



Town of Hilton Head Island
GULLAH GEECHEE HISTORIC
NEIGHBORHOODS COMMUNITY
DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION MEETING
Wednesday, July 16, 2025, 6:00 PM
Minutes

Call to Order

Chair Peterson called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

Board Members Present: Shirley "Peaches" Peterson, Chair; David Ames, Alex Brown, Sarah Eisner, Alan Perry

Board Members Absent: Louis Johnson and Andre White

Adoption of the Agenda

Mr. Perry moved to adopt. Mr. Brown seconded. Motion carried 5-0.

Approval of the Minutes

Regular Meeting Minutes of May 21, 2025

Mr. Perry moved to approve. Ms. Eisner seconded. Motion carried 5-0.

Unfinished Business

2024-19 Wayfinding Solution Development Update - Thomas Boxley, Executive Director for the Gullah Geechee Historic Neighborhoods Community Development Corporation

Mr. Boxley provided a presentation on the progress of the Wayfinding Solution application. He reported that the first phase of the project is nearing completion, with an anticipated launch date of August 2025. Both the mobile application and its companion website are in the final stages of development. He also noted that the signage component of the project is close to completion. This includes finalized sign designs, previously shared with the Board for review in June, QR code generation and implementation, and the strategic placement of signage to maximize visibility and user engagement. The final stage will involve submitting materials to the contractor for design approval, fabrication, and installation.

Mr. Boxley noted that there have been some delays in the project timeline due to recent updates to Apple's iOS operating system, as well as the process of getting the application established in both the Apple and Android app stores.

Board members had questions, comments, and discussion regarding: the marketing strategies for the application's launch and public outreach, the inclusion of signage in historical neighborhoods, and the technical aspects of QR code implementation.

New Business

Recognition of Outgoing Board Member Terry Brubaker - Thomas Boxley, Executive Director for the Gullah Geechee Historic Neighborhoods Community Development Corporation

Chair Peterson thanked outgoing Board of Director member Terry Brubaker for his service. Although Mr. Brubaker was not in attendance, Chair Peterson read his Certificate of Service aloud and acknowledged his valuable contributions as a founding member of the Gullah Geechee Historic Neighborhoods Community Development Corporation. Other members present also shared their appreciation for Mr. Brubaker's service and recognized his meaningful contributions to both the Board and the broader Gullah Geechee community.

Recognition of Newly Appointed Board Members David Ames and Sarah Eisner - Thomas Boxley, Executive Director for the Gullah Geechee Historic Neighborhoods Community Development Corporation

Mr. Boxley welcomed newly appointed members David Ames and Sarah Eisner to the Gullah Geechee Historic Neighborhoods Community Development Corporation. Mr. Ames, a previous member, was welcomed back, while Ms. Eisner was welcomed as a new member. Members of the Board expressed their appreciation for both individuals' willingness to serve. They shared their enthusiasm about the diverse perspectives and experience each member brings to the organization. Members noted Mr. Ames' historical knowledge and past contributions to the Board's early development and expressed excitement about Ms. Eisner's fresh ideas and commitment to community engagement. The Board conveyed a collective sense of optimism and collaboration as they moved forward in advancing the mission of the Corporation.

Review & Discussion of the Gullah Geechee Historic Neighborhoods Community Development Corporation Staffing - Thomas Boxley, Executive Director for the Gullah Geechee Historic Neighborhoods Community Development Corporation

Mr. Boxley announced that Sharonica Stewart has transitioned from the Town's Community Development Department to the Gullah Geechee Historic Neighborhoods Community Development Corporation (GGHNCD). As discussed during the FY 2026 budget process, the Principal Planner, Historic Neighborhoods position has been restructured into a Project Manager role within the GGHNCD. This change aligns with the Corporation's mission and encompasses responsibilities that support the Gullah Geechee community. In addition, certain functions previously handled by the Gullah Geechee Cultural Preservation Task Force, including initiatives identified in its final report, will now fall under the Corporation's purview.

Mrs. Stewart will support Mr. Boxley in addressing heir's property issues, managing the "Money Talks" workshop series, and strengthening the connection between the Town's Community Development Department, the Cultural Preservation Task Force, and the GGHNCD's Strategic Plan. The transition, effective July 1, 2025, also enhances collaboration between the Corporation and the Town's Planning Department, particularly through ongoing work with the Design Studio.

Board members had questions, comments, and discussion regarding: the visible increase of mobile homes on property and the possibility of them becoming obsolete in the future as the availability of traditional homes will become more prevalent for Native Islanders should they wish

explore that option; there also were comments regarding the possibility of the GGHNCDC to develop a matching site development/planning fund to assist Native Islanders to transition to traditional homes should they wish to; and questions of how property owners can connect with Mrs. Stewart to discuss development on their property.

Review & Discussion of 2025 Community Financial Educational Meetings - Thomas Boxley, Executive Director for the Gullah Geechee Historic Neighborhoods Community Development Corporation

Mr. Boxley provided an update on the upcoming 2025 Community Financial Educational Meetings, which originated from the Gullah Geechee Historic Neighborhoods Community Development Corporation's (GGHNCDC) Strategic Plan developed in the fall of 2023. The initiative, launched in 2024 under the series title "Money Talks," is designed to support aspiring entrepreneurs and small business owners by offering practical strategies for business start-up, growth, and long-term sustainability. The GGHNCDC partnered with the Island Recreation Center to serve as the host location and collaborated with TD Bank, whose representatives co-facilitated the sessions and contributed to the delivery of educational content. As a result of the previous series, three new business accounts, two personal accounts, and a \$50,000 small business line of credit were established.

Board members had questions, comments, and discussion regarding: post-session follow-up with attendees and the importance of collecting and analyzing data from the series; a recommendation to create a database to track the challenges and successes experienced by participants, which would allow the GGHNCDC to refine and strengthen the program over time; explore potential partnerships with the Hilton Head Island-Bluffton Chamber of Commerce Leadership Class and the University of South Carolina Beaufort's Island Ambassador Program as these partnerships could help engage Native Islanders who live and work in the community and encourage their involvement in improving and expanding the program and our community.

Public Comment - Non Agenda items

There was no public comment at this time.

Executive Session

At 6:24 pm, Mr. Perry moved to enter into executive session. Mr. Ames seconded. Motion carried 5-0.

At 7:12 pm, Mr. Perry moved to end executive session and return to the regular meeting. Mr. Ames seconded. Motion carried 5-0.

Discussion of Negotiations Incident to Proposed Contractual Arrangements and Discussion for the Proposed Sale or Purchase of Property [Pursuant to South Carolina Freedom of Information Act Section 30-4-70 (a)(2)] related to:

1. Stoney Area

Discussion of Matters Related to Proposed Contractual Arrangements Related to Services at Hilton Head Island Airport [Pursuant to South Carolina Freedom of Information Act Section 30-4-70 (a)(2)]

Action from Executive Session

There was no action as a result of executive session.

Adjournment

At 7:12pm, Mr. Ames made a motion to adjourn. Ms. Eisner seconded. Motion carried 5-0.

Approved: August 20, 2025

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