



The Town of Hilton Head Island
**Gullah Geechee Land & Cultural
Preservation Task Force
Meeting Minutes
December 6, 2021, 9:00 a.m.**

Present from the Task Force: Chairman Lavon Stevens, Vice Chairman Palmer E. Simmons, Ibrahim Abdul-Malik, John Campbell, Theresa White (joined the meeting at 9:25 a.m.)

Absent from the Task Force: Martha Davis (excused), Tom Henz (excused), Shani Green (excused)

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

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

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

Upon Ms. White's arrival, Chairman Stevens noted a quorum was in effect and asked for a motion to approve the agenda as presented. Mr. Abdul-Malik moved to approve. Vice Chairman Simmons seconded. By way of roll call, the motion passed by a vote of 5-0-0.

5. Approval of Minutes

a. Meeting of October 4, 2021

Upon Ms. White's arrival, Chairman Stevens noted a quorum was in effect and asked for a motion to approve the minutes of the October 4, 2021, regular meeting. Vice Chairman Simmons moved to approve. Mr. Abdul-Malik seconded. By show of hands, the motion passed by a vote of 5-0-0.

6. Citizen Comments

Public comments concerning agenda items were to be submitted electronically via the Open Town Hall HHI portal. The comments were provided to the Task Force for review and made part of the official 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. Education Programs and Outreach

Dr. DuBose reviewed the syllabus for the Historic Neighborhood Community Engagement Program. She stated quarterly informational sessions will be held to address land use challenges and land use policies that impact Historic Neighborhoods. She noted the educational opportunities can be held at different venues throughout the neighborhoods for widespread community outreach. Dr. DuBose reviewed the packet materials in detail. She added that additional topics can be added as needed.

Dr. DuBose reviewed in detail the syllabus for Gullah Community Introduction Lesson and Education Opportunities. She noted there will be a Gullah History and Culture Overview held for new hires, newly appointed board and commission members, and newly elected officials which will focus on Gullah history, land use challenges, and policy amendments for Gullah landowners. She reviewed the topics of focus and proposed presenters, noting there are also other educational opportunities which will occur quarterly.

The Task Force made comments and inquiries regarding: the need for inclusion of all studies conducted through the years within the programs; business and economics should be included within the cultural side of the program; the need for a resource center for access to reports and information other than the Town website; the need to go out into the community with educational/informational materials; and the need for all past studies and reports such as the Rudat Study to be included in the materials on the Town website.

b. 2022 Meeting Schedule

Following discussion, the Task Force decided to approve the January meeting as presented and postpone the remainder of the 2022 schedule for discussion at that time. Mr. Abdul-Malik moved to approve the January 3, 2022, at 1:00 p.m. Ms. White seconded. By way of roll call, the motion passed by a vote of 5-0-0.

8. Staff Report

Dr. DuBose thanked the Pan African Empowerment Network and Lowcountry Gullah Foundation for assisting property owners in paying taxes this past season. She stated that based on the list from Beaufort County regarding the Native Islanders on Hilton Head Island that there are no properties in redemption. She also thanked Ms. White for all the assistance she has given to property owners.

Dr. DuBose reviewed the list of vetted street names included in the packet that the Task Force submitted. She noted the names that did not meet criteria noting many of the names submitted do qualify. Dr. DuBose informed the names will be utilized when needed. She added that this list is not final and additional names could still be submitted for vetting.

Dr. DuBose stated the Heritage Library is asking for Native Islanders to write their stories regarding growing up on Hilton Head Island and these will be included in their newsletter. She asked that if any Task Force members know of someone that is interested in doing so, to please share the information. She added they are also asking for volunteers to work with them to produce a video regarding growing up on Hilton Head Island. She stated the videographer is scheduled for January and as she receives further information, she will provide it to members of the Task Force.

Dr. Dubose shared photos of Fire Rescue members going out into the community installing smoke alarms and high visibility addressing to aid if there is an emergency. She stated this will be ongoing and people will be contacted when it is taking place in their individual neighborhoods.

Dr. DuBose informed the Task force members there will be an informational event held regarding the Mid-Island Track with the MKSK Consultants and Staff on January 11. She stated the venue and time have not been decided but she will keep the Task Force informed. She asked that they save the date and plan to attend.

Chairman Stevens asked if the Task Force Members had any comments/questions regarding the Staff Report. Ms. White stated that while the Town continues to report there were no Native Island properties listed for the tax sale, there were in fact two properties listed. She referenced the non-profit Lowcountry Gullah Foundation missing two properties that needed assistance. She stated that going by the list provided by Beaufort County Treasurer regarding Native Island properties was not enough and the need to review the list published in the paper and researching properties listed beginning with the number 5. Ms. White informed the Task Force that to prevent any further conflict, the Pan African Family Empowerment Land Preservation Network Board of Directors voted to discontinue providing financial assistance to Gullah families on Hilton Head Island, in favor of letting the Lowcountry Gullah Foundation handle all Hilton Head Island property taxes. She assured the Task Force that if the Network received funds specifically earmarked for Hilton Head Island, they will utilize those funds for Hilton Head Island properties.

Chairman Stevens thanked Ms. White for her experience, expertise, and assistance through the years. He encouraged coordination of efforts in the future.

Mr. Abdul-Malik inquired as to when the Task Force could expect an updated report regarding the progress of the historic overlay district. Dr. DuBose stated that staff is waiting on a code writer to draft the amendments for the overlay district. She stated it would be well after the new year before any expected forward movement. Dr. DuBose added that as she receives further information, she would pass it on to the Task Force.

9. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 10:12 a.m.

Submitted by: Vicki Pfannenschmidt, Secretary

Approved: January 3, 2022