



Town of Hilton Head Island
GULLAH GEECHEE LAND AND CULTURAL
PRESERVATION TASK FORCE MEETING
Monday, August 4, 2025, 1:00 PM
Minutes

1. Call to Order

Chairman Stevens called the meeting to order at 1:00 p.m. In attendance were: Chairman Stevens, Vice-Chair Simmons, Mr. Henz, Ms. Wright and Mr. Abdul-Malik.

2. Adoption of the Agenda

Mr. Henz moved to approve the Agenda as presented. Vice-Chair Simmons seconded. Motion passed.

3. Approval of the Minutes

a. Regular Meeting Minutes of February 3, 2025

Vice-Chair Simmons moved to approve the Minutes of February 3, 2025. Mr. Henz seconded. Motion passed.

b. Regular Meeting Minutes of June 2, 2025

The Minutes of June 2, 2025 were not approved due to changes in Board membership.

4. Staff Report

a. Historic Neighborhood Permitting & Design Studio Report – Sharonica Stewart, Principal Planner Historic Neighborhoods

Sharonica Stewart reported that the Historic Neighborhoods and Design Studio, established in 2021, serves to assist property owners and residents in the Town's historic neighborhoods with property development permits, conceptual site designs, addressing, business licensing, and connections to resources related to heirs' property, property taxes, and business development.

Ms. Stewart noted that since the last report in June 2025, two new service requests have been submitted through the program. These requests addressed:

- Density allowances and their impact on proposed development
- Allowances for property development
- Manufactured housing placement process
- Conceptual site design

Over the past five years, the program has received 107 service requests, of which 90 have been completed, while 17 remain active.

Providing these services requires collaboration with Town staff from several departments, including Stormwater, Engineering, Natural Resources, Building, Capital Improvement Projects Division and Fire Rescue. Staff also collaborates with outside agencies and nonprofits, including Hilton Head Public Service District, Heritage Library and Lowcountry Gullah Foundation.

Ms. Stewart answered questions from the Task Force.

b. Home Safety and Repair Program Update – Sharonica Stewart, Principal Planner Historic Neighborhoods

Ms. Stewart advised the Task Force that the Home Safety and Repair Program has successfully utilized its full funding allocation of \$1,499,741.00, resulting in the completion of 108 critical home repair projects. Since its inception, the program has addressed critical home repair projects, enhanced livability, and ensured compliance with local building standards to homeowners in need. Effective implementation of the program required close collaboration within the Town's Planning Department, including coordination with planners, permitting staff, building inspectors, and administrative personnel. This teamwork ensured projects met all necessary codes and standards.

The program has exhausted all allocated funding and cannot approve additional projects until new funding is secured. As a result, the acceptance of new applications has been paused.

c. Sewer Connection Program Update – Sharonica Stewart, Principal Planner Historic Neighborhoods

Ms. Stewart reported the Lateral Sewer Connection Program has successfully completed 35 connections to date. Town staff continue to collaborate with the Hilton Head Island Public Service District (PSD) to complete the remaining projects, ensuring that residents have access to essential sewer services. The program was allocated \$369,417.00, which has now been expended; therefore, acceptance of new applications is currently on hold.

Councilman Alex Brown advised the Task Force that the Town is engaging with the Beaufort Jasper Housing Trust to potentially tap into some SC Housing funds that could help with home repairs. Councilman Brown also mentioned that the majority of sewer connections that need to be made are in PSD #1. The PSD has information on who needs to be connected and may have some good reasons as to why they are not being connected, which are all not financial as there are other reasons. I encourage the Town to collaborate with PSD #1 to 1) understand the full reason and 2) there may be opportunities for a joint effort between the Town and the PSD to raise funding through grants and philanthropy to get folks connected.

d. Land Management Ordinance Update – Michelle Mealer, Community Planning Manager

Shea Farrar provided an update on the Land Management Ordinance initiatives, which include priority amendments and the full overhaul projects. The priority amendments are nearing completion and are currently before Town Council for adoption.

Ms. Farrar explained the overall project does not aim to introduce significant changes but rather to enhance existing programs, such as subdivisions and family compounds, by incorporating lessons learned and community feedback.

She noted that Sharonica Stewart and Thomas Boxley have joined the staff team working alongside the consultant, ensuring the Task Force's priorities remain a focus. The project is expected to be presented to Town Council for a workshop in November.

In preparation, staff is coordinating public engagement and outreach with the Planning Commission and the Task Force. Following the November workshop, additional details will be shared regarding the project's structure and next steps. Both the Planning Commission and the Task Force will serve as key stakeholders in reviewing the proposed updates to the Land Management Ordinance.

e. District Planning Update – Michelle Mealer, Community Planning Manager

Shea Farrar reported that a workshop with Town Council is scheduled for October. Staff and the Town's consultant are preparing seven draft plans for the respective districts. A series of public meetings was held from January through March, which resulted in over 700 survey responses and approximately 300 attendees. These meetings included interactive stations that gathered valuable input on zoning, traffic, and neighborhood concerns.

The feedback collected from the meetings and surveys has been provided to the consultant and is also informing the ongoing Land Management Ordinance project. Information gathered from the district planning process is being shared with the Code Consultant, who is concurrently developing the initial modules for the Land Management Ordinance overhaul.

5. Discussion Items

6. Public Comment - Non Agenda Items

7. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 1:57 p.m.

APPROVED:10-20-25

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