



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

Approved: November 4, 2019