



Town of Hilton Head Island  
GULLAH GEECHEE HISTORIC  
NEIGHBORHOODS COMMUNITY  
DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION MEETING  
Wednesday, March 18, 2026, 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; Alan Perry; and Andre White, Secretary

Board Members Absent: Sarah Eisner, Treasurer

Adoption of the Agenda

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

Approval of the Minutes

Regular Meeting Minutes of February 19, 2026

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

Presentations

Report of the Executive Director

Executive Director Thomas Boxley provided an update on activities undertaken since the February meeting. He reported that the Land Management Ordinance (LMO) Focus Group convened on March 12 to develop recommendations regarding potential ordinance amendments affecting historic neighborhoods. Additional meetings were anticipated in April and May, with the broader LMO Task Force expected to complete its work by June. Mr. Boxley also shared updates on planning efforts for the 2026 Money Talks Financial Education Series, noting that feedback from the small business community identified personal finance, business finance, credit health and wellness, fraud prevention, and doing business with the Town as priority topics.

Mr. Boxley further reported on the CDC's Community of Practice Quarterly Meeting held on February 27 at the Hilton Head Library. The meeting brought together planning and community development professionals from across South Carolina to discuss strategies for supporting culturally sensitive communities. The guest panel included Thomas Barnwell, Murray Christopher, Dr. Louise Cohen, Dr. Yolawnda McKinney, and Mayor Pro Tem Alex Brown. In addition, Mr. Boxley highlighted his participation in the International

Economic Development Council Leadership Summit, where he met with staff from the offices of Representatives James Clyburn and Nancy Mace to discuss potential future funding opportunities for the CDC. The report was received as information only and no action was taken.

The Board discussed the Executive Director's report and expressed appreciation for Mr. Boxley's work and the relationships he has established on behalf of the CDC; and members noted that communities throughout the region are paying attention to the work being accomplished by both the Town and the CDC.

### New Business

#### 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

Mr. Boxley provided an overview of South Carolina Senate Bill 856 and its potential implications for the CDC. He explained that the legislation would reestablish provisions of the Community Economic Development Act, which previously authorized tax incentives and investment opportunities for community development corporations and community development financial institutions. The Executive Director noted that the CDC's mission includes supporting community and economic development through grants, loans, and other financial opportunities that benefit residents and businesses within Gullah Geechee historic neighborhoods.

Board members discussed how the proposed legislation could create future funding and investment opportunities for the organization if enacted. Staff reviewed provisions of the bill related to tax credits for investments made in qualified community development corporations and highlighted eligibility requirements established within the legislation. The Board received the information and discussed the importance of monitoring the bill's progress during the legislative session. No action was taken.

The Board held discussed regarding the future direction of the CDC, including opportunities that could result from a potential organizational name change; members also expressed support for exploring a name that more accurately reflects the organization's mission and economic development activities.

#### 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

Mr. Boxley presented the proposed Fiscal Year 2027 Budget for the Gullah Geechee Historic Neighborhoods Community Development Corporation. He reviewed the organization's accomplishments during FY 2026, including the acquisition of 117 William Hilton Parkway, additional land acquisition in the Stoney community, support for tax sale and heirs' property mitigation efforts, and the launch of the Experience Gullah website and mobile application. He

noted that the proposed budget was developed in alignment with the CDC Strategic Plan and the Town of Hilton Head Island Comprehensive Plan while maintaining a fiscally responsible approach.

The proposed FY 2027 budget includes funding for legal support services, continuation of land acquisition efforts, implementation of a Stoney Improvement Grant Program, and development of a pitch competition initiative. Mr. Boxley also discussed a proposal for the Town to absorb the Executive Director salary and associated support costs, allowing the CDC to focus additional resources on programmatic initiatives. Board members discussed the proposed expenditures, projected revenues, and anticipated funding opportunities. Following discussion, the Board voted to approve the Fiscal Year 2027 Budget as presented.

The Board discussed current and future partnerships, potential grant funding opportunities, and ways the CDC can continue supporting residents through land acquisition assistance and business development initiatives; members also noted the growing recognition and credibility the CDC has established both locally and throughout the region.

**Mr. Brown made a motion to approve and forward to Town Council for approval the Fiscal Year 2027 Gullah Geechee Historic Neighborhoods Community Development Corporation proposed budget. Mr. Perry seconded.**

Chair Johnson asked for public comment. There was no public comment at that time.

**Motion carried 6-0.**

Public Comment - Non Agenda Items

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

Adjournment

**At 10:58 am, Mr. Perry made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Brown seconded.  
Motion carried 6-0.**

**Approved: June 17, 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).**