



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

AGENDA

This meeting is being conducted virtually and can be viewed via the [Town of Hilton Head Island Public Meetings Facebook Page](#). A Facebook account is not required to access the meeting livestream.

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. Approval of Agenda

5. Approval of Minutes

a. Meeting of January 3, 2022

6. Citizen Comments

Citizens who wish to address the Task Force concerning items on the agenda may do so by contacting the Task Force Secretary at 843-341-4691 no later than 12:00 p.m. the day of the meeting. Citizens may also submit written comments via the [Town's Open Town Hall Portal](#). The portal will close at 12:00 p.m. the day of the meeting. Comments submitted through the portal will be provided to the Task Force and made part of the official record.

7. Discussion Items

a. Update of the Gullah Geechee Cultural Preservation Report Top 16 Priority Projects

b. Stormwater Management

8. Staff Report

9. Adjournment

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

Please note that a quorum of the Planning Commission may result if five (5) or more of their members attend this meeting.



The Town of Hilton Head Island
**Gullah Geechee Land & Cultural
Preservation Task Force
Meeting Minutes
January 3, 2022, 1:00 p.m.**

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

Absent from the Task Force: Shani Green

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

Present from Town Staff: Chris Yates, Interim Community Development Director; Sheryse DuBose, Historic Neighborhoods Preservation Administrator; Anne Cyran, Interim Comprehensive Planning Manager; Brad Tadlock, Fire Chief; Joheida Fister, Deputy Fire Chief – Administration/Fire Marshal; Becky Neugent, E911 Communications Manager; Teresa Haley, Senior Administrative Assistant; Vicki Pfannenschmidt, Temporary Administrative Assistant

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 – 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 December 6, 2021

Chairman Stevens asked for a motion to approve the minutes of the December 6, 2021, regular meeting. Mr. Abdul-Malik moved to approve with additions. He requested that his inquiry and Staff response regarding the overlay district during the Staff Report be added to the minutes. Mr. Abdul-Malik also requested that going forward a monthly update regarding the Historic Overlay District be provided to the Task Force. Vice Chairman Simmons seconded. By way of roll call, the motion passed by a vote of 4-0-1. (Mr. Henz abstained as he was not present at the subject meeting.)

6. Citizen Comments

Public comments concerning agenda items were to be 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 by phone.

7. Discussion Items

a. Historic Neighborhoods Permitting and Design Studio

Dr. DuBose stated the Design Studio launched in October of 2021, to implement Project PP-3 from the Gullah Geechee Preservation Project Report and assist property owners with Town regulations. She noted it is a one-step resource for property owners in Historic Neighborhoods who need assistance with development permits, family compounds and family subdivisions, conceptual site designs, addressing, property access, along with assistance in acquiring business licenses. Dr. DuBose explained the Design Studio also assists the public with other resources such as information on heirs' property and taxes. She emphasized that it is more than just providing an application for the owners' needs. She stated that through scheduled meetings with staff and the several departments involved, projects can be completed in a more efficient manner.

Dr. DuBose explained the Design Studio formalized the process to access all needed resources to complete a project. She stated at this time 20 property owners are being assisted. Dr. DuBose clarified that time frames vary for the projects dependent on needs and staff is readily available to assist with the challenges presented.

Dr. DuBose referenced the pamphlets that have been shared via hard copy throughout the community explaining the process and the assistance that can be provided. She asked the Task Force members to further share the information. Dr. DuBose described the project as exciting and stated staff is eager to be helpful to the community.

Members of the Task Force and Dr. DuBose discussed the project at length and the following items were discussed: importance of informing the public through the pamphlet distribution throughout the community, the Town website, and collaboration with churches and organizations; the need for a central focal point; the addition of outside resources being linked to assist; the need for data in the way of charts to track progress and needs; the challenge of LMO compliance; confirmation that the Design Studio assists businesses as well as private property owners; and the need for the Task Force to have full and complete understanding as to what the Design Studio is so they can assist in educating the public.

b. Fire in the Streets Community Initiative

Deputy Chief Fister conducted a presentation regarding Fire in the Streets, a program Fire Rescue put into place in 2015. She explained Fire Rescue reviewed areas where fires were occurring, and they targeted those areas for home visits and fire safety information distribution. She added that they also assist in inspecting, replacing, and installing fire alarms. She said since 2015, they have visited over 500 homes. Deputy Chief Fister stated Fire Rescue has also assisted in posting addresses on homes for better visibility during an emergency. She noted with the new addressing that took place on Chisholm Place, they have assisted in posting them. Deputy Chief Fister explained the focus has been in the Historic Neighborhoods and there is a tracking element in place. She added that the goal is to reach all neighborhoods outside the planned unit developments.

Members of the Task Force and Deputy Chief Fister discussed the initiative and the following items were discussed: the benefit of the program to the community; suggestion

of including CPR training and confirmation that CPR training is implemented and open to the public monthly; suggestion to add the Fire in the Streets information to the Design Studio information; clarification of how locations are determined; plans that the initiative takes place four times a year; a request for an update on fire hydrant placement in the area; the need for volunteers to partner with Fire Rescue and assist with paperwork; the need for notice in advance of arrival in the neighborhood; and the need for training on how to interact with the residents.

Deputy Chief Fister stated it is very rewarding to have this type of interaction in the community and invited all Task Force members to assist with the coordination of efforts. Members of the Task Force were very receptive to the invitation.

c. 2022 Meeting Schedule

Mr. Henz moved to approve as presented. Mr. Abdul-Malik seconded. By way of roll call, the motion passed by a vote of 5-0-0.

8. Staff Report

Dr. DuBose noted that as requested, the Historic Overlay District update will be part of the Staff Report at future Task Force meetings.

She reported that Jenn McEwen, Director of Cultural Affairs has developed a self-guided Gullah Tour pamphlet with photographs and descriptions of various sites, and she will send it out this week to members of the Task Force. She requested comments and suggestions from Task Force members regarding the pamphlet by end of week, January 7.

Dr. Dubose reviewed upcoming events planned throughout the community:

Fire in the Streets – TBD - scheduled for the beginning of February on Chisholm Place

Mid-Island Tract Redevelopment Plan Consultant Presentation and Public Input – January 11, 2022, from 5pm-8pm at Hilton Head Public Service District Community Room.

Heirs' Property Workshops – February 15, 2022, from 5pm-7pm at Queen Chapel A.M.E. Church and on February 19, 2022, 10:00am-12noon at Coastal Discovery Museum.

Dr. DuBose requested that Task Force members assist in sharing the information regarding presentation and the workshops.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 2:09 p.m.

Submitted by: Vicki Pfannenschmidt, Secretary

Approved: [DATE]

Status of Gullah Geechee Top Priority Project Recommendations



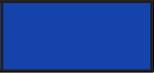
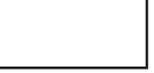
January 2022

Status of Gullah Geechee Top Priority Project Recommendations

January 2022



 Items completed since October 2021.

Page #	Priority #	Title	25%	50%	75%	100%
3	PP-4	Establish an Overlay District				
4	PP-5	Family Compound/Subdivision				
5	PP-6	Allow Site Design Flexibility				
6	PP-2	Fast Track FC/FS Applications				
7	CP-17	Outreach with Gullah Churches				
8	CP-14	Establish Open Air Market				
9	CP-7	Educate Town Officials and Staff				
10	HP-4	Fund to Clear Property Titles				
11	HP-2	Partner with Heirs' Property Orgs				
12	PP-14	Temporary and Seasonal Signs				
13	HP-1	Heirs' Property Family Research				
14	PP-12	Educational Outreach				
15	HP-3	CHPP Satellite Office				
16	CP-1	Promote Heritage Library				
17	PP-11	Fund for Delinquent Taxes				
18	PP-3	Permitting and Design Studio				

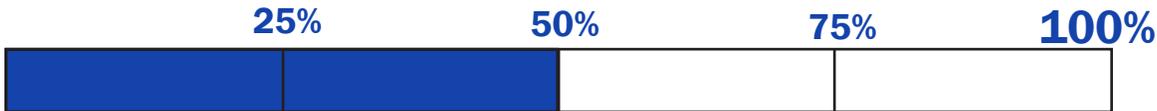
Priority Recommendation 1



PP-4: Establish an Overlay District

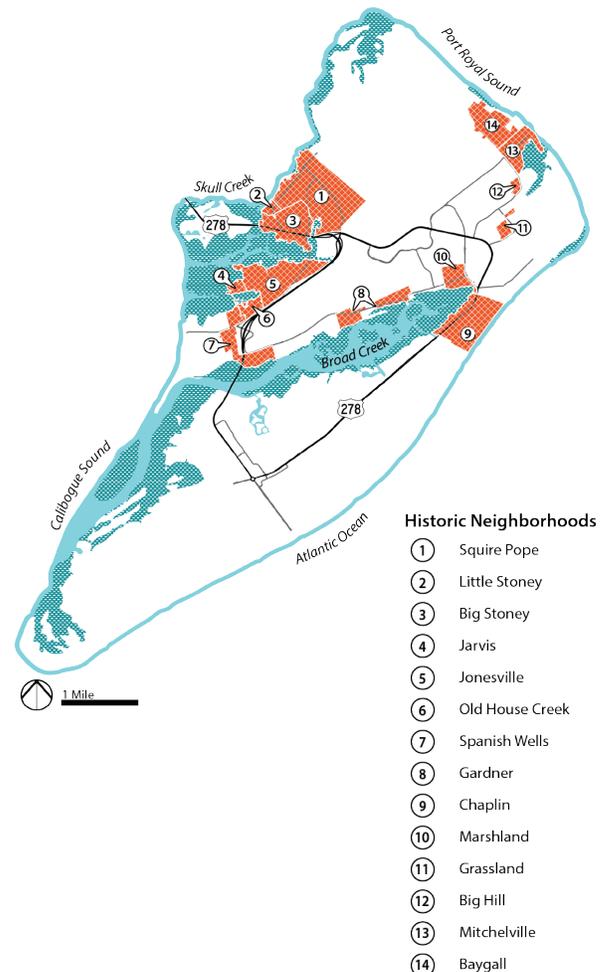
Establish a Historic Neighborhoods Preservation Overlay District.

Percent Complete



- Reduces buffer, setback, right-of-way, and access easement minimums.
- Creates rights-of-way without reducing density.

- Drafted LMO amendments.
- Reviewed by Gullah Geechee Task Force, LMO Committee, and Planning Commission.
- Public Planning Committee requested additional research and revisions related to density increase, land uses, and home occupations.
- Research and analysis will be conducted concurrently with the Island Capacity Baseline Assessment. 1st Quarter 2022 - 3rd Quarter 2022.
- Engage on-call code writing consultant to revise amendments. 4th Quarter 2022.
- Present revised amendments to Gullah Geechee Task Force, Planning Commission, and Town Council for adoption. 4th Quarter 2022 - 1st Quarter 2023.



Priority Recommendation 2

PP-5: Family Compound/Family Subdivision

Revise the Land Management Ordinance (LMO) to allow Family Compound and Family Subdivision developments on properties in the Historic Neighborhoods.

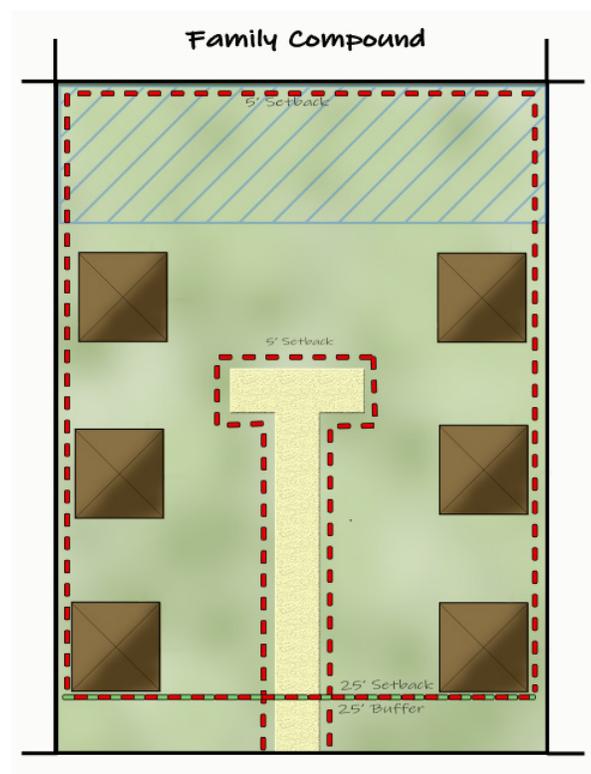


Percent Complete



- **Preserve family land for future generations.**
- **Honor communal living traditions.**
- **Subdivide without prohibitive expenses.**

- ☑ Posted signs, sent letters, and used the Town's website and social media sites to notify stakeholders and the public. Historic Neighborhoods Preservation Administrator discussed the amendments with property owners and families and made presentations to community groups.
- ☑ Reviewed and recommended for approval by the Gullah Geechee Task Force, the LMO Committee, the Planning Commission (including two public hearings), and the Public Planning Committee.
- ☑ Adopted by Town Council in July 2021.
- ☑ Working with three to five families to develop a Family Compound or Family Subdivision.
- ☑ Implemented a communication plan to inform stakeholders, churches, and community organizations of the Family Compound/Family Subdivision LMO amendments, including a news release and social media posts.



Priority Recommendation 3



PP-6: Allow Site Design Flexibility

The Family Compound/Family Subdivision and Dirt Road LMO amendments allow flexibility for development in Historic Neighborhoods.

Percent Complete



- Reduces buffer, setback, right-of-way, and access easement minimums.
- Creates rights-of-way without reducing density.
- Applies to properties in Historic Neighborhoods.

- ☑ Wrote the amendments using input from property owners.
- ☑ Notified stakeholders and the public. Historic Neighborhoods Preservation Administrator discussed the amendments with property owners and families and made presentations to community groups.
- ☑ Reviewed and recommended for approval by Gullah Geechee Task Force, LMO Committee, Planning Commission, and Public Planning Committee.
- ☑ Town Council adopted Dirt Road LMO amendments in November 2020.
- ☑ Town Council adopted Family Compound/Family Subdivision LMO amendments in July 2021.



Priority Recommendation 4

PP-2: Fast Track Family Compound/Family Subdivision Applications

Town staff prioritizes the review of Family Compound and Family Subdivision applications and related building permits.

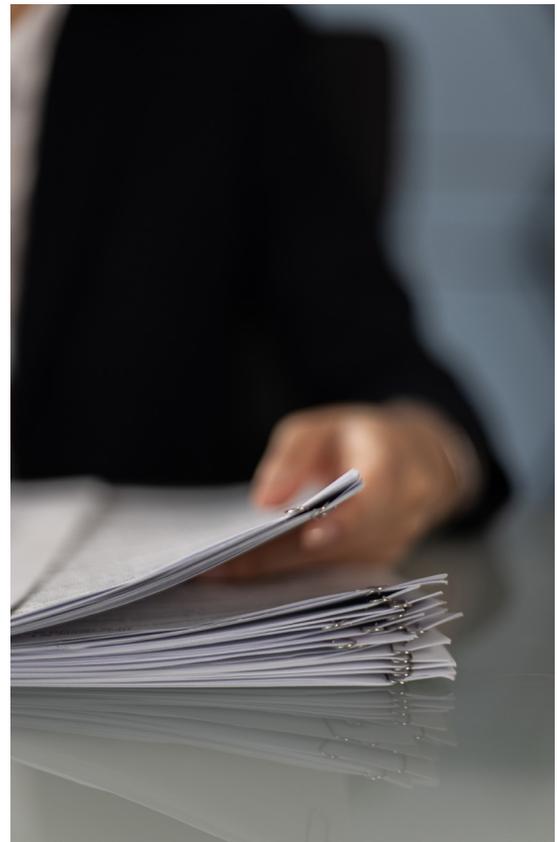


Percent Complete



- **Family Compound/Family Subdivision applications are reviewed before other applications.**
- **Related building permits are fast tracked.**

- ☑ Review Family Compound and Family Subdivision applications and related building permits prior to other submittals, as specified in the LMO amendments.
- ☑ Noted on the Town webpage and application forms the applications will be fast tracked.
- ☑ Notified applicants that their applications will be prioritized for review.
- ☑ Implemented a communication plan to inform stakeholders, churches, and community organizations of the Family Compound/Family Subdivision LMO amendments, including a news release and social media posts.



Priority Recommendation 5

CP-17: Outreach with Gullah Churches

Work with Gullah churches to gather information, assess needs, and disseminate information.



Percent Complete



- **Update churches on Gullah-related meetings and initiatives.**
- **Share vital information, such as Town-led COVID-19 testing and vaccination sites.**

- Established Historic Neighborhoods Preservation Administrator as point of contact for the Town for all Island Gullah churches.
- Communicate regularly on Gullah Geechee initiatives, such as the Family Compound/ Family Subdivision LMO amendments.
- Provide updates regarding Town meetings addressing relevant topics.
- Receive referrals from churches of community members who need assistance.



Priority Recommendation 6

CP-14: Establish Open-Air Gullah Market

Work with stakeholders to establish an open-air market to promote Gullah Culture and create economic opportunities.



Percent Complete



- **Create an open-air market for the sale of Gullah items.**
- **Coordinate the management of the market through Native Island Business and Community Affairs Association.**
- **Evaluate success of temporary location and consider alternate locations.**

Overview

- Gathered input from local vendors.
- Coordinated with Native Island Business and Community Affairs Association, Gullah Geechee Task Force representatives, and Culture HHI.
Considered proposed sites and created a layout of proposed site.
- Wrote a business plan.
- Native Island Business and Community Affairs Association will hire a Community Liason to manage market. 1st Quarter 2022.
- Present Squire Pope Community Park as a temporary location for the market to the Community Services and Public Safety Committee. 2nd Quarter 2022.
- Explore additional locations for the market including Mitchelville Freedom Park, Lowcountry Celebration Park, and the Mid-Island Tract. 2nd Quarter 2022.
- Work with vendors and community organizations to promote the market. 2nd Quarter 2022.



Priority Recommendation 7



CP-7: Educate Town Officials & Employees

Develop education programs on Gullah history, culture, development standards challenges, and land use policies for Town officials, employees, and Board and Commission members.

Percent Complete



- Provide quarterly orientation on Gullah history and culture.
- Offer engaging, ongoing learning opportunities such as panel discussions, site visits, and mobile tours.

- Created orientation training on Gullah Community for new hires, newly elected officials, and Board and Commission members.
- Offered staff and Board and Commission training using *Resilience in Vulnerable Communities: The Preservation of Gullah Geechee Communities in Hilton Head, South Carolina* webinar in February 2021.
- Conducted staff training on Family Compound and Family Subdivision LMO amendments in September 2021.
- Received approval of draft program from Gullah Task Force in December 2021.
- Receive approval of draft program from Town Council. 1st Quarter 2022.
- Schedule initial orientation program and organize events. 1st Quarter 2022.



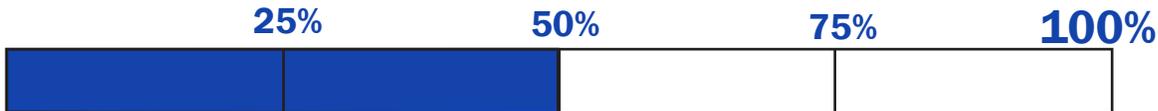
Priority Recommendation 8

HP-4: Fund to Clear Property Titles

Establish a fund to help Heirs' Property owners clear the title to their land.



Percent Complete



- **Create a Community Foundation of the Lowcountry fund to clear Heirs' Property titles.**
- **Preserve family land by preventing sales by non-resident owners.**

- Met with Community Foundation of the Lowcountry to discuss creating a fund.
- Researched Farm Service Administration Heirs' Property Relending Program as possible funding source.
- Informed community members of process to clear property titles and promoted organizations on Town's website.
- Explore the opportunities and responsibilities associated with creating a fund with the Community Foundation of the Lowcountry.
2nd Quarter 2022 - 2nd Quarter 2023.



Priority Recommendation 9

HP-2: Coordinate with Heirs' Property Organizations

Connect with organizations that can provide legal assistance and/or education for property owners seeking to clear Heirs' Property.



Percent Complete



- Understand services provided by Heirs' Property organizations.
- Establish relationships with those organizations.
- Direct Heirs' Property owners to the appropriate resources.

- Established connections with South Carolina Legal Services, South Carolina Appleseed Legal Justice Center, Black Belt Justice Center, Black Family Land Trust, and the Center for Heirs' Property Preservation.
- Created a summary of the services each organization provides for reference and distribution to the Gullah community.
- Continue to refer Heirs' Property owners to the appropriate organization to meet their needs.



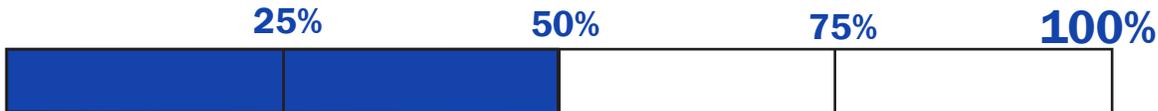
Priority Recommendation 10



PP-14: Temporary and Seasonal Signs

Establish a program to provide temporary and seasonal signs for Gullah businesses in Historic Neighborhoods.

Percent Complete



- **Identify Gullah businesses with shared signs.**
- **Expand opportunities for Gullah residents and businesses.**
- **Portable, reusable signs distributed by Native Island Business and Community Affairs Association.**

Overview

- Coordinated with the Native Island Business and Community Affairs Association on proposed program.
- Prepared initial sign design and cost estimates.
- Presented program to Public Planning Committee in June 2021. Received feedback and request for additional detail.
- Presented additional detail to Public Planning Committee in July 2021. Received additional feedback and requests for additional detail.
- Identified 10 Gullah businesses that would use the signs to sell their produce and fresh seafood.
- Engage on-call code writing consultant to draft LMO amendments. 1st Quarter 2022.
- Present amendments to the Planning Commission, Public Planning Committee, and Town Council. 2nd Quarter 2022 - 3rd Quarter 2022.
- Partner with the Native Island Business and Community Affairs Association to manage the distribution and maintenance of signs. 3rd Quarter 2022.



Priority Recommendation 11



HP-1: Heirs' Property Family Research

Develop a program with the Heritage Library Foundation to provide genealogy research assistance for Gullah families seeking to clear Heirs' Property titles.

Percent Complete



- Established the Heirs' Property Family Research Project.
- Partnered with Heritage Library and USCB Hilton Head Island.
- Identify heirs using genealogy research.

- ✓ Established with the Heritage Library the criteria to accept client referrals.
- ✓ Worked with the Heritage Library to define available services.
- ✓ Partnered with USCB Hilton Head Island to create a dedicated office with equipment and software.
- ✓ Provided the required equipment and software.
- ✓ Held a ribbon cutting ceremony at the Heirs' Property Family Research Project office on the USCB Hilton Head Island campus in August 2021.

Heirs' Property Family Research Project

Sponsored by the Town of Hilton Head Island in partnership with its Gullah Geechee Culture and Land Preservation Task Force, the Heritage Library and the University of South Carolina Beaufort.

PROJECT PURPOSE
The project aims to assist families with the genealogy research necessary for building a family tree that can be used for heirs' property claims and valid land deeds. Heirs' property is land that has been passed down from the original deed holder to succeeding generations without benefit of a formal will or probate. Although the family members know they own the land, their claim to it has not been established by the county. This leaves the family without a title and vulnerable to exploitation, no matter who lives there or who pays the taxes, and restricts the land from development.

PROJECT GUIDELINES:

- Clients are accepted for the project based upon a referral from the Office of Historic Neighborhoods Preservation, Town of Hilton Head Island.
- The project is open to Hilton Head Island families that qualify based on their current situation with heirs' property.
- Heritage library volunteers will be assigned to assist clients with genealogy research.
- Families accepted for the project will be contacted by a Heritage Library volunteer.

Sheryse DuBose, PhD
Historic Neighborhoods Preservation Administrator
Town of Hilton Head Island
(843) 343-4683
SheryseD@hiltonheadislandsc.gov

The Heirs' Property Family Research Project Office
University of South Carolina Beaufort,
Hilton Head Island Campus
1 Sand Shark Drive, Room 218
Hilton Head Island, S.C. 29928

Barbara Catenacci
Executive Director
Heritage Library of Hilton Head Island
(843) 686-6560
director@heritagella.org

Office hours are by appointment only.
Call (843) 686-6560 to schedule.

Priority Recommendation 12



PP-12: Educational Meetings & Workshops

Host educational meetings and workshops on issues that impact Gullah residents, such as Heirs' Property, development standards, and property taxes.

Percent Complete



- Offer quarterly educational opportunities for Gullah community.
- Address Town development standards and challenges that impact Historic Neighborhoods.

- ☑ Established educational outreach programs on topics such as Gullah History and Culture, Development Standards in Historic Neighborhoods, Addressing Policies, etc. to be held quarterly. Held a Community Education Program on Family Compounds and Family Subdivisions on September 30, 2021. Another program on Family Compounds and Family Subdivisions is scheduled for October 20, 2021.
- ☑ Worked with The Links, Inc. to promote education from the Center for Heirs' Property Preservation on Heirs' Property, Forestry, and Wills.
- ☑ Held small group meetings to update community members on development standards, including Family Compounds and Family Subdivisions.



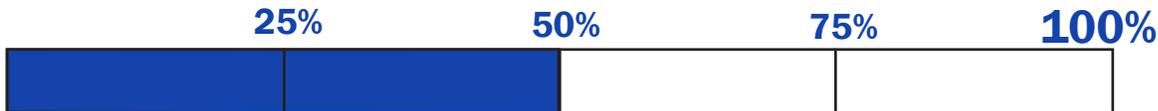
Priority Recommendation 13



HP-3: Create Center for Heirs' Property Preservation Satellite Office on Hilton Head Island

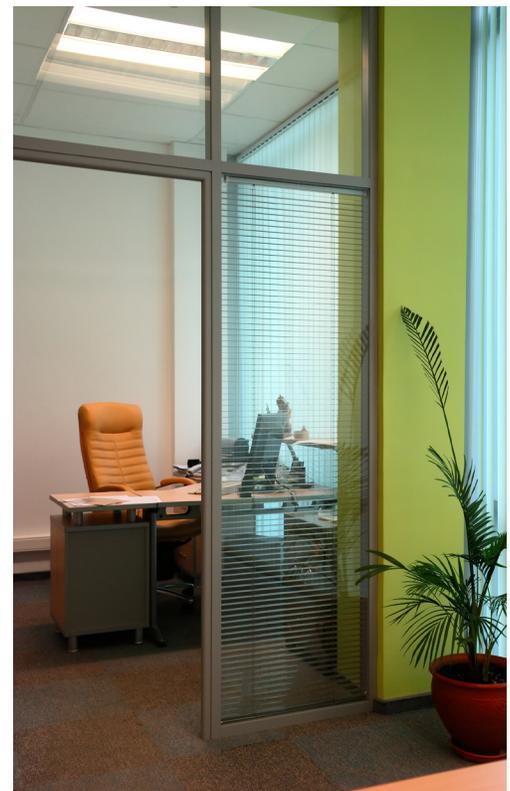
Provide information and assistance to Heirs' Property owners regarding the Center for Heirs' Property Preservation. Explore establishing a satellite office on Hilton Head Island.

Percent Complete



- **Promote Center for Heirs' Property Preservation services to qualified Heirs' Property owners.**
- **Facilitate consultations with Center for Heirs' Property Preservation for Island clients.**

- Promoted Center for Heirs' Property Preservation services to qualified Heirs' Property owners.
- Offered Island clients of Center for Heirs' Property Preservation the use of the Heritage Library Family Research Project office at USCB's Hilton Head Island campus for virtual meetings, if needed. (Current Center for Heirs' Property Preservation services are only offered via virtual platforms.)
- Continue to investigate the possibility of creating Center for Heirs' Property Preservation satellite office on Hilton Head Island, including recurring costs and alternative options. 2nd Quarter 2022 - 2nd Quarter 2023.



Priority Recommendation 14

CP-1: Promote Heritage Library

Promote the use of the Heritage Library's resources for the Island's Gullah people to research their history and genealogy.



Percent Complete

25%

50%

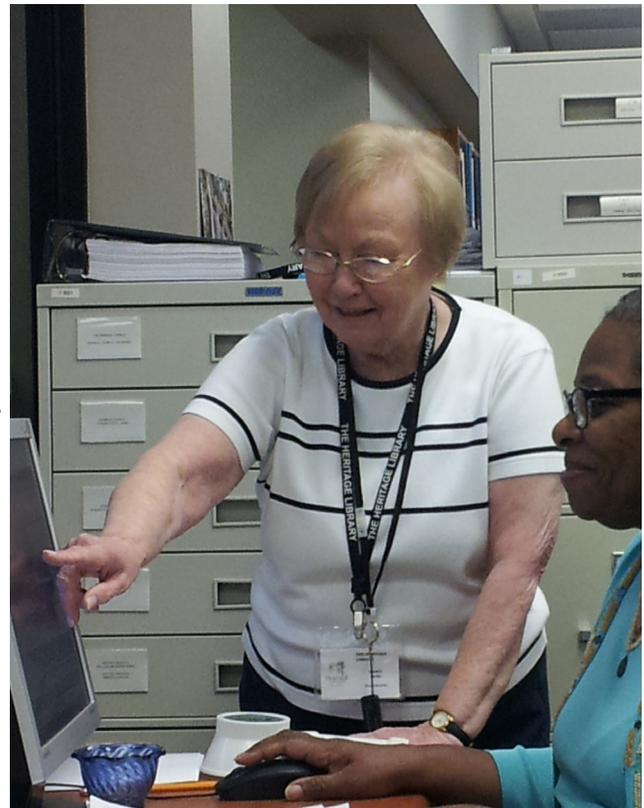
75%

100%



- Increase awareness of the Heritage Library's resources and services.
- Foster knowledge about Gullah history and genealogy.

- ☑ Promoted Heritage Library on Town's website.
- ☑ Notified Gullah community of Heritage Library events.
- ☑ Established the Heirs' Property Family Research Project.
- ☑ Implemented a sustainable communication plan to inform stakeholders, churches, and community organizations of the Heritage Library's resources and of the Family Research Project.



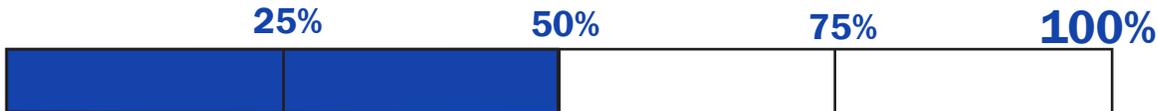
Priority Recommendation 15

PP-11: Fund for Delinquent Taxes

Establish a fund to help Heirs' Property owners avoid losing their property to delinquent tax sales.

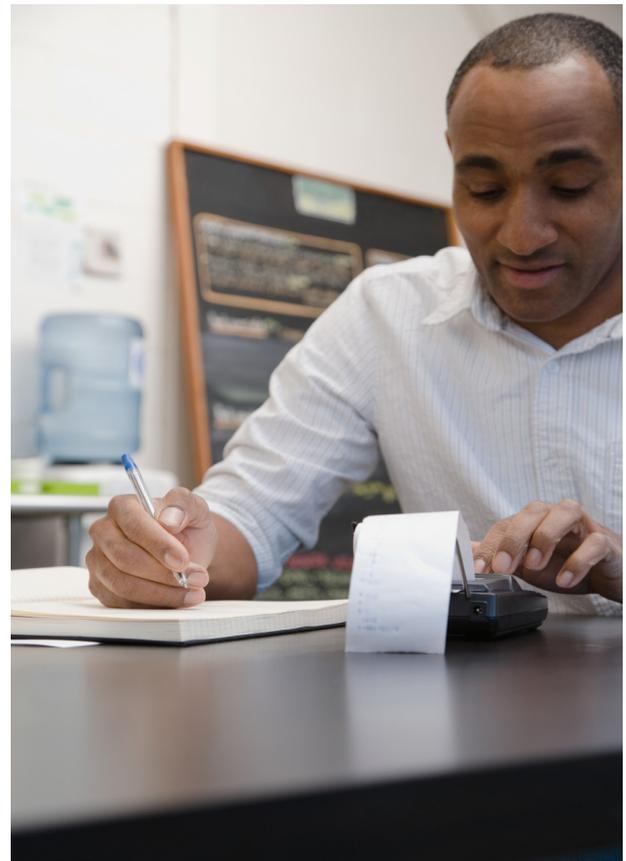


Percent Complete



- **Create a fund with the Community Foundation of the Lowcountry.**
- **Prevent properties from becoming delinquent.**
- **Coordinate with related organizations to identify at-risk properties.**

- Promoted Penn Center's Land Preservation Assistance Program in February 2021.
- Promoted the Pan African Family Empowerment and Land Preservation Network, which pays owners' delinquent taxes.
- Coordinated with related organizations such as Lowcountry Gullah to identify properties that are delinquent and at risk of being lost.
- Explore the opportunities and responsibilities associated with creating a fund with the Community Foundation of the Lowcountry.
2nd Quarter 2022 - 2nd Quarter 2023.



Priority Recommendation 16



PP-3: Permitting & Design Studio

A one-stop resource to assist property and business owners in navigating the Town's land use and development standards, preparing development applications, and resolving related issues.

Percent Complete



- **Provide personalized guidance.**
- **Current Planning, Urban Design, Fire Rescue, Infrastructure, and Business License assistance.**
- **Reduce barriers to property preservation and development.**

- Provides assistance to property and business owners in the Historic Neighborhoods on a variety of issues, including subdivisions; buffers and setbacks; easements and rights-of-way; property access; dirt roads; mobile home placements; building permit issues; addressing; fire hydrants; and code enforcement issues.
- Offers conceptual site design services and business license assistance.
- Create a communication plan to inform stakeholders, churches, and community organizations of the Historic Neighborhoods Permitting and Design Studio and that staff is available to provide information and assistance.

