



Town of Hilton Head Island
**COMMUNITY SERVICES AND PUBLIC
SAFETY COMMITTEE MEETING**
Tuesday, August 16, 2022, 11:30 AM
AGENDA

The Community Services and Public Safety Committee special meeting will be held in-person at Town Hall in the Benjamin M. Racusin Council Chambers. The meeting can be viewed on the [Town's Public Meetings Facebook Page](#), the [Beaufort County Channel](#) and Spectrum Channel 1304.

1. **Call to Order**
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**
4. **Appearance by Citizens** Citizens who wish to address the Committee may do so by contacting the Town Clerk at 843.341.4701, no later than 4:30 p.m., Monday, August 15, 2022. Citizens may submit comments on the agenda items via the eComment portal at [Community Services and Public Safety Committee Meeting](#)
5. **Committee Business**
 - a. [Consideration of a Resolution of the Town of Hilton Head Island Authorizing the Implementation of the Gullah History and Cultural Education Program for Town Employees and Officials](#)
6. **Adjournment**

Please note, a quorum of Town Council may result if four (4) or more of their members attend this meeting.



TOWN OF HILTON HEAD ISLAND

Memo

TO: Community Services & Public Safety Committee
FROM: Missy Luick, *Community Planning Manager*
CC: Lavon Stevens, Chair, *Gullah-Geechee Land & Cultural Preservation Task Force*
VIA: Shawn Colin, AICP, *Assistant Town Manager – Community Development*
DATE: August 11, 2022
SUBJECT: Gullah History and Cultural Education Program for Town Employees and Officials

Recommendation: That the Community Services and Public Safety Committee recommend Town Council approval via Resolution of the Gullah Geechee Land and Cultural Preservation Report Recommendation CP-7, “To establish a program to educate Town officials, area schoolteachers, and others on Gullah culture so that they can better understand the culture and more effectively interact with the Island’s Gullah Citizens”.

Summary: Staff has drafted a program to provide Town employees and officials with an understanding of Hilton Head Island’s Gullah history and culture. The program will consist of an hour-long orientation program and quarterly events and presentations for ongoing education and enrichment. The program was reviewed and recommended for implementation by the Gullah-Geechee Land & Cultural Preservation Task Force on July 11, 2022. The Task Force requested that the education program be first presented to the Gullah-Geechee Land & Cultural Preservation Task Force prior to implementation to Town employees and officials which will be incorporated into program roll out.

If Town Council approves the program, staff will implement the program with initial events targeted for the fourth quarter of 2022.

Background: In 2019, Town Council approved 16 Top Priority Projects from the *Gullah Geechee Preservation Project Report* that were identified by the Gullah Geechee Land & Cultural Preservation Task Force. This program aligns with Recommendation CP-7, “To establish a program to educate Town officials, area schoolteachers, and others on Gullah culture so that they can better understand the culture and more effectively interact with the Island’s Gullah Citizens.”

Attachment:

- A. Gullah History and Cultural Education Program for Town Staff and Officials
 - B. Resolution
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TOWN OF HILTON HEAD ISLAND

Gullah History and Cultural Education Program

For Town Employees and Officials

Program Purpose and Description

The purpose of this program is to provide Town of Hilton Head Island employees and officials with an understanding of Hilton Head Island's Gullah history and culture to establish effective communication and service.

The program will consist of an hour-long orientation program, and quarterly events and presentations for ongoing education and enrichment. This program aligns with recommendation CP-7 of the Gullah Geechee Culture Preservation Project Report, which is to, "Establish a program to educate Town officials, area schoolteachers, and others on Gullah culture so that they can better understand the culture and more effectively interact with the Island's Gullah citizens."

Gullah History and Culture Orientation Program

Target Start: 4th Quarter 2022

This introductory program will focus on Gullah history, culture, land use challenges, and policy amendments for Gullah landowners. The program contents will be developed with assistance from community historians Dr. Emory Campbell and Dr. Louise Cohen, as recommended by the Gullah Task Force. The presentation will include audiovisual and interactive elements to engage the audience. Program participants will receive a list of recommended resources for further information.

The one-hour program will be presented quarterly by the Historic Neighborhoods Preservation Administrator. As the program is refined, staff will create a video of the presentation, which will be available to those who cannot attend in person.

Topics of Focus

- Settlement of Gullah People on Hilton Head Island
Participants will learn about the importance of comparing United States coastal area with West African geography, specific skills of West Africans that led to a thriving South Carolina economy, the Gullah Heritage Corridor, and the Freedmen Settlement of Mitchelville.
- Economic Activities
Participants will learn about past and present Gullah economic activities and economic contributions to the region. Past activities such as fishing, shrimping, quilting, agriculture, and current activities such as operating local businesses are some of the economic activities that will be discussed and celebrated.



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Gullah History and Cultural Education Program

For Town Employees and Officials

- Gullah Culture
Participants will learn about the Gullah cultural connection with the land. Cultural topics that are still celebrated include language, music, spiritual ties, arts and crafts, and local delicacies.
- Settlement into Fourteen Historic Communities on Hilton Head Island
Participants will learn how overall Gullah-owned land was acquired, where the Native Islanders settled on Hilton Head Island and the unique aspects of each neighborhood, small businesses established for economic-sustainability, the challenges to retaining Gullah-owned property, and the remaining acreage of Gullah-owned property on Hilton Head Island.
- Challenges to Native Island Land Retention and Sustainability
Participants will learn about the construction of the bridge in 1956, impacts to Gullah property owners with the incorporation of the Town of Hilton Head Island, the influx of development, establishment of a limited-services government, and the loss of Native Island properties.
- Proposed Public Policy Initiatives for Historic Neighborhoods
Participants will learn about the Gullah Geechee Land & Cultural Preservation Task Force, the Gullah Geechee Culture Preservation Project Report, and the Gullah Preservation Initiatives for property protection and cultural preservation. Participants will learn about the policies that have been implemented and their efficacy in resolving challenges that impact the Gullah Community. Policy initiatives include establishing Family Compound and Family Subdivision development options, creating the Family Heritage Research Project, establishing a community education program for Gullah residents, establishing addressing change notification protocol for properties in the Historic Neighborhoods, and establishing connections with other resources that aid the Gullah community.

Ongoing Education and Enrichment Events

Target Start: 4th Quarter 2022

A tour or presentation will be offered at least once a quarter. These events will be scheduled and promoted well in advance to allow as much participation as possible. Presentations will be recorded for those unable to attend in person. Staff will develop additional opportunities such as seasonal or special events and to address emerging topics such as changes to the Land Management Ordinance.



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Gullah History and Cultural Education Program

For Town Employees and Officials

Proposed Tours and Presentations

- Explore Mitchelville
Participants will tour the Historic Mitchelville Freedom Park and learn about the First Settlement for Freedmen in the United States.

- Visit the Gullah Museum
Participants will tour the Gullah Museum and attend a lecture by Dr. Louise Cohen, Historian and Gullah Museum founder, on being raised in the Gullah culture on Hilton Head Island.

- Take a Gullah Heritage Mobile Tour
Participants will attend the Gullah Heritage mobile tour and learn about the history and culture of Gullah people on Hilton Head Island, Gullah Families, Gullah neighborhoods, and historical areas such as the one-room schoolhouse and the first Freedman's Village.

RESOLUTION 2022-_____

A RESOLUTION OF THE TOWN COUNCIL OF THE TOWN OF HILTON HEAD ISLAND, SOUTH CAROLINA, AUTHORIZING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE GULLAH HISTORY AND CULTURAL EDUCATION PROGRAM FOR TOWN EMPLOYEES AND OFFICIALS.

WHEREAS, in September 2019, the Town Council accepted the Gullah Geechee Culture Preservation Project Report, which included 35 recommendations, and the Gullah Task Force’s two additional recommendations; and

WHEREAS, in November 2019, Town Council voted to accept the framework for 16 Top Priority Recommendations; and

WHEREAS, one of the 16 Top Priority Recommendations included a project to educate Town officials and employees (CP-7) which was described as establishment of a program to educate Town officials and employees on Gullah culture so they can better understand the culture and more effectively interact with the Island’s Gullah citizens; and

WHEREAS, the purpose the education program is to improve the relationship between Town staff and public officials and the Gullah Community based on a mutual understanding of the Gullah culture and perspective; and

WHEREAS, the program consists of an initial orientation training with ongoing educational opportunities and enrichment events. The initial orientation training focuses on the settlement of Gullah people, Gullah culture, the settlement of the 14 Historic Neighborhoods, challenges to Native Island land retention and sustainability, and public policy initiatives for Historic Neighborhoods; and

WHEREAS, this program aligns with Our Plan Inclusive Tactic 2.4.1 to establish a program to help better educate Town officials and staff on Gullah culture so they can better understand the culture and more effectively interact with the Island’s Gullah citizens per the Town’s Gullah Geechee Culture Preservation Project Report; and

WHEREAS, on July 11, 2022, the Gullah Geechee Land & Cultural Preservation Task Force reviewed the Gullah History and Cultural Education Program for Town Employees and Officials and recommended it for implementation; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT, AND HEREBY IT IS, RESOLVED BY THE TOWN COUNCIL FOR THE TOWN OF HILTON HEAD ISLAND, SOUTH CAROLINA:

1. The Mayor and Town Manager are hereby authorized to take such steps as may be necessary to implement the Gullah History and Cultural Education Program for Town Employees and Officials.

**MOVED, APPROVED, AND ADOPTED BY THE COUNCIL FOR THE TOWN OF
HILTON HEAD ISLAND ON THIS _____ DAY OF _____, 2022.**

THE TOWN OF HILTON HEAD ISLAND,
SOUTH CAROLINA

John J. McCann, Mayor

ATTEST:

Krista M. Wiedmeyer, Town Clerk

APPROVED AS TO FORM:

Curtis L. Coltrane, Town Attorney

Introduced by Council Member: _____