



The Town of Hilton Head Island  
**Gullah Geechee Land & Cultural  
Preservation Task Force  
Meeting Minutes  
July 11, 2022, 1:00 p.m.**

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

**Absent from the Task Force:** Tom Henz (excused)

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

**Present from Town Staff:** Angie Stone, *Assistant Town Manager*; Missy Luick, *Community Planning Manager*; Carolyn Grant, *Communications Director*; Karen Knox, *Senior Administrative Assistant*

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1. **Call to Order** – Chairman Stevens called the meeting to order at 1:00 p.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** – as noted above.

4. **Approval of Agenda**

Chairman Stevens asked for a motion to approve the agenda as presented. Mr. Simmons moved to approve. Mr. Abdul-Malik seconded. The motion passed unanimously by a vote of 5-0.

5. **Approval of Minutes**

- a. Meeting of June 6, 2022

Chairman Stevens asked for a motion to approve the Minutes of June 6, 2022. Mr. Abdul-Malik moved to approve. Mr. Campbell seconded. The Minutes of June 6, 2022, were unanimously approved by a vote of 5-0.

6. **Appearance by Citizens**

Public comments concerning agenda items were to be submitted electronically via the Open Town Hall HHI portal. There were no comments of record.

Mr. John Floyd spoke with the Committee regarding Waterway Gardens Townhomes encroachment on the Talbird Cemetery in Hilton Head Plantation and the fact that the survey markers for the next seven townhomes appear to overlap the current access to the Talbird Cemetery. Mt. Calvary Church has obtained legal counsel to help protect access to this cherished, historic cemetery that is part of Hilton Head Island's past and present. Chairman Stevens stated they are aware of this issue and the Town is addressing it.

## **7. Discussion Items**

### **a. Draft Gullah History and Cultural Education Program for Town Employees and Officials – Recommendation requested.**

Missy Luick stated at last month's meeting there was discussion of adding some content into the syllabus. Economic Activities have been added within the topics of focus in the syllabus. Last month we also heard that the Task Force would like to hear the first presentation before it goes live to Town Employees and Officials which has been programmed into our implementation plan. Otherwise, the Program is the same as what was presented last month. Staff is asking the Task Force to review this and recommend its implementation. After a brief discussion, Mr. Abdul-Malik moved that the Gullah Geechee Land & Cultural Preservation Task Force recommend the Program for implementation. Mr. Simmons seconded. The motion was unanimously approved by a vote of 5-0.

### **b. Critical Path Discussion on Gullah Geechee Report 16 Top Priority Recommendations**

Missy Luick stated in your packet was a memo that identified a schedule as well as a brief outline of a Critical Path to achieve implementation of all the Top 16 Recommendations within the Gullah Geechee Task Force Report. Handed out on your desk today is an updated Critical Path Workplan. Ms. Luick highlighted that this is going to be a living document so it will be updated and reviewed with the Task Force monthly. On our website, we have a resource area for some of the items that were mentioned in the Report. We would like to add content to this section to create a list of area of resources into more robust online Resource Center where we can have a descriptive line about what each of these organizations does and how it can help achieve some of the programs and ideas within the Task Force Report. We do have significant resource information already on our website. I believe if we repackaged that into a Resource Center and can show how it is one of the tools to help implement a variety of the programs within our Critical Path for completion. In the Memorandum, we included an Implementation Schedule. Each month we will go through the Critical Path updates. Next month we will work on all the non-priority projects and find a Critical Path Implementation Plan for those projects as well. Ms. Luick reviewed with the Committee the Implementation Schedule month by month. Chairman Stevens wanted to ensure that the all the Recommendations are on the Website as a separate item, so they are easily accessed.

Mr. Simmons questioned CP-14 Establish Open-Air Gullah Market and stated there have been comments that the Town only has regulations if it is an "Open Air Market" vs. "Pop-up Shop." One Applicant got turned around when she mentioned a Pop-up Shop which is no more than an Open-Air Market. Ms. Luick stated we can look at defining Open Air Market vs. Pop-Up Shop.

Ms. Green requested clarification on the Resource Center and whether it was only online or whether there was an actual building. Ms. Luick stated there are recommendations in the Plan to explore a brick-and-mortar office for resources, but also, we want to make sure the Town is providing an online resource center as well for those who wanted to access the information online or wanted to do some initial research. There are implementation steps to explore a satellite office with the Center for Heirs Property as well as coordinate with the Heritage Library and the USCB Campus to potentially provide an office space for a physical resource center.

### **c. Update on Historic Districts Overlay District**

Missy Luick directed the Committee to Page 9 of the Critical Path Workplan which gives a detail summary of where we are in the process. We are looking at Island Wide Conditions and Trends Assessment as well as the creation of the Growth Framework and Island-wide Master Plan in the 4<sup>th</sup> Quarter of 2022. Staff is analyzing if program elements can be accommodated by amending our Base Zoning Districts instead of through an Overlay District. There was some concern from the Committee that Zoning has always been the issue, and it looks like we are moving forward and then going backwards. Ms. Luick stated as we advance where we are headed with the Overlay item and how it could potentially be achieved with Base Zoning Changes, it will be mapped out a little easier once we have something on paper and can present it. We will, of course, bring it all before the Board for your review and comments and make sure that it is advancing the goals that were in that Project Report. Chairman Stevens stated when we started talking about Historic Overlay District, we were thinking about bringing in another Consultant or Legal Assistant to help us look at what an Overlay District would look at here on the Island and in the Community to make sure that it is going to be something that will serve what our intentions were. The things that I believe we need to be careful about is that we start trying to put these things into place, making sure that it is going to have the meaning of preserving the history, culture and people being able to use their properties the way it is intended without some unscrupulous developers who might come in and take advantage of something that is an Overlay District. I am anxious to hear either from staff or some other legal minds about the pros and cons of an Overlay District. Ms. Luick stated we do need an expert in land use and planning to help us identify a path forward for these critical issues within these areas – someone who is an expert in heirs' property and the layers of development challenges that we have within our historic neighborhoods. We are going to seek outside help us navigate this implementation, whether it is an Overlay or Base Zoning Changes.

### **d. Case Study Discussion**

- Missy Luick stated Mr. John Floyd briefed the Committee regarding what is happening with Talbird Cemetery. The Town and all the relevant parties in the matter are working on a resolution to the access and the access will be greater than was originally approved in the Development Plan Review Process. It is being actively worked on and we will inform this group and body of the outcome when it comes. The Committee is very anxious to hear an update as to what the Town is doing to resolve this issue.
- Missy Luick stated this case study is a summary of a case which was shared with Chairman Stevens and a few folks on town staff. Chairman Stevens and asked that we have a Case Study Discussion at the Task Force. Ms. Luick explained that this case study example is as follows: a property owner has a parcel within the RM-4 zoning district that is just shy of .5 acres needed to add a second dwelling by .06 acres. The property owner was upset that he couldn't add a second dwelling unit to their property. He had concerns about how the Town calculates net acreage vs. gross acreage as well as our Work Force Housing Program and where it is applicable.

Ms. Luick stated this particular property is zoned RM-4. In an RM-4 district, the density is 4 dwelling units per net acre for properties that are 3 acres and under. The gross site acreage is the total size of the parcel. If there is any tidal wetland, that gets subtracted out and the net acreage is what is used to calculate density. In

this case, there were no tidal wetlands, so their parcel size was .44 acres. Staff reviewed their inquiry and informed the property owner that they needed to acquire .06 acres from an adjoining property to achieve the .5 acres of parcel size and corresponding density needed to add a second dwelling to the parcel. The property owner also indicated that they didn't think our Work Force Housing Program was applied equally throughout the Town and it seemed like most of the Work Force Housing and the Density Bonus Program are in the RM-4 areas. Ms. Luick indicated that Town Workforce Housing programs applies within the RM-4 zoned areas on properties that are 3 acres in size or larger. For properties that meet those criteria, then there are density bonuses available based on the percent of Work Force Housing within the project. The Workforce Housing program is not limited only to the RM-4 District but is allowed within our Commercial Districts as well through the commercial conversion program. Ms. Luick stated that in this particular case, the parcel itself had enough room physically for another unit, but it didn't meet the parcel size density requirement for another dwelling unit. That is hard to understand when you physically have enough room on your parcel. Chairman Stevens stated in previous discussions we talked about having more density per unit per acre. I hope that is something we can revisit and look at.

Chairman Stevens took a moment to acknowledge the presence of Council Member Tamara Becker and Alex Brown and thanked them for attending.

## **8. Staff Report**

### **a. Mid-Island Redevelopment District Update**

Missy Luick stated this update will be moved to the August Meeting and MKSK will be here in September.

### **b. Historic Neighborhood Design Studio Report**

Missy Luick stated they have provided services to 36 residents since the program was incepted, 18 completed cases, 2 were withdrawn, 11 are waiting on an Applicant, 3 are waiting on Town CIP Program Implementation, 2 are currently actively under review – Design Studio Concept Drawings are being worked on. There are a variety of reasons we might be waiting on an Applicant. Sometimes it is to get further information or direction, what kind of home type they want, what kind of home footprint for the Concept Drawing. Some are working on getting a Survey. Ms. Luick reviewed the issues addressed or issues we discussed within these Design Studios. They are the same range of issues we talked about last month. We continue to work through both having Design Studios for applicants within Historic Neighborhoods, but also, we have meetings every other week among staff to advance the projects within the Historic Neighborhoods and we talk about these issues and work on creative solutions to move projects toward completion.

Chairman Stevens stated there are a lot of common themes even in this Design Studio Report when it comes to discussion about density and some of the challenges we are having with landscaping, etc.

Chairman Stevens submitted and read a Memorandum to Town Council regarding LMO Changes and asked that Staff forward it on to Town Council.

### **c. Home Safety and Repair Program Update**

**d. Sewer Connection Program Update**

Missy Luick stated both the Home Safety and Repair Program and the Sewer Connection Program were launched last week. We have significant interest in the Home Safety and Repair Program. The Applicants for the Sewer Connect Program first come through Deep Well. If they do not meet the qualifications or are partially funded through Deep Well for a sewer connection, then they are going to be referred to the Town for an Application with the Sewer Connect Program. The Sewer Connection Program is a two-year program and applicants who either own or rent their home and meet the income qualifications for the Program can apply for assistance in installing a sewer connection. The Home Safety and Repair Program is also a two-year program, and it includes improvements to a home to keep a home safe and dry, hazardous tree removal, and demolitions of an unsafe structure. There is a limit of \$15,000 per applicant for the program. Staff looks forward to updating you on all of these projects as they advance through completion and hopefully, we will make a remarkable impact in the Community with both Programs.

**9. Adjournment**

The meeting adjourned at 2:17 p.m.

**Submitted by:** Karen Knox, Secretary

**Approved:** September 12, 2022