



Town of Hilton Head Island GULLAH GEECHEE LAND AND CULTURAL PRESERVATION TASK FORCE MEETING Monday, February 3, 2025, 1:00 PM Minutes

1. Call to Order

Chairman Stevens called the meeting to order at 1:00 p.m. Present were: Chairman Stevens, Vice Chairman Simmons, Mr. Henz and Mr. Abdul-Malik. Ms. Green, Mr. Campbell and Ms. Wright were excused.

2. Adoption of the Agenda

Mr. Henz moved to approve the Agenda as presented. Vice Chairman Simmons seconded. The Agenda was unanimously approved.

3. Approval of the Minutes

a. Regular Meeting Minutes of January 6, 2025

The meeting minutes of January 6, 2025 were not approved as there was not a quorum of members present at that meeting. They will be presented for approval at the March 3, 2025 Meeting.

4. Staff Report

a. Introduction to Land Management Ordinance Priority Amendments to include Workforce Housing Density Bonus, Single-Family Home and Commercial Mass & Scale, Subdivision Regulations, Adaptive Re-Use of Existing Hotels & Motels, Major Subdivision & Development Plan Review Process, Transportation Impact Analysis Plan, Common Open Space, Tree Protection, Sign Regulations, and Construction Management Standards - Missy Luick, Director of Planning

Missy Luick, Director of Planning, noted that there are several Priority Amendments to review and introduce with the Task Force today. As part of the Land Management Ordinance (LMO) Amendment Project, the Task Force is one of the key bodies involved in reviewing the Code as updates unfold.

The broader Priority Amendments Project is a key initiative within the Town's Strategic Action Plan and is being implemented under the Growth Management Strategy. The LMO Amendment Project consists of two primary components: the comprehensive LMO Overhaul and the LMO Priority Amendments. The Priority Amendments focus on incremental changes that address critical and time-sensitive issues that cannot wait for the full overhaul. These amendments provide immediate, effective solutions to pressing community development challenges while minimizing unintended consequences. More complex issues requiring additional research and analysis will be considered as part of

the full LMO Overhaul.

To date, several amendments have already been adopted within the Priority Amendments framework. In 2023, three phases of amendments were implemented, followed by an additional amendment in 2024 related to floor area ratio. In September 2024, ten amendment topics were reviewed by Town Council during a Workshop. These same topics will be discussed with the Task Force today. We are hosting a Public Hearing on these Amendments with the Planning Commission on February 19th. These Amendments are for introduction, review and your feedback.

Ms. Luick reviewed the 10 Priority Amendments with the Task Force, as follows:

- 1) Workforce Housing Density Bonus
- 2) Single-Family Home & Commercial Mass & Scale
- 3) Subdivision Regulations
- 4) Adaptive Re-Use of Existing Hotels & Motels
- 5) Major Subdivision & Development Plan Review Process
- 6) Transportation Impact Analysis Plan
- 7) Common Open Space
- 8) Tree Protection
- 9) Sign-Regulations
- 10) Construction Management Standards

Ms. Luick answered questions and concerns from the Task Force and indicated that if the Task Force has additional comments or questions after this meeting, please email staff so that we can incorporate those as we bring these Amendments through to completion. Chairman Stevens and the Task Force thanked Ms. Luick for her report.

b. Historic Neighborhood Permitting & Design Studio Report - Sharonica Stewart, Principal Planner Historic Neighborhoods

Sharonica Stewart, Principal Planner for Historic Neighborhoods, informed the Task Force that two new requests were received during this reporting period. Staff provided guidance to applicants on zoning regulations, land use considerations, and pathways for property development. Additionally, staff continued to collaborate with applicants to ensure their projects align with established guidelines while preserving historical and cultural integrity.

To date, a total of 97 Design Studio requests have been received. Of these, 67 have been completed, 22 remain active, and 8 have either been withdrawn or become inactive.

c. Home Safety and Repair Program Update - Sharonica Stewart, Principal Planner Historic Neighborhoods

Sharonic Stewart, Principal Planner for Historic Neighborhoods, informed the Task Force that over the past 30 days, eight projects have been successfully completed, positively impacting eight families within our community. The program teams remain committed to

finalizing the remaining contracted projects while actively exploring additional funding opportunities.

Since the program's inception in July 2022 through January 2025, a total of 147 applications have been received. Of these, 113 were fully completed applications, resulting in 82 permitted projects being successfully completed, 26 currently under contract, and seven awaiting additional program funding. Additionally, applicants who were not eligible for this program have been referred to other available resources for assistance.

d. Sewer Connection Program Update - Sharonica Stewart, Principal Planner Historic Neighborhoods

Sharonic Stewart, Principal Planner for Historic Neighborhoods, informed the Task Force that 32 sewer connections have been successfully completed to date. Town staff continues to collaborate closely with the Hilton Head Island Public Service District to complete the remaining projects, ensuring that more residents gain access to essential sewer services.

To date, 48 applications have been received, with 32 projects completed, four currently under contract, and five awaiting additional funding.

As previously mentioned in the last meeting, staff remains committed to identifying additional funding opportunities for these programs. I have shared details regarding program funding via email and would like to provide further insight into our ongoing efforts. At this time, I would like to invite Missy Luick to speak further on this topic.

Missy Luick advised that our current program is funded through the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA). Following last month's Task Force Meeting, Sharonica shared the total allocations for both the Home Safety and Repair Program and the Sewer Connection Program. Notably, the Home Safety and Repair Program received an award of just under \$1.5 million, while the Lateral Sewer Program was allocated \$369,000. The data reflects the significant number of community members who have applied for and received assistance through these programs, demonstrating their substantial impact on improving residents' quality of life.

Recognizing the importance of these initiatives, we have been actively exploring additional funding sources to sustain them beyond the exhaustion of ARPA funds, which have been fully encumbered through the end of calendar year 2024. Potential funding sources under consideration include the Beaufort Jasper Housing Trust, Community Development Block Grants (CDBG), South Carolina Housing, and other grant opportunities. Since these programs were originally established by Town Council with ARPA as the designated funding source, any continuation will require additional funding and further direction from Town Council.

As we evaluate available funding sources and explore other entities now offering similar

services—many of which were not in place when our programs began—we will compile these options and present them for future consideration. Most importantly, I want to emphasize our deep appreciation for the hard work and dedication that has gone into these programs. Sharonica has devoted significant time and effort to their implementation, and we have witnessed firsthand the meaningful improvements made to homes and, most critically, the positive impact on residents' quality of life.

I want to extend my gratitude to our team, the contractors performing the work, and everyone involved in making these programs a success. Their commitment has been instrumental in delivering these essential services to our community. As we move forward, we remain committed to identifying opportunities to sustain and expand these programs, as well as guiding applicants toward other entities providing similar support. We will continue to provide updates as we explore potential funding avenues, whether through Town-initiated projects or partnerships with agencies such as the Beaufort Jasper Housing Trust, which is making a significant impact in the home safety and repair sector.

Mr. Henz asked if in the future they could receive two separate reports for the Home Safety and Repair Program and the Sewer Connection Program. Mr. Henz also asked if it was possible to receive a report of the properties that are not hooked up to sewer so we can see the magnitude of what is left to do on the Island. Missy Luick stated they would have to work with our PSD Partners to do that.

e. Introduction of Community Planning Manager - Michelle Mealer, Community Planning Manager

Michelle Mealer, the Town's new Community Planning Manager introduced herself to the Task Force and mentioned she is very excited to help define and support the critical path and priorities of the Planning Department. The Task Force welcomed Ms. Mealer and looks forward to working with her.

5. Discussion Items

6. Public Comment - Non Agenda Items

Chet Williams, Esquire stated he recently represented a couple of clients before the Planning Commission on an amendment of a previously recorded subdivision. When you look through the Code, almost invariably where the Planning Commission has review and approval authority, they have three options - they can 1) approve the application submitted, 2) they can approve with modifications or conditions or 3) they can deny it. This one section of the Code on amendments to previously platted subdivisions doesn't explicitly give the Planning Commission the authority to approve an application with conditions or modifications. I think that is something that needs to be included in the Code. This rewrite that is going on is the perfect time to do that. I think it is inherent in the Planning Commission's authority and it is clearly stated throughout the Code in numerous places that they have the authority to approve with conditions or modifications.

Chairman Stevens asked Ms. Stewart if she could provide an update on District Planning. Ms.

Stewart thanked the members of the Task Force who have been attending the District Planning meetings. It is great to have you as members of the Task Force joining and helping and assisting with these meetings. This week, the Marshes District meeting is Wednesday, February 5th at 5:00 p.m. at Grace Community Church. Typically, the meetings are from 5:00 p.m. - 7:00 p.m. We encourage all those within the specific districts to come out and share their input. Each meeting includes a presentation overview of the District, followed by breakout stations which include District themes, character, vision, aspirations as well as focus areas. Upcoming meetings that will include historic neighborhoods are our Forest Beach District Planning Meeting which will be February 20th, as well as our Chaplin District Meeting on February 27th.

7. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 3:13 p.m.

APPROVED: August 4, 2025

The full recording and a transcript of this meeting can be found on the Town's website at www.hiltonheadislandsc.gov