



Town of Hilton Head Island

Gullah Geechee Historic Neighborhoods Community Development Corporation Meeting

Wednesday, March 18, 2026, 10:00 AM
1 Town Center Court, Hilton Head Island, SC
Benjamin M. Racusin Council Chambers

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 February 19, 2026
4. **Presentations**
 - a. Report of the Executive Director
5. **New Business**
 - a. Review and Discussion of the Gullah Geechee Historic Neighborhoods Community Development Corporation in Relation to the South Carolina Senate Bill 856 - Thomas Boxley, Executive Director for the Gullah Geechee Historic Neighborhoods Community Development Corporation
 - b. Review and Approval of the Fiscal Year 2027 Gullah Geechee Historic Neighborhoods Community Development Corporation Proposed Budget - Thomas Boxley, Executive Director for the Gullah Geechee Historic Neighborhoods Community Development Corporation
6. **Public Comment - Non Agenda Items**
7. **Adjournment**

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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
Thursday, February 19, 2026, 6:00 PM
Minutes

Call to Order

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

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

Board Members Absent: Sarah Eisner, Treasurer

Adoption of the Agenda

Mrs. Peterson made a motion to adopt. Mr. Perry seconded. Motion carried 6-0.

Approval of the Minutes

Regular Meeting Minutes of November 19, 2025

Mrs. Peterson made a motion to approve. Mr. Perry seconded. Motion carried 6-0.

Presentations

Report of the Executive Director

Thomas Boxley, Executive Director, provided the Gullah Geechee Historic Neighborhoods Community Development Corporation with his monthly report. Mr. Boxley reported that the Community Organization Active in Disaster (COAD) continues to meet monthly, and draft operational guidelines have been developed with legal counsel for the Board's consideration as it evaluates whether the CDC should serve as the lead coordinating organization and fiscal agent. Staff also continues to convene the Land Management Ordinance (LMO) Focus Group to develop recommendations related to ordinance updates affecting historic neighborhoods. In addition, staff provided an update on the Stoney Corridor/Highway 278 effort, noting that a meeting was held with property owners, the MKSK consulting team, and Town staff to review the proposed corridor master plan and gather feedback from approximately 25 participants representing Gullah Geechee community property owners.

Additional updates included the continuation of the Money Talks Financial Education Series, with the November session focusing on procurement and doing business with the

Town of Hilton Head Island and planning currently underway for the 2026 series. Staff also participated in the Community of Practice Quarterly Meeting hosted by the Clemson Design Center in Charleston, which brought together planning and community development professionals to discuss strategies for mitigating development impacts on culturally significant communities. Other updates included the CDC's annual Christmas Party with approximately 50 attendees and a partnership with the Heritage Classic Foundation through the RBC Heritage Golf Tournament's Birdies for Charity and Champions Fore Charity programs, which provide opportunities for donor contributions with a 20 percent match from the Foundation.

The Board held discussion and asked questions regarding the relationships being developed within the community and emphasized the importance of continuing to invest in those partnerships. Committee members also requested that the Executive Director research additional opportunities to further support these efforts. Positive comments were shared regarding the Executive Director's work to strengthen and rebuild relationships with the Gullah Geechee community. The Committee also reflected on the mission of the CDC and acknowledged its progress and impact within the Stoney Community.

Unfinished Business

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

Mr. Boxley reviewed the proposed renaming of the Rowing and Sailing Center at Squire Pope Community Park to better reflect the historic significance of the site to the Gullah Geechee community. He recommended renaming the facility Hilton Head Island Fishing Cooperative Park, recognizing the historic Fishing Cooperative established by Native Island Gullah Geechee fishermen in 1966, prior to the incorporation of the Town of Hilton Head Island. Mr. Boxley reported that outreach was conducted with descendants of the founding families of the Hilton Head Island Fishing Cooperative, with representatives from five of the fifteen identified families expressing strong support for the proposed name change.

The Board held discussion regarding the proposed name change with a consensus of positive comments.

Mr. Ames made a motion to forward to Town Council for consideration of approval the renaming of the Rowing & Sailing Center at Squire Pope Community Park to the Hilton Head Island Fishing Co-op. Mrs. Peterson seconded.

Chair Johnson asked for public comment.
There was no public comment during this time.

Motion carried 6-0.

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

Mr. Boxley presented the proposed establishment of a Community Organizations Active in Disasters (COAD). He explained that the COAD would serve as a community-based network designed to coordinate organizations and resources in response to emergency and disaster-related needs affecting residents of Hilton Head Island, including named storms and other emergency events. As part of the CDC's mission to support Gullah Geechee culture and historic neighborhoods, the Gullah Geechee Historic Neighborhoods Community Development Corporation has been actively involved in emergency operations planning, and the creation of a COAD would further strengthen these efforts. The proposed operational guidelines and by-laws, which have been reviewed by legal counsel, were presented for the Board's review, discussion, and consideration. If approved, Mr. Boxley indicated he would continue coordination with the Town of Hilton Head Island Emergency Operations Command and other partner organizations.

The Board held discussion and asked questions regarding the importance of the program as the community approaches hurricane season, and about the potential inclusion of the Community Foundation of the Lowcountry as a partner.

Mr. Perry made a motion to approve the Community Organizations Active in Disasters proposal with the Gullah Geechee Historic Neighborhoods Community Development Corporation serving as the Lead Entity and Fiscal Agent. Mr. Brown seconded.

Chair Johnson asked for public comment.
There was no public comment during this time.

Motion carried 6–0.

New Business

Review and Discussion Regarding the Land Management Ordinance Focus Group Recommendations — Thomas Boxley, Executive Director for the Gullah Geechee Historic Neighborhood Community Development Corporation

Mr. Boxley presented recommendations developed by the focus group convened by the Gullah Geechee Historic Neighborhoods Community Development Corporation to provide input on updates to the Land Management Ordinance. The recommendations addressed several development and infrastructure considerations, including stronger stormwater mitigation requirements and downstream impact analysis, support for cottage-style homes with smaller footprints, maintaining provisions for home-based businesses, replacing height measurements in feet with building stories, requiring more consistent infrastructure standards across development types, mandating sewer connections for new development, reintroducing incentives for workforce housing, establishing a minimum density of six dwelling units per acre, and extending development standards associated with the Mitchelville area to nearby

parcels for greater consistency. Mr. Boxley informed the Board that, if approved, the recommendations would be forwarded to the LMO Task Force and to Town Council for further consideration.

The Board held discussion and asked questions regarding the proposed density of six dwelling units per acre for Native Islander properties and whether those units could be used as short-term rentals; inquires about the level of Native Islander representation within the focus group; remarks regarding the long-term sustainability and future implications of the proposed amendments; and the emphasis on the importance of ensuring that any recommended changes to the Land Management Ordinance support the long-term preservation, stability, and economic sustainability of historic Gullah Geechee neighborhoods.

Mrs. Peterson made a motion to approve and forward to the Land Management Ordinance Task Force for consideration of incorporation into the rewrite of the Land Management Ordinance and to Town Council for final consideration and action.

Chair Johnson asked for public comment.
There was no public comment during this time.

Motion carried 6-0.

Public Comment - Non Agenda Items

Chair Johnson asked for public comment on non-agenda items.
There was no public comment at this time.

Executive Session

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

At 6:27 p.m., Mr. Perry made a motion to enter into executive session. Mr. Brown seconded. Motion carried 6-0.

At 7:02 p.m., Mr. Perry made a motion to end executive session and return to the regular meeting. Mr. Brown seconded. Motion carried 6-0.

Action from Executive Session

There was no action as a result of executive session.

Adjournment

At 7:02 p.m., Mr. Perry made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Mrs. Peterson seconded. Motion carried 6-0.

The full recording and a transcript of this meeting can be found on the Town's website at 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, ICMA-CM, Town Manager
DATE: March 18, 2026
SUBJECT: Report of the Executive Director

BACKGROUND:

This report provides a monthly update on the activities in which the Gullah Geechee Historic Neighborhoods Community Development Corporation (CDC) staff has been engaged since the February meeting. Highlights include the following:

- **Land Management Ordinance (LMO) Task Force and Focus Group** – The LMO Focus Group was formed to develop recommendations related to updates to the Land Management Ordinance that may affect historic neighborhoods. The Focus Group met on March 12. Additional recommendations from the Focus Group will be forthcoming. Additional meetings are anticipated in April and May, with the Task Force scheduled to complete its work by June.
- **Money Talks Financial Education Series** – Planning for the 2026 series is ongoing. Topics of interest identified by a cross-section of the small business community include Personal Finance, Business Finance, Credit Health and Wellness, Fraud Prevention, and Doing Business with the Town of Hilton Head Island.
- **Community of Practice Quarterly Meeting** – The CDC hosted the Community of Practice Quarterly Meeting on Friday, February 27, 2026, at the Hilton Head Library. The meeting brought together planning and community development professionals from across South Carolina to collaborate on strategies for supporting culturally sensitive communities.

The guest panel included Mr. Thomas Barnwell, Mr. Murray Christopher, Dr. Louise Cohen, Dr. Yolawnda McKinney, and Mayor Pro Tem Alex Brown. The panel discussion focused on development pressures, successes experienced

through various community initiatives, and strategies that planners throughout the region can implement to better support their respective communities. A total of 28 planning professionals attended the meeting.

- **International Economic Development Council Leadership Summit** – The International Economic Development Council (IEDC) serves as a certifying body for economic development professionals. During this visit, staff participated in a Capitol visit and met with staff members from the offices of Representatives Clyburn and Mace to discuss potential future funding opportunities.

RECOMMENDATION:

No action necessary.



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, ICMA-CM, Town Manager
DATE: March 18, 2026
SUBJECT: Review and Discussion of the Gullah Geechee Historic Neighborhoods Community Development Corporation in Relation to South Carolina Senate Bill 856

BACKGROUND:

As part of its mission to support the Gullah Geechee culture and community of Hilton Head Island, the CDC seeks to provide funding in support of community and economic development projects. This support may be provided in the form of grants and loans to businesses and members of the community that align with the organization's stated purpose as outlined in the Bylaws, Section 2.3: "...encouraging entrepreneurialism; assisting in business attraction, expansion, and retention; and providing financial opportunities..."

In 2000, the South Carolina Legislature established criteria for grants and loans to community development corporations and community development financial institutions through SC Code 34-43, the Community Economic Development Act. This act was last amended and reauthorized in 2015 and sunset in June 2023. There is currently a bill before the 126th Session of the South Carolina General Assembly that, if enacted, would effectively reestablish the Community Economic Development Act with revised provisions.

RECOMMENDATION:

No action necessary. Item for review, discussion.

ATTACHMENTS:

1. South Carolina Senate Bill 856

South Carolina General Assembly
126th Session, 2025-2026

Bill 856

~~Indicates Matter Stricken~~

Indicates New Matter

(Text matches printed bills. Document has been reformatted to meet World Wide Web specifications.)

A BILL

TO AMEND THE SOUTH CAROLINA CODE OF LAWS BY ADDING SECTION 12-6-3531 SO AS TO ALLOW A TAX CREDIT TO A TAXPAYER THAT INVESTS IN A COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION OR IN A COMMUNITY FINANCIAL INSTITUTION.

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of the State of South Carolina:

SECTION 1. Article 25, Chapter 6, Title 12 of the S.C. Code is amended by adding:

Section 12-6-3531. (A)(1) A taxpayer may claim as a credit against his state income tax, bank tax, or premium tax liability thirty-three percent of all amounts invested in a community development corporation or in a community development financial institution. A taxpayer that makes a cash donation to a certified community development corporation or community development financial institution may claim a credit equal to fifty percent of the donation.

(2) To qualify for this credit the taxpayer must obtain a certificate from the South Carolina Department of Commerce certifying that the entity into which the funds are invested is a community development corporation or a community development financial institution and certifying that the credit taken or available to that taxpayer will not exceed the annual aggregate dollar limitation of all those credits as provided in subsection (B). A taxpayer who invested in good faith in a certified corporation or institution may claim the credit provided in this section, notwithstanding the fact that the certification is later revoked or not renewed by the department.

(B) The total amount of credits allowed pursuant to this section may not exceed in the aggregate fifteen million dollars for all taxpayers and all taxable years and three million dollars for all taxpayers in one taxable year.

(C) The Department of Commerce shall authorize the tax credits each year on a first-come, first-served basis. A

single community development corporation or community development financial institution may not receive more than twenty-five percent of the total annual tax credits authorized pursuant to this section. Twenty-five percent of annual tax credits must be held in a reserve account during the first three quarters of each tax year and made available exclusively to small, rural-based, community development corporations. During the first three quarters of any tax year, an individual community development corporation or a community development financial institution must not be authorized to receive more than fifteen percent of the statewide total annual credits. During the fourth quarter of each tax year, all remaining tax credits are available to all certified community development corporations or community development financial institutions.

(D) The department shall monitor the investments made by taxpayers in community development corporations and community development financial institutions as permitted by this section and shall perform the functions as provided in subsections (A) and (C).

(E) If the amount of the credit determined, pursuant to subsection (A), exceeds the taxpayer's state tax liability for the applicable taxable year, the taxpayer may carry over the excess to the immediately succeeding taxable years. However, the credit carry-over may not be used for a taxable year that begins on or after three years from the date of the acquisition of stock or other equity interest that is the basis for a credit pursuant to this section. The amount of the credit carry-over from a taxable year must be reduced to the extent that the carry-over is used by the taxpayer to obtain a credit provided for in this section for a later taxable year.

(F) The department must not authorize any tax credits after the annual aggregate limitation set forth in subsection (B) has been reached.

(G) Banks and financial institutions with tax liabilities in this State may invest in community development corporations and community development financial institutions incorporated pursuant to the laws of this State, up to a maximum of ten percent of a chartered bank or financial institution's total capital and surplus.

(H) For purposes of this section:

(1) "Community development corporation" means a nonprofit corporation which:

(a) is chartered pursuant to Chapter 31, Title 33;

(b) is tax exempt pursuant to Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, as amended;

(c) has a primary mission of developing and improving low-income communities and neighborhoods through economic and related development;

(d) has activities and decisions initiated, managed, and controlled by the constituents of those local communities;

(e) has a primary function of developing projects and activities designed to enhance the economic opportunities of the people in the community served, including efforts to enable them to become owners and managers of small businesses and producers of affordable housing and jobs in the community served;

(f) does not provide credit, capital, or other assistance from public funds in an amount greater than twenty-five thousand dollars at one time or in one transaction. The department may adjust that dollar amount in the manner provided in Section 37-1-109; and

(g) is not a nonprofit organization with the sole purpose of providing housing to neighborhoods or technical assistance to other nonprofit organizations.

(2) "Community development financial institution" means an organization that:

(a) has a primary mission of promoting community development by providing credit, capital, or development services to small businesses or home mortgage assistance to individuals including, but not limited to, capital access programs, microlending, franchise financing, and guaranty performance bonds;

(b) maintains, through representation on its governing board, accountability to persons in need of the institution's services;

(c) is not an agent or instrumentality of the United States, or of a state or political subdivision of a state nor maintains an affiliate relationship with any of them;

(d) maintains a goal of providing a majority of its services to low-income individuals, minorities, females, or rural areas;

(e) provides capital and technical assistance to small and micro businesses or mortgage assistance to individuals;

(f) does not provide credit, capital, or other assistance in an amount greater than two hundred fifty thousand dollars at one time or in one transaction. That dollar amount may be adjusted in the manner provided in Section 37-1-109;

(g) has been certified or recertified as a community development financial institution as provided in this chapter; and

(h) may be a federally chartered or state-chartered financial institution holding company which qualifies as a community development financial institution only if the holding company and the subsidiaries and affiliates of the holding company collectively satisfy the requirements of this section.

SECTION 2. Unless reauthorized by the General Assembly, the provisions of this act shall terminate on June 30, 2031, and this act and all other laws and regulations governing, authorizing, and otherwise dealing with community development corporations and community development financial institutions are deemed repealed on that date.

SECTION 3. This act takes effect upon approval by the Governor and first applies to credits earned and certificates issued, and the administration thereof, after 2025. Any credits earned and certificates issued, and the administration thereof, before 2026 must be claimed in accordance with the provisions of Section 12-6-3530 as it existed on June 30, 2024. However, any credits earned, and certificates issued before 2026 must count toward the aggregate credit limit for all taxpayers in all calendar years set forth in Section 12-6-3531(B).

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This web page was last updated on January 28, 2026 at 01:49 PM



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, ICMA-CM, Town Manager
DATE: March 18, 2026
SUBJECT: Review and Discussion of the Gullah Geechee Historic Neighborhoods Community Development Corporation Fiscal Year 2027 Budget

BACKGROUND:

Established in 2022, the Gullah Geechee Historic Neighborhoods Community Development Corporation has continued its operations by developing programs in alignment with both the Strategic Plan adopted by the Board in February 2024 and the Town of Hilton Head Island's Comprehensive Plan, 2020–2040 (adopted in October 2020). In this manner, staff has worked to present a budget that supports the mission of the organization while maintaining fiscal responsibility.

FY 2026 budget highlights include the following:

- Purchase of 117 William Hilton Parkway
- Additional land purchase in the Stoney community
- Support of tax sale and heirs' property mitigation efforts
- Launch of the Experience Gullah website and application

FY 2027 budget highlights include the following:

- Proposal for the Town to absorb the salary and associated support costs
- Provision of funding for legal support
- Stoney Improvement Grant Program
- Pitch Competition
- Funding for the additional purchase of land in support of the organization's mission

Staff has worked to fine-tune projected expenditures to ensure that funding is being allocated intentionally and strategically. Additional capital investments in support of construction costs (both soft and hard) are anticipated in the next fiscal year. Staff is also pursuing additional funding streams from both the public and private sectors in support of the organization's goals.

RECOMMENDATION:

Item for review, discussion, and vote. Staff recommends approval of this agenda item.

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Fiscal Year 2027 Proposed Budget

FY2027 GGHNCD FUND BUDGET

Special Revenue Fund - GGHNCD Fund

	FY 2024 Actual	FY 2025 Actual	FY 2026 Adopted Budget	FY 2026 Projection	FY 2027 Proposed Budget
Beginning Fund Balance	5,415,560	5,561,896	5,564,275	5,564,275	4,074,501
Revenues					
SC Department of Commerce	-	-	-	-	-
Beaufort County Economic Devlp	-	-	-	-	-
Lease	-	-	-	45,000	30,000
Donations - Community Foundation				14,000	-
Fundraising					100,000
Investment Income	275,478	279,404	125,000	169,789	52,500
Transfers In GF	-	-	-	-	359,026
Total Revenues	275,478	279,404	125,000	228,789	541,526
Expenditures					
Personnel					
Salaries	94,983	149,720	154,826	255,031	261,863
FICA	7,733	12,159	13,663	17,852	20,721
Retirement	11,377	17,924	18,579	30,604	31,424
Administrative Fee	21	36	36	69	72
Medflex	1,342	1,150	1,150	2,300	2,300
Preventive Health Care	180	233			600
Medical	4,009	9,430	12,706	27,344	27,176
Dental	94	162	162	310	324
Basic LTD	23	39	39	74	77
STD	111	195	204	329	343
Supplemental LTD	157	396	544	601	663
Life A&D (State)	3	5	5	9	9
Life A&D (Town)	184	323	365	544	1,172
Workers Compensation	-	817	1,092	848	2,420
Holiday	-	-	431	431	862
Vehicle Allowance	5,250	9,000	9,000	9,000	9,000
Total Personnel	125,464	201,588	212,802	345,346	359,026
Operating					
Travel	-	226	4,900	4,900	3,685
Meetings and Events	299	1,329	4,250	4,250	3,420
Training	178				-

FY2027 GGHNCDC FUND BUDGET

Special Revenue Fund - GGHNCDC Fund

	FY 2024 Actual	FY 2025 Actual	FY 2026 Adopted Budget	FY 2026 Projection	FY 2027 Proposed Budget
Professional Due					-
Professional Services		59,955	204,210	73,000	111,210
Promotion and Hospitality	605	10,370	13,400	13,400	60,600
Printing and Publishing	170	504	2,000	2,000	2,000
Marketing	1,859	2,625	2,417	2,417	2,315
Insurance	-	-	10,000	-	-
Books, Subscriptions and Dues	22	25	1,125	800	1,000
Books and Resource Material		62			
Office Supplies	546	341	1,500	1,500	1,500
Fundraising	-	-	500,000	-	25,000
Donation Expense	-	-	1,000,000	-	100,000
General Contingency			80,000	-	25,000
Total Operating	3,678	75,437	1,823,802	102,267	335,730
Capital Outlay					
Land	-	-	1,250,000	1,270,950	1,000,000
Total Capital Outlay	-	-	1,250,000	1,270,950	1,000,000
Other Financing Uses					
Transfer to Capital	-	-	-	-	-
Total Other Financing Uses	-	-	-	-	-
Total Expenditures	129,142	277,025	3,286,604	1,718,563	1,694,756
Net change in fund balance	146,336	2,379	(3,161,604)	(1,489,774)	(1,153,230)
Ending Fund Balance	5,561,896	5,564,275	2,402,671	4,074,501	2,921,271

Head Count

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