



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

Benjamin M. Racusin Council Chambers  
**August 2, 2021, 9:00 a.m.**

**Present from the Task Force:** Chairman Lavon Stevens, Vice Chairman Palmer E. Simmons, Ibrahim Abdul-Malik, Martha Davis, Shani Green, Theresa White, John Campbell, Tom Henz

**Absent from the Task Force:** Mark O'Neil

**Present from Town Council:** Alex Brown

**Present from Town Staff:** Marc Orlando, Town Manager; Brad Tadlock, Fire Chief; Joheida Fister, Deputy Fire Chief-Administration/Fire Marshal; Jennifer Ray, Capital Program Manager; Sheryse DuBose, Historic Neighborhoods Preservation Administrator; Diane Busch, Staff Attorney; Carolyn Grant, Communications Director

**1. Call to Order**

Chairman Stevens called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m.

- 2. FOIA Compliance** - Public notification of this meeting has been published, posted, and distributed in compliance with the South Carolina Freedom of Information Act and the requirements of the Town of Hilton Head Island.
- 3. Roll Call** – See as noted above.

**4. Approval of Agenda**

Chairman Stevens asked for a motion to approve the agenda as presented. Mr. Abdul-Malik moved to approve. Mr. Simmons seconded. By way of roll call, the motion passed by a vote of 8-0-0.

**5. Approval of Minutes**

**a. Meetings of May 3, 2021 and July 6, 2021**

Chairman Stevens asked for a motion to approve the minutes of the May 3, 2021 regular meeting. Mr. Abdul-Malik moved to approve. Mr. Campbell seconded. By show of hands, the motion passed by a vote of 7-0-1. (Mr. Henz abstained as he was not present at the subject meeting.)

Chairman Stevens asked for a motion to approve the minutes of the July 6, 2021 regular meeting. Mr. Abdul-Malik moved to approve. Mr. Henz seconded. By show of hands, the motion passed by a vote of 8-0-0.

## **6. Election of Officers for July 1, 2021—June 30, 2022 Term**

Mr. Simmons moved to nominate Lavon Stevens as Chairman. Mr. Henz seconded. There were no additional nominations. By show of hands, the motion passed 8-0-0.

Mr. Abdul-Malik moved to nominate Palmer E. Simmons as Vice Chairman. Mr. Henz seconded. There were no additional nominations. By show of hands, the motion passed 8-0-0.

Chairman Stevens welcomed the new members of the Task Force and stated he is looking forward to working with them.

## **7. Discussion Items**

### **a. Family Compound and Family Subdivision Update**

Dr. DuBose stated that on July 20, 2021 Town Council passed the Family Compound and Family Subdivision amendments. She said that several families have been anxiously awaiting the passage of the amendments and she recapped the process that has taken place up to this point including definitions and descriptions of the Family Compound and Family Subdivision. She added the implementation of the project checks off three of the sixteen high priority projects in the Gullah Geechee Land and Cultural Preservation Task Force recommendation.

The Task Force made comments and inquiries regarding: the anticipation of moving forward with the amendments; clarification that the proposed Overlay District is at the Public Planning Committee level; clarification that any further request for reduction in buffers or setbacks would need to go to the Board of Zoning Appeals; clarification Boards or Committees of the Town have to follow the LMO; clarification that density is not increased just buildable area; clarification and availability of staff resources to assist families wanting to take advantage of the LMO amendments; the goal of preserving a culture as opposed to a specific group of people; and clarification that property can now be subdivided without the previously required infrastructure and infrastructure can be added as building takes place.

Words of gratitude were expressed by all members of the Task Force to members of the community, Town Council, Dr. DuBose and staff for their efforts in moving the amendments forward.

### **b. Addressing in Historic Neighborhoods**

Fire Chief Brad Tadlock stated that addressing issues throughout Historic Neighborhoods have been discussed. He said Staff has recognized problems in the order of addressing in some areas. He noted there are standard addressing guidelines utilized by the Town. Chief Tadlock realized the need for improvement in addressing on certain roads in the area if there are future homes added to the road. He informed the Task Force that they then worked on correcting the numbers and standardizing them to allow for additional homes at a later date. He stated that better communication will take place in the future as they work to bring a better order to the addressing within the community. Chief Tadlock added that they will engage members of the community and properties when names are

selected for roadways. He clarified addressing issues have come up throughout Hilton Head Island and not just in Historic Neighborhoods. Chairman Stevens stated the Task Force will assist in any way they can to help get through the process.

## **8. Citizen Comments**

Tai Scott spoke in support of the LMO amendments for Family Compound and Family Subdivisions and expressed concern with the buffers and setbacks based on use.

Dr. Campbell congratulated the Task Force on their work to date. He encouraged them to continue moving forward with the priorities.

Morris Campbell expressed his appreciation to the Task Force and Staff on their accomplishments noting there is more work to do regarding the Historic Overlay District and many other priorities.

Thomas Curtis Barnwell, Jr. thanked the members of Town Council, the Task Force and Staff, along with former Council Member Marc Grant and former Town Manager Steve Riley for their hard work for the benefit for all citizens of Hilton Head Island. He noted the need for education and connectivity needed for this Task Force to continue its work, along with the need for finances to accomplish future goals such as housing and other projects.

Chairman Stevens expressed his appreciation to Joyce Wright, Todd Theodore and Caroline McVitty for their services to the Task Force. He added his thanks to Jayme Lopko, Senior Planner for her efforts and assistance.

## **9. Staff Report**

Dr. DuBose informed the Task Force upcoming items for discussion and review will include the project of Gullah Geechee names being added to addressing in the Historic Neighborhoods. She asked for volunteers from the Task Force that would be willing to work with the community to establish names for Fire Rescue to work with. After discussion, it was decided Shani Green, Ibrahim Abdul-Malik, Palmer E. Simmons and John Campbell would assist in the project. Dr. DuBose stated she will reach out in the near future to prepare for the discussion with Fire Rescue.

Dr. DuBose reported seasonal and temporary signs were discussed at the June 2 and July 21 Public Planning Committee meetings as proposed LMO amendments. She stated staff is working at this time on drafting the amendments. She said she will keep the Task Force apprised as they move forward.

Dr. DuBose informed the Task Force the proposed Open Air Gullah Market is a work in progress and parties have met to discuss the business plan for the market. A proposed site plan will be presented to the Community Services and Public Safety Committee on August 23.

Dr. DuBose stated there will be a Heritage Library Genealogy Clinic Open House Media Event on Thursday, August 12, 2021 at USCB-Hilton Head Campus.

Dr. Dubose referenced her email sent to Task Force members regarding the US Department of Agriculture investing \$67 Million towards a lending program that will address heirs' property. She noted this brings national attention to the issue, particularly in this region.

Dr. Dubose stated she is expecting a new listing of delinquent taxes from Beaufort County near the end of August. She reported that as of July, sixty four property owners are on the list. She thanked all that have reached out to the owners. She added there are no properties in redemption for 2020.

Dr. Dubose recognized and congratulated Victoria Smalls, a member of the Consultant Team with the Gullah Geechee Preservation Project report who is now the Executive Director of the Gullah Geechee Culture Heritage Corridor Commission.

## **10. Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 10:38 a.m.

**Submitted by:** Vicki Pfannenschmidt, Secretary

**Approved:** September 7, 2021