



The Town of Hilton Head Island
**Gullah Geechee Land & Cultural
Preservation Task Force**

Meeting Minutes

April 5, 2021, 9:00 a.m.

VIRTUAL VIA BLUEJEANS

Present from the Task Force: Lavon Stevens, Chairman, Todd Theodore; Ibrahim Abdul-Malik; Martha Davis; Palmer Simmons; Shani Green; Teresa White (Ms. White joined the meeting at 9:12 a.m.)

Absent from the Task Force: Todd Theodore, Joyce Wright, Palmer Simmons

Present from Town Council: Alex Brown, Tamara Becker, Tom Lennox, David Ames, Glenn Stanford

Others Present: None

Present from Town Staff: Sheryse DuBose, Historic Neighborhoods Preservation Administrator; Jennifer Ray; Interim Community Development Director; Diane Busch, Staff Attorney; Teresa Haley, Senior Administrative Assistant

1. Call to Order

Chairman Stevens called the meeting to order at 9:02 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

Chairman Stevens asked for a motion to approve the agenda as presented. Mr. Theodore moved to approve. Ms. Davis seconded. By way of roll call, the motion passed by a vote of 5-0-0.

5. Approval of Minutes

a. March 1, 2021

Chairman Stevens asked for a motion to approve the minutes of the March 1, 2021 regular meeting. Ms. Davis moved to approve. Ms. Green 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 to be submitted electronically via the Town's Open Town Hall portal. The portal closed at 4:30 p.m. Friday, April 2, 2021, prior to the scheduled meeting. There were no comments.

Citizens were provided the option to sign up for public comment participation by phone during the meeting. The public comment sign up period closed at Noon on Friday, April 2, 2021, prior to the scheduled meeting. There were no requests.

7. Discussion Items

- a. Update on status of Top Priority Gullah Geechee Cultural Project Recommendations

Dr. DuBose reviewed the framework for the top priority recommendations noting the strategies, resources and status of each. She went through the timeline of the recommendations and how they moved forward. She went through the items proposed for the Historic Overlay District which included designation of such; flexibility for right of ways and drainage easements, fast-tracking the development review process and the addition of family compound provisions to the LMO. Dr. DuBose stated the Task Force recommendations went on to the Planning Commission for review and the Commission then moved the recommendations on to the Public Planning Committee with the request that staff look at ways to exclude private subdivisions from the proposed overlay district boundaries. She said the amendments were presented to the Public Planning Committee and the Committee voted to move the amendments forward to Town Council for first reading and consideration on April 6, 2021. She added that since there were changes by the Public Planning Committee to the originally proposed amendments from the Planning Commission. She informed the Task Force that per South Carolina State Law, the amendments will need to go back to the Public Planning Commission on April 21, 2021 for review before Town Council has a second reading scheduled for May 4, 2021. She emphasized that this is not starting the process over but a requirement.

Dr. Dubose informed the Task Force that the following items were partially implemented or in progress: outreach with Gullah churches is being conducted to gather information, assess needs, and disseminate information, as well as notification of meetings and any other activities regarding items impacting the Native Island Community; gathering input from local vendors regarding an open air market to promote Gullah Culture and noted this item was on hold due to the restrictions caused by Covid19; create a recording of *Resilience in Vulnerable Communities: The Preservation of Gullah Geechee Communities in Hilton Head, South Carolina* for Town Staff and the community as an educational tool; creation of a story map regarding Gullah history; future plans for Native Island Business and Community Affairs Association (NIBCAA) and the Community Development Foundation of the Lowcountry (CFL) to create a fund to clear property titles; plans to work with agencies and organizations to address Heirs' Property; plans to use signage to promote economic opportunities for Gullah business and residents; utilization of the Heritage Library as a first step to clear land titles; future creation of programs and workshops to present information to Gullah residents regarding taxes, land use and development; reaching out to the Center for Heirs' Property Preservation to open a local satellite office; promotion of the Heritage Library to research history and genealogy which will aid in clearing property titles; working towards development of a fund for delinquent taxes; staff to provide assistance regarding Town regulations to Gullah property and business owners; and further development of case studies.

The Task Force made comments and inquiries regarding: the need to complete items one through four; possible locations for the proposed open air market; development of an application process and marketing for the open air market; clarification of revisions to buffers and setbacks for Family Compounds and Family Subdivisions; outreach regarding assistance in clearing property titles; suggestion of removal of the Pan African Family Empowerment and Land Preservation Network (PAFEN) from Item 9 as they don't specifically deal with Heirs' property; the addition of the PAFEN to Item 15; status of the request for Task Force participation with the Heritage Library efforts; status of case studies and communication efforts.

8. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 9:54 a.m.

Submitted by: Vicki Pfannenschmidt, Secretary

Approved: May 3, 2021