



## Town of Hilton Head Island

### Gullah Geechee Historic Neighborhoods Community Development Corporation Meeting

Wednesday, November 19, 2025, 10:00 AM  
1 Town Center Court, Hilton Head Island, SC  
Benjamin M. Racusin Council Chambers

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The meeting can be viewed on the [Town's YouTube Channel](#), the [Beaufort County Channel](#), and Spectrum Channel 1304.

- 1. Call to Order**
- 2. Adoption of the Agenda**
- 3. Approval of the Minutes**
  - a. Regular Meeting Minutes of September 17, 2025
- 4. Presentations**
  - a. Report of the Executive Director
- 5. Unfinished Business**
  - a. 2024-19 Wayfinding Solution Development Update - Thomas Boxley, Executive Director for the Gullah Geechee Historic Neighborhoods Community Development Corporation
- 6. New Business**
  - a. Review and Discussion Regarding the Renaming of the Rowing & Sailing Center at Squire Pope Community Park - Thomas Boxley, Executive Director for the Gullah Geechee Historic Neighborhoods Community Development Corporation
  - b. Review and Discussion of the Community Organizations Active in Disasters (COAD) Proposal - Thomas Boxley, Executive Director for the Gullah Geechee Historic Neighborhoods Community Development Corporation
  - c. Consideration of 2026 Meeting Schedule - Thomas Boxley, Executive Director for the Gullah Geechee Historic Neighborhoods Community Development Corporation

## **7. Public Comment - Non Agenda Items**

## **8. Executive Session**

- a.** Discussion of Appointment to Boards, Commissions, and Committees [Pursuant to the South Carolina Freedom of Information Act Section 30-4-70 (a)(1)] related to:
  - 1. Gullah Geechee Historic Neighborhood Community Development Corporation
- b.** 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

## **9. Action from Executive Session**

## **10. Adjournment**

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.

In accordance with the requirements of Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 ("ADA"), the Town of Hilton Head Island will not discriminate against qualified individuals with disabilities on the basis of disability in its services, programs, or activities. Auditory accommodations are available. Any person requiring further accommodation should contact the Town of Hilton Head Island ADA Coordinator as soon as possible but no later than 48 hours before the scheduled event.

Municipal Association of South Carolina (MASC) Civility Pledge:  
"I pledge to build a stronger and more prosperous community by advocating for civil engagement, respecting others and their viewpoints, and finding solutions for the betterment of my city or town."



Town of Hilton Head Island  
GULLAH GEECHEE HISTORIC  
NEIGHBORHOODS COMMUNITY  
DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION MEETING  
Wednesday, September 17, 2025, 10:00 AM  
Minutes

Call to Order

Chair Johnson called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m.

Board Members Present: Louis Johnson, Chair; Shirley Peterson, Vice-Chair; David Ames; Alex Brown; Sarah Eisner, Treasurer; Alan Perry; and Andre White, Secretary

Adoption of the Agenda

**Mr. Perry made a motion to adopt. Mr. Brown seconded. Motion carried 6-0 (Mr. White was not present at the time of voting).**

Approval of the Minutes

Regular Meeting Minutes of August 20, 2025

**Mr. Brown made a motion to approve. Mr. Perry seconded. Motion carried 6-0 (Mr. White was not present at the time of voting).**

Presentation and Recognitions

Report of the Executive Director

Mr. Boxley provided the Gullah Geechee Historic Neighborhoods Community Development Corporation Board of Directors with a comprehensive update on the activities and initiatives the CDC has been engaged in since the last meeting. He reported on the Community Needs Group, the Land Management Ordinance (LMO) Focus Group, the Home Safety and Repair Program, Experience Gullah, Accounting Services, and the Money Talks Financial Education Series. Mr. Boxley discussed the ongoing coordination with community partners to assess and address emerging needs within the Island's historic neighborhoods, continued participation in the LMO Focus Group to ensure the Gullah Geechee community's priorities are represented in the ordinance update process, and progress on home repair projects within historic neighborhoods. He also highlighted the successful launch and continued expansion of the Experience Gullah digital platform, coordination with Town finance staff to strengthen financial management and reporting, and the ongoing success of the Money Talks Financial Education Series, which continues to provide valuable resources to local business owners and residents.

Board members held discussion and made comments regarding hurricane preparedness and community readiness efforts, potential state legislation related to housing and expressed their appreciation and encouragement for the continuation of the Money Talks Financial Education

Series. The Board thanked Mr. Boxley and CDC Staff for their continued dedication to advancing the organization's mission and supporting the Gullah Geechee community through these initiatives.

### Unfinished Business

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

Mr. K.J. Jackson and Mr. Clarence Boyd of Solaos provided a presentation to the Board on the progress of the Wayfinding Solution Development project. The presenters demonstrated the functionality of the mobile application and companion website, highlighting the technology's capabilities, including real-time updates, user-friendly navigation, and the integration of augmented reality features designed to enhance visitor engagement. They also reviewed design concepts and signage elements, noting that feedback from previous focus groups had been incorporated into the ongoing development process. The presentation illustrated how the wayfinding system will connect digital tools with physical markers to guide residents and visitors throughout Hilton Head Island's historic neighborhoods.

Board members held discussion and made comments regarding the overall look and design of the platform. Members expressed that the visual approach should remain authentic to the character of Hilton Head Island and not be overly influenced by the existing marketing tone of the Chamber, which some felt has already saturated the Island's branding. Several members suggested incorporating local artwork, photography, and cultural motifs to better reflect the Island's history, ancestry, and Gullah Geechee heritage. Additional recommendations included developing a coordinated social media presence to support the wayfinding application and ensuring that images used throughout the platform represent real people and places from the community rather than standard stock photography.

In closing, Mr. Boxley announced that the official launch of the Wayfinding Solution Application would take place on October 2nd at the Rowing and Sailing Center at Squire Pope Community Park.

### Public Comment - Non Agenda Items

**Luana Graves Sellars** commended the Board on the successful launch of the website and mobile application, noting that this initiative positions the Town and the Gullah Geechee culture as leaders within the corridor.

**Al Jenkins** addressed the board sharing his personal connection to the area and expressing his support for the ongoing efforts of the organization. He stated that if there is any assistance Senator Tim Scott's office can provide, the Board should not hesitate to reach out.

Adjournment

**At 11:37 a.m., Mr. Perry made a motion to adjourn. Mr. Brown seconded. Motion carried 7-0.**

**The full recording and a transcript of this meeting can be found on the Town's website at [www.hiltonheadislandsc.gov](http://www.hiltonheadislandsc.gov)**



# TOWN OF HILTON HEAD ISLAND

## *Gullah Geechee Historic Neighborhoods Community Development Corporation*

**TO:** Gullah Geechee Historic Neighborhoods Community Development Corporation  
**FROM:** Thomas Boxley, Executive Director  
**CC:** Marc Orlando, Town Manager  
**DATE:** November 19, 2025  
**SUBJECT:** Report of the Executive Director

### **RECOMMENDATION:**

No action necessary. Status update.

### **BACKGROUND:**

This report provides a monthly update regarding the activities in which the Gullah Geechee Historic Neighborhoods Community Development Corporation (CDC) staff has engaged.

### **SUMMARY:**

Since our September meeting, CDC staff has been involved in the following activities:

- **Community Organization Active in Disaster (COAD)** – As discussed in September, this community-based response group focuses on activation during times of destructive weather that impact areas outside of the PUDs, with the purpose of addressing immediate needs within our historic neighborhoods. These events often require funding to support remediation efforts. Our goal is to consider the CDC serving as the lead and fiscal agent for this initiative.
- **Land Management Ordinance Focus Group** – This group was organized to develop a set of recommendations regarding updates to the Land Management Ordinance. A group field study was conducted in September, followed by a meeting on Thursday, November 6. On October 22, Town Council approved and appointed 21 individuals to serve on the LMO Task Force. This body—chaired by and including two members of Town Council—will make recommendations to the larger Town Council body regarding priority amendments to the Land Management Ordinance.

- **Stoney Corridor/Highway 278 Update** – This evening, we will convene a meeting with property owners in the Highway 278 corridor. The purpose of this meeting is to provide an update on proposed development in the corridor and to gather feedback from property owners in the area.
- **Experience Gullah** – Officially launched on October 2<sup>nd</sup> with excellent community turnout. We are now moving into Phase II of the project, which will include identifying businesses based in and serving historic Gullah neighborhoods that are interested in marketing and advertising through this platform.
- **Money Talks Financial Education Series**
  - **September Topic:** *The Legal Aspects of Business Ownership*. A speaker from the University of South Carolina Joseph P. Rice School of Law presented on business structures. Productive meetings were also held with two business owners prior to the larger group session. One of our local small businesses provided food for attendees—a pleasant addition to our workshop!
  - **October Topic:** *Non-Traditional Lending*. Featured speaker David Timmons from Full Horn Finance discussed the capacity of his lending organization and the niche role it plays in the financial ecosystem.
  - **Upcoming November Topic:** *Procurement: Doing Business with the Town of Hilton Head Island* – Tuesday, November 18.
- **Gullah Geechee Historic Neighborhoods CDC Christmas Party** – Scheduled for Friday, December 12, 2025. More information to follow.



# TOWN OF HILTON HEAD ISLAND

## *Gullah Geechee Historic Neighborhoods Community Development Corporation*

**TO:** Gullah Geechee Historic Neighborhoods Community Development Corporation  
**FROM:** Thomas Boxley, Executive Director  
**CC:** Marc Orlando, Town Manager  
**DATE:** November 19, 2025  
**SUBJECT:** 2024-19 Wayfinding Solution Development Update

### **RECOMMENDATION:**

No action necessary. Status update.

### **BACKGROUND:**

In October 2025, the Gullah Geechee Historic Neighborhoods Community Development Corporation (CDC) officially launched the *Experience Gullah* website and mobile application. The launch event had an excellent turnout, and we have received positive feedback as the platform continues to grow. Through the development of this robust digital platform available in both iOS and Android formats, as well as a full-scale website, the CDC seeks to honor Gullah Geechee history by using technology to enhance the cultural experience.

### **SUMMARY:**

We are now moving forward with operational expansion. As part of the ongoing maintenance of the site, we anticipate regular hosting fees to support the continued operation of the application, website, and Gullah TV, which will feature evolving content and updates.

To support these ongoing costs, one identified revenue stream will include marketing and advertising contracts. Our marketing outreach will focus on three categories:

- Native Island Gullah Geechee–owned businesses,
- Island-owned businesses (non-Gullah Geechee), and
- Non-Islander–owned businesses.

Fee-based advertising services will be offered to these groups, with tiered pricing structures based on each client’s marketing goals and desired level of visibility during their campaign.



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**TO:** Gullah Geechee Historic Neighborhoods Community Development Corporation  
**FROM:** Thomas Boxley, Executive Director  
**CC:** Marc Orlando, Town Manager  
**DATE:** November 19, 2025  
**SUBJECT:** Review and Discussion Regarding the Renaming of the Rowing & Sailing Center at Squire Pope Community Park

### **RECOMMENDATION:**

The Gullah Geechee Historic Neighborhoods Community Development Corporation (CDC) is requested to consider and recommend to Town Council a proposed name change of the current “Rowing and Sailing Center at Squire Pope Community Park,” to “Hilton Head Island Fishing Cooperative Park.”

### **BACKGROUND:**

As part of our ongoing mission to honor and preserve the history of the Gullah Geechee culture and community of Hilton Head Island, the CDC is proposing a name change that more accurately reflects the historical significance of this site.

### **SUMMARY:**

In recognition of the previous ownership, utilization, and historic context of this location, we are proposing that the current name — *Rowing and Sailing Center at Squire Pope Community Park* — be changed to *Hilton Head Island Fishing Cooperative Park*.

This site holds deep historical roots within the Native Island and Gullah Geechee community. Historical references to the Hilton Head Island Fishing Cooperative date back to 1966, seventeen years prior to the Town’s incorporation, highlighting the organization’s instrumental role in advancing business and advocacy for Gullah fishermen and producers.

Renaming this site provides an opportunity to honor that legacy and further strengthen the relationship between the Town of Hilton Head Island and the Gullah Geechee community.

### ***Next Steps***

A formal recommendation will be submitted to Town Council for consideration at a future Town Council Meeting.



# TOWN OF HILTON HEAD ISLAND

## *Gullah Geechee Historic Neighborhoods Community Development Corporation*

**TO:** Gullah Geechee Historic Neighborhoods Community Development Corporation  
**FROM:** Thomas Boxley, Executive Director  
**CC:** Marc Orlando, Town Manager  
**DATE:** November 19, 2025  
**SUBJECT:** Review and Discussion of the Community Organizations Active in Disasters (COAD) Proposal

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### **RECOMMENDATION:**

Staff recommends that this item be presented for discussion. Consideration and approval will be scheduled for a future Gullah Geechee Historic Neighborhoods Community Development meeting.

### **BACKGROUND:**

As part of our mission to support the Gullah Geechee culture and community of Hilton Head Island, the Gullah Geechee Historic Neighborhoods Community Development Corporations (CDC) has actively participated in emergency operations planning and coordination efforts. There is now an opportunity to further support our historic neighborhoods through the development of a Community Organization Active in Disaster (COAD).

### **SUMMARY:**

The COAD is a community-based response group organized to address immediate needs that arise following disasters—ranging from major named storms to smaller-scale events that still create urgent community impacts.

During hurricane season, COAD members meet bi-weekly with representatives from key community organizations, including Emergency Management (Tom Dunn), Deep Well, CF Lowcountry, Second Helpings, and various faith-based entities. The bi-weekly meetings ensure readiness and rapid mobilization in the event of a storm. Now that hurricane season has ended, the group will transition to monthly meetings to continue planning and coordination as community needs evolve.

Today, we will hear from Mr. Dunn regarding the timeline of work completed to date and the next steps. Those next steps include:

1. Legal review of the proposed bylaws.
2. Presentation of the proposed bylaws to the Board.
3. Consideration and approval of the CDC serving as the fiscal agent for the COAD, enabling fundraising in support of communities outside the gates (*future meeting date*).



# TOWN OF HILTON HEAD ISLAND

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## *Gullah Geechee Historic Neighborhoods Community Development Corporation*

**TO:** Gullah Geechee Historic Neighborhoods Community Development Corporation  
**FROM:** Thomas Boxley, Executive Director  
**CC:** Marc Orlando, Town Manager  
**DATE:** November 19, 2025  
**SUBJECT:** Consideration of the 2026 Meeting Schedule

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### **RECOMMENDATION:**

The Gullah Geechee Historic Neighborhoods Community Development Corporation approve the attached schedule for regular meetings for the calendar year of 2026.

### **ATTACHMENTS:**

1. Proposed 2026 Meeting Schedule



Town of Hilton Head Island  
Gullah Geechee Historic Neighborhoods  
Community Development Corporation

## 2026 Meeting Schedule

<b>MEETING DATES</b>
January 21, 2026**
February 18, 2026
March 18, 2026
April 15, 2026*
May 20, 2026
June 17, 2026
July 15, 2026*
August 19, 2026
September 16, 2026
October 21, 2026*
November 18, 2026
December 16, 2026
January 20, 2027*

Regular meetings are held at 10:00 a.m. on the third Wednesday of each month, unless otherwise indicated. *\*Quarterly meetings will begin at 6:00 p.m.*

*\*\* (Date approved in 2025)*