



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

August 26, 2019 at 1:00 pm
Benjamin M. Racusin Council Chambers

MEETING MINUTES

Present From the Committee: Lavon Stevens, Martha Davis, Shani Green, Caroline McVitty, Todd Theodore, Joyce Wright

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

Town Council Members Present: David Ames

1. Call to Order

Chairman Stevens called the meeting to order at 1:02 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 July 15, 2019 meeting were approved by consent.

4. Unfinished Business - none

5. New Business

Chairman Stevens made comments concerning the presentation of the Gullah Geechee Preservation Report Recommendations at the Public Planning Committee held on August 19th. Chairman Stevens congratulated the Task Force on their hard work throughout the process, as well as extended appreciation to the Public Planning Committee and members of the public.

Pete Nardi, General Manager for Hilton Head Public Service District gave a presentation to educate the Task Force on the partnership between PSD and the fire department concerning adequate fire hydrant placement for the areas that lacked. Mr. Nardi ensured fire protection is present for all structures on Hilton Head and efforts for placement will be focused on areas that lack coverage. New developments are required to be within 1000 feet proximity to a fire hydrant and there are options to finance the cost if a hydrant is needed. PSD and the fire department are also working to create access to properties that may be close to hydrants, but the access is blocked. A map displayed showed that most of the parcels on Hilton Head are within 500 feet of a fire hydrant.

Sheryse DuBose explained that the Public Planning Committee has instructed the Task Force and staff to identify which recommendations from the Gullah Geechee Preservation Report are

the priorities prior to the Town Council meeting on September 17th. The Task Force agreed that PP-4, establishing the Historic Gullah Conservation Overlay District should be one of the top priorities although it is listed as a long term project. Jayme Lopko explained that in testing LMO design standards on different shaped parcels typically found in the Historic districts, it was still difficult to max out the density by reducing buffers and setbacks. Other challenges faced with increasing the allowable density on these parcels is the increase in impervious surfaces. Jayme Lopko further explained that once the Report recommendations are passed by Town Council, staff would test design standards on all shaped parcels before committing to any proposed LMO changes. Jennifer Ray stated that the Task Force should decide on which recommendations should be top priority prior to the deadline to complete the agenda packet for the Town Council. The Task Force agreed to individually submit to staff their ideas of which should be top priority to be compiled into a document for Town Council. Morris Campbell agreed that establishing the Historic overlay district should be top priority. Joyce Wright discussed identifying different resources to assist with the proposed projects. Sheryse DuBose explained that some of the challenges facing the Gullah Geechee community on Hilton Head related to property use issues.

Chairman Stevens stated that property owners who are delinquent with paying their taxes need to be identified in order to be assisted before the October 1st deadline. The delinquent tax list was distributed among the Task Force members for their use only to inform those listed owners that taxes are due. Jayme Lopko explained that the efforts from the previous year to inform families of their delinquent taxes served to reduce the amount owed in taxes from \$220,000 to \$8,000, as well as reduce the number of properties going to tax sale. Jayme Lopko stated that anyone can check online to confirm that taxes on a property have been paid.

6. Appearance by Citizens on Items Unrelated to Today's Agenda

Tom Barnwell congratulated the Task Force on helping property owners save their properties and for their work on the Report recommendations.

7. Staff Report

Sheryse DuBose stated that the Task Force needs think about education topics to present to the public. Jayme Lopko made the Task Force aware that organizations such as the Center for Heirs' Property takes a couple of months to set up, particularly in time for the Gullah Celebration in February. Joyce Wright stated that schools and teachers should be educated on the Task Force.

Pete Nardi offered PSD as source of outreach to the Gullah Geechee community on Hilton Head.

8. Adjournment

Chairman Stevens adjourned the meeting at 2:35 PM.

Submitted by: Sheryse DuBose

Meeting Date: August 26, 2019

Approved: September 16, 2019