



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.**

**Approved: March 18, 2026**

**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)**