



The Town of Hilton Head Island  
**Gullah Geechee Land & Cultural  
Preservation Task Force  
Meeting Minutes  
March 7, 2022, 1:00 p.m.**

**Present from the Task Force:** Chairman Lavon Stevens, Vice Chairman Palmer E. Simmons (Joined at 1:15 p.m.), Ibrahim Abdul-Malik, Tom Henz, John Campbell, Shani Green

**Absent from the Task Force:** None

**Present from Town Council:** Alex Brown, David Ames, Tamara Becker

**Present from Town Staff:** Josh Gruber, Deputy Town Manager; Sheryse DuBose, Historic Neighborhoods Preservation Administrator; Anne Cyran, Interim Comprehensive Planning Manager; Teresa Haley, Senior Administrative Assistant

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## 1. Call to Order

Chairman Stevens called the meeting to order at 1:00 p.m.

Chairman Stevens informed the Task Force that Jayme Lopko, Senior Planner for the Town will be leaving the Town for another job opportunity. He acknowledged her hard work and efforts working for the Town and the Task Force. He applauded her expertise and professionalism in working on many projects. Chairman Stevens asked that Ms. Lopko attend the next meeting of the Task Force as they would like to recognize her and thank her for her service.

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. Campbell seconded. By way of roll call, the motion passed by a vote of 5-0-0.

## 5. Approval of Minutes

### a. Meeting of January 3, 2022

Chairman Stevens asked for a motion to approve the minutes of the January 3, 2022, regular meeting. Mr. Abdul-Malik moved to approve. Mr. Henz seconded. By way of roll call, the motion passed by a vote of 5-0-0.

### b. Meeting of February 7, 2022

Chairman Stevens asked for a motion to approve the minutes of the February 7, 2022, regular meeting. Mr. Abdul-Malik moved to approve. Mr. Campbell seconded. By way of roll call, the motion passed by a vote of 5-0-0.

## **6. Citizen Comments**

Public comments concerning agenda items were submitted electronically via the Open Town Hall HHI portal. There were no comments of record. Citizens were provided the option to sign up for public comment participation during the meeting by phone. There were no requests to participate during the meeting by phone.

## **7. Discussion Items**

### **a. Historic Stoney Neighborhood Economic Development Corporation**

Mr. Josh Gruber explained that at the meeting of February 15, 2022, Town Council reviewed the possibility of creating a Historic Stoney Neighborhood Economic Development Corporation. He noted the item was identified in the Strategic Action Plan and development of the Corporation was originally earmarked for FY23. He said due to some information received and potential opportunities the item has been accelerated. He explained that a resolution was introduced and when approved would authorize staff to begin the process that is necessary to create a separate non-profit entity. Mr. Gruber stated the mission would be to assist property owners, businesses, and other people within the Stoney Neighborhood Community. He outlined the following areas of focus for the Corporation once created:

- Promotion of Cultural Resources and Protection of Cultural Assets
- Neighborhood Sustainability Quality of Life Enhancements
- Entrepreneurialism
- Business Attraction, Expansion, and Retention
- Land Planning/Development
- Assistance Providing Financial Opportunities

Mr. Gruber explained the items go beyond what would be thought of as traditional functions of an economic development corporation. He said that following the adoption of the resolution they have begun calling it a Community Development Corporation. He detailed the steps that need to be taken to complete the process and bring it back to Town Council for review and consideration of approval. He said that if it is approved, a board will be created to oversee the corporation.

Members of the Task Force and Mr. Gruber discussed the corporation at length and the following items were discussed: the benefits of the corporation for Native Islanders; the creation of new economic opportunities; expectations and goals of the organization; discussion of representatives and number of people that would make up the board; the need for professionals to be a part of the board; the need for Gullah and community representation; discussion regarding the focus of the group; the need to create a business plan for the corporation; the need for input from the community and Task Force; the need to define the by-laws; the need to identify individuals interested in the corporation; the need to build a business plan; inquiry as to the number of businesses currently in the Historic Stoney Neighborhood; the need for local individuals or those with knowledge of the culture to be on the board; the need to identify and enhance the existing businesses and assist them in thriving; clarification the initial focus will be on the Historic Stoney Neighborhood but the scope will enlarge to cover other neighborhoods as well; the need

to make the public aware of the proposed corporation; and encouragement for those that are interested or know someone that would be interested in being on the board to contact Dr. DuBose or Mr. Gruber.

Chairman Stevens thanked Mr. Gruber for the update and stated the Task Force looks forward to him returning with an update. He encouraged members of the Task Force to reach out to Dr. DuBose or Mr. Gruber if they have any additional questions or suggestions regarding membership of the proposed board.

## **8. Staff Report**

Dr. DuBose provided an update regarding the Historic Overlay District stating the work on the District will resume once the Island-Wide Capacity Trends and Assessment has been completed. She stated staff has begun meeting with the consultant to discuss aspects the study needs to address. She said the Task Force will be updated as the study progresses. Dr. DuBose added that the framework of the proposed Overlay will be reworked to address some of the needs of the property owners in Historic Neighborhoods. She stated the Historic Neighborhoods Permitting and Design Studio helps focus on immediate concerns which helps deal with challenges owners' face, with anticipation the Overlay District will address those challenges.

Dr. DuBose informed the Task Force that Links, Inc., is working with the Center for Heirs Property Preservation and there will be a drive through Wills Clinic held on March 12, 2022, at Queens Chapel AME and reviewed the details for participation.

Dr. DuBose reported on two community education programs which were held in February. She stated there was positive feedback and it was a great way to share the services that are provided by the Heritage Library Genealogy Clinic.

Dr. DuBose informed the Task Force there is an Heirs Property Forestry Seminar being held on March 29, 2022, at Oscar Frazier Park in Bluffton. She stated a flier had been distributed to the Task Force and encouraged them to distribute the information, noting the need for at least 25 participants for the event to take place.

Dr. DuBose stated that Palmetto Breeze is looking into expanding services to the airport and other areas and looking for community input. She referenced the survey distributed to the Task Force and encouraged the Task Force to complete the survey and share it with others to complete as well.

## **9. Adjournment**

The meeting adjourned at 1:46 p.m.

**Submitted by:** Vicki Pfannenschmidt, Secretary

**Approved:** June 6, 2022