



Town of Hilton Head Island

Gullah Geechee Historic Neighborhoods Community Development Corporation Meeting

Wednesday, January 17, 2024, 6:00 PM

Hilton Head Island Branch Library

11 Beach City Road, Hilton Head Island, SC 29926

Large Meeting Room

- 1. Call to Order**
- 2. Adoption of the Agenda**
- 3. Appearance by Citizens**
- 4. New Business**
 - a. Discussion of the Gullah Geechee Historic Neighborhoods Community Development Corporation's Position on the William Hilton Parkway Gateway Corridor Project - Thomas Boxley, Executive Director for the Gullah Geechee Historic Neighborhoods Community Development Corporation
 - b. Review, Consideration and Approval of the Fiscal Year 2024-2026 Gullah Geechee Historic Neighborhoods Community Development Corporation Strategic Plan - Thomas Boxley, Executive Director for the Gullah Geechee Historic Neighborhoods Community Development Corporation
 - c. Discussion of the Establishment of an Account with the Community Foundation of the Lowcountry for the purpose of Planned Giving - Thomas Boxley, Executive Director for the Gullah Geechee Historic Neighborhoods Community Development Corporation
- 5. 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

TO: Gullah Geechee Historic Neighborhoods Community Development Corporation
FROM: Thomas Boxley, Executive Director
CC: Marc Orlando, Town Manager
DATE: January 8, 2023
SUBJECT: Discussion of the Gullah Geechee Historic Neighborhoods Community Development Corporation's Position on the William Hilton Parkway Gateway Corridor Project

RECOMMENDATION:

That the Gullah Geechee Historic Neighborhoods Community Development Corporation formulate a position on the William Hilton Parkway Gateway Corridor Project that is in line with the Community and its Strategic Plan.

BACKGROUND:

The purpose of this discussion regarding the proposed expansion of William Hilton Parkway Gateway Corridor Project is to present the collected information that has been gathered during meetings with impacted families of the Stoney Community and to recommend an official course of action which incorporates mitigation strategies currently available.

SUMMARY:

On February 21, 2023, Town Council authorized the creation of a William Hilton Parkway Corridor Independent Review Advisory Committee, which has played an integral part in the Town's comprehensive review of the William Hilton Parkway Gateway Corridor Project. In this process, the Town has hired an independent specialist to conduct an end-to-end simulation and perform a project analysis including areas through and beyond the project limits. Executive Director, Thomas Boxley, was charged by the Gullah Geechee Historic Neighborhoods Community Development Corporation to formulate a position statement based on outside meetings with those identified families within the Stoney Community that will be impacted by the proposed project.



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: December 27, 2023
SUBJECT: Review, Consideration and Approval of the Fiscal Year 2024-2026 Gullah Geechee Historic Neighborhoods Community Development Corporation Strategic Plan

RECOMMENDATION:

The Gullah Geechee Historic Neighborhoods Community Development Corporation review and formally adopt the fiscal year 2024-2026 Strategic Plan and forward to Town Council for final approval and adoption.

BACKGROUND:

The purpose of the review of the Gullah Geechee Historic Neighborhoods Community Development Corporations Strategic Plan is to provide an opportunity for input from its Board Members and the community regarding the first draft of the fiscal year 2024-2026 Strategic Plan. Once approved by the board, it will be forwarded to Town Council for final approval and adoption at a subsequent meeting.

SUMMARY:

Through various previous public meetings, the Gullah Geechee Historic Neighborhoods Community Development Corporation (GGHNCD) formalized a draft fiscal year 2024-2026 Strategic Plan. With the community's involvement, Thomas Boxley, Executive Director of the GGHNCD, will present the draft of the strategic plan for final approval by the Board of Directors.

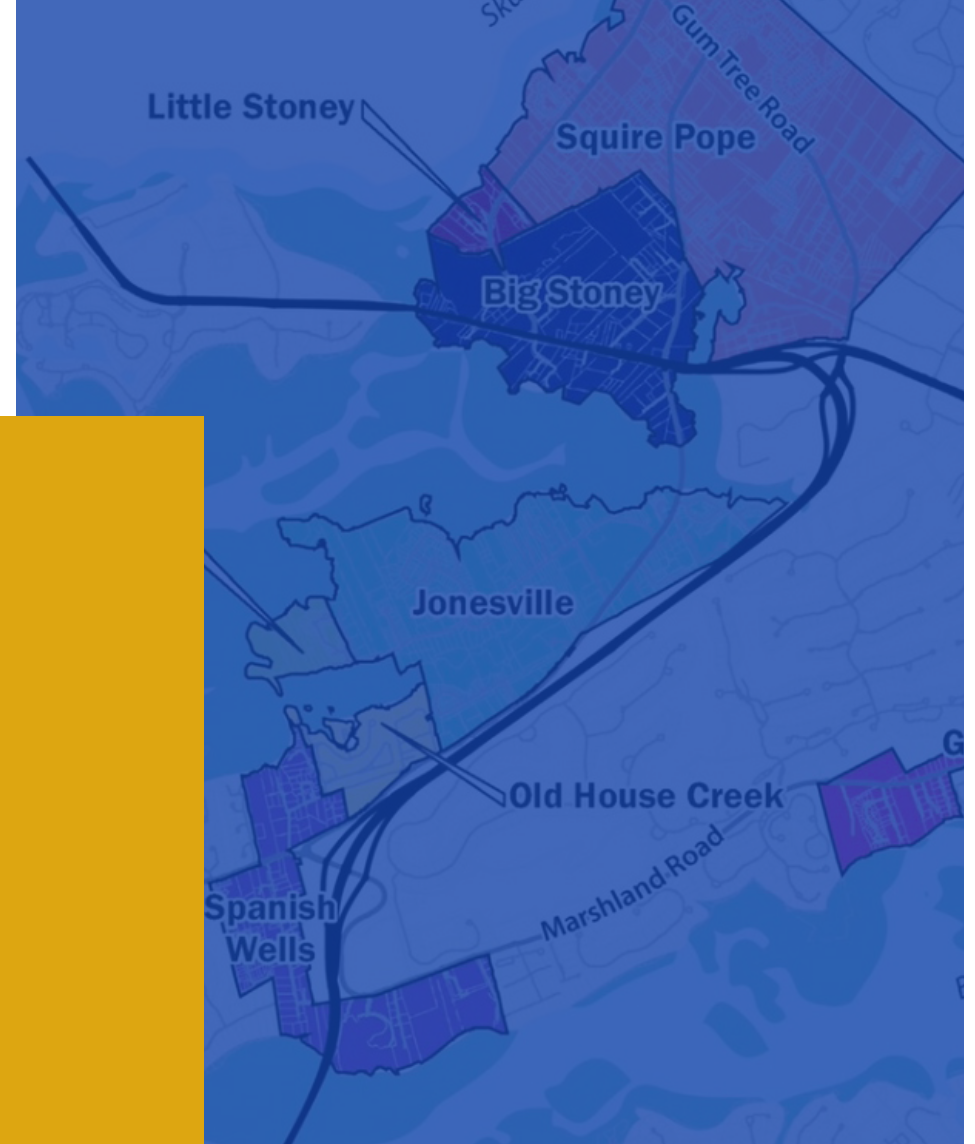
ATTACHMENTS:

1. Fiscal Year 2024 – 2026 Gullah Geechee Historic Neighborhoods Community Development Corporation Draft Strategic Plan



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

Strategic Plan



PHONE

Thomas Boxley
Executive Director
843-341-3097



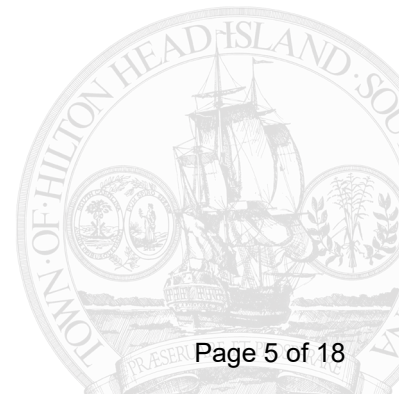
ADDRESS

1 Town Center Court
Hilton Head Island, SC
29928



WEB

Hiltonheadislandsc.gov



Town of Hilton Head Island

*Gullah Geechee Historic Neighborhoods
Community Development Corporation*

Strategic Plan



MEET THE TEAM



Thomas Boxley

Executive Director



Cindaia Ervin

Assistant Town Clerk



Marc Orlando

Town Manager



Alan Perry

Mayor



BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Shirley Peterson

Chairwoman

Terry Brubaker

David Ames

Town Councilman

Louis Johnson

Alex Brown

Town Councilman

Andre White

CORPORATE OBJECTIVE



The Gullah Geechee Historic Neighborhood Community Development Corporation was established in 2023 as a South Carolina not-for-profit corporation to support the advancement and sustainability of the historic and culturally sensitive Gullah Geechee communities of HiltonHead Island, South Carolina.





CORPORATE MISSION

In tribute to the Gullah Geechee ancestors, whose roots on Hilton Head Island trace back to pre-Civil War times, and whose resilient descendants endure and flourish, we pledge to amplify their voices, preserve their culture, honor their way of life, and uphold their legacy. Looking forward, we are committed to fostering collaboration across the Hilton Head Island community, working to establish, cultivate, and support economic, business, educational, training, and development opportunities. This commitment aims to empower present-day Gullah Geechee descendants and ensure that future generations actively engage in and benefit from the economic opportunities of the present and beyond.

SWOT ANALYSIS

A SWOT analysis is a tool utilized in planning that identifies strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats pertaining to specific study areas. The SWOT Analysis aims to identify the positive and negative forces that can impact desired outcomes. Our approach for gathering this information was a community-centric approach involving community members.

We hosted a strategic planning session on November 30, 2023, to gather information. The question posed to the board of directors and approximately 50 community members in attendance was, "When considering the historic Gullah communities on Hilton Head Island, what do you identify as strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats?" A summary of the responses from both the board and the community members who chose to speak publicly is captured in the following narrative.

01

Strengths

- The people - the people give the neighborhoods character, the people are resilient. The people are the keepers of the heritage, are talented and are landowners.
- Connection – Gullah Heritage Corridor – nationally recognized
- The uniqueness of the culture – oral history, language
- Cultural Tourism Sites – Mitchelville, Fort Howell, cemeteries
- Financial position – ATAX funding

02

Weaknesses

- Communication across groups – breaking down the "silos"
- Barriers exist in political processes, public agencies, private groups and large businesses – some of which carry biases towards the Gullah people
- Trust (lack of)
- Not open to change
- Move beyond the Frazier mystique – recognizing and naming the fact that this caused gentrification and creation of a class and caste system among the Island community

02

Weaknesses (continued)

- Lack of youth involvement and succession planning
- Prioritization of issues
- Education regarding Gullah history
- Administrative Process for cultural awareness

03

Opportunities

- Town's current willingness to invest human, financial, and real (land) resources
- Adjustment of town meeting times (create an opportunity for broader participation)
- Civic engagement in the political process
- Public/private institutional partnerships
- Entrepreneurial joint ventures in the areas of tourism, golf tournament (the RBC Heritage), contracting with the Town
- Education – development of Gullah curriculum for youth and adult learners
- Collaboration with other Gullah Geechee corridor communities
- Further protection of the environment and mitigation of climate change
- Business development
- Tourism District Development

04

Threats

- Complacency
- Lack of affordable housing
- Territorial mentality of those living in the gated communities
- Gentrification – loss of land ownership for the Gullah people
- Competing priorities
- Controlling the narrative of Gullah history
- Political change

STRATEGIC GOALS

During November and December 2023, the Gullah Geechee Historic Neighborhoods Community Development Corporation hosted a series of meetings, engaging both the board of directors and community members. The primary objective of these gatherings was to collect information to inform and shape our strategic plan. Additionally, a survey was disseminated electronically and in hard copy among Gullah community members through diverse networks. The insights gathered from these meetings and surveys guided the development of our strategic plan.

1

Ensure the stabilization and preservation of Gullah Geechee neighborhoods, cultural sites, and history.

2

Develop and maintain strategic partnerships that will support the work of the Community Development Corporation.

3

Educate the Island community regarding the Community Development Corporation and the opportunities the organization presents.

4

Increase access to capital and financial education.

5

Support training and employment opportunities for Gullah Geechee youth.



Looking forward, we are committed to fostering collaboration across the Hilton Head Island community, working to establish, cultivate, and endorse fair financial, business, educational, training, and developmental opportunities.

Goal #1:

Ensure the stabilization and preservation of Gullah Geechee neighborhoods, cultural sites, and history.

• STONEY NEIGHBORHOOD

The proposed expansion of William Hilton Parkway (Highway 278) will significantly impact the historic Stoney neighborhood within the Gullah Geechee community as well as the broader Hilton Head Island community. The ramifications will be realized disproportionately in the historic Stoney neighborhood. The following summary represents input gathered from Gullah Geechee community members who own property or businesses in the Stoney community that will be directly impacted by the proposed expansion and the CDC's suggested mitigation recommendations:

1. Gullah Geechee people and communities have historically shouldered the disproportionate burdens of Highway 278 expansions, and they deserve comprehensive support to reap the benefits of their sacrifices. Property owners within the proposed expanded right-of-way should receive fair and mutually agreed-upon compensation for the land they are asked to relinquish. Compensation options may include and equitable financial settlement, land swap, or a combination of both.
2. It is imperative to establish a provision that allocates funding to ensure appropriate access, including a safe turning lane, signage, and parking at the Jenkins Cemetery—a significant Gullah Geechee Heritage site.
3. All impacted land sites should receive infrastructure development support, encompassing water/sewer line connections, safe streets and roads, sidewalks, curb cuts, and drainage. This infrastructure should adhere to maximum Floor Area Ratio (FAR) standards to facilitate future development on sites owned by affected families and businesses.
5. Funding should be allocated toward the establishment of a business corridor in the Stoney neighborhood. This corridor should feature safe ingress/egress, parking facilities, and water/sewer infrastructure, ensuring seamless access to the proposed expanded highway and fostering the development of a thriving commerce center.
6. Prominent public art displays showcasing Gullah Geechee heritage and culture should be installed at entry and exit points of the Stoney neighborhood.
7. A commitment should be secured from the Town Council, Mayor's Office, and South Carolina Department of Transportation (SCDOT) to refrain from impacting Stoney when considering future expansion concepts.



Goal #1: *Continued*

Ensure the stabilization and preservation of Gullah Geechee neighborhoods, cultural sites, and history.

• **Muddy Creek/Bryant Road Property**

Collaborate with the Town to develop housing and essential amenities on the 7.5-acre site for the creation of affordable housing opportunities.

• **Mitchelville**

Support the continued development of the Historic Mitchelville Freedom Park as needed and requested.



• **Community Land Trust**

Provide formal recommendations, including community benefit agreements, to the Town Council. These guidelines will outline how future development and developers should approach projects within historic Gullah Neighborhoods.

1. Development projects will undergo thorough evaluation by a committee comprised of community members, CDC board members, and representatives from historic land preservation task forces.

2. The Town Council will take these recommendations into consideration when developers seek resources from the Town to support projects that impact Gullah neighborhoods.

• **Gullah cemeteries**

Support the preservation of historic Gullah Geechee cemeteries.

1. Clear ownership and title related issues as needed.
2. Establish agreements with gated communities for access to cemeteries.

3. Establish right of way agreements with gated communities that impedes future encroachment.

• **Enhancement of cultural tours**

Utilize QR codes to integrate video history, supporting park projects through the preservation of digital records.

• **Support the development of a world class Gullah museum.**

• **Support Increased tourism to Gullah landmarks and cultural sites through effective marketing and outreach strategies.**

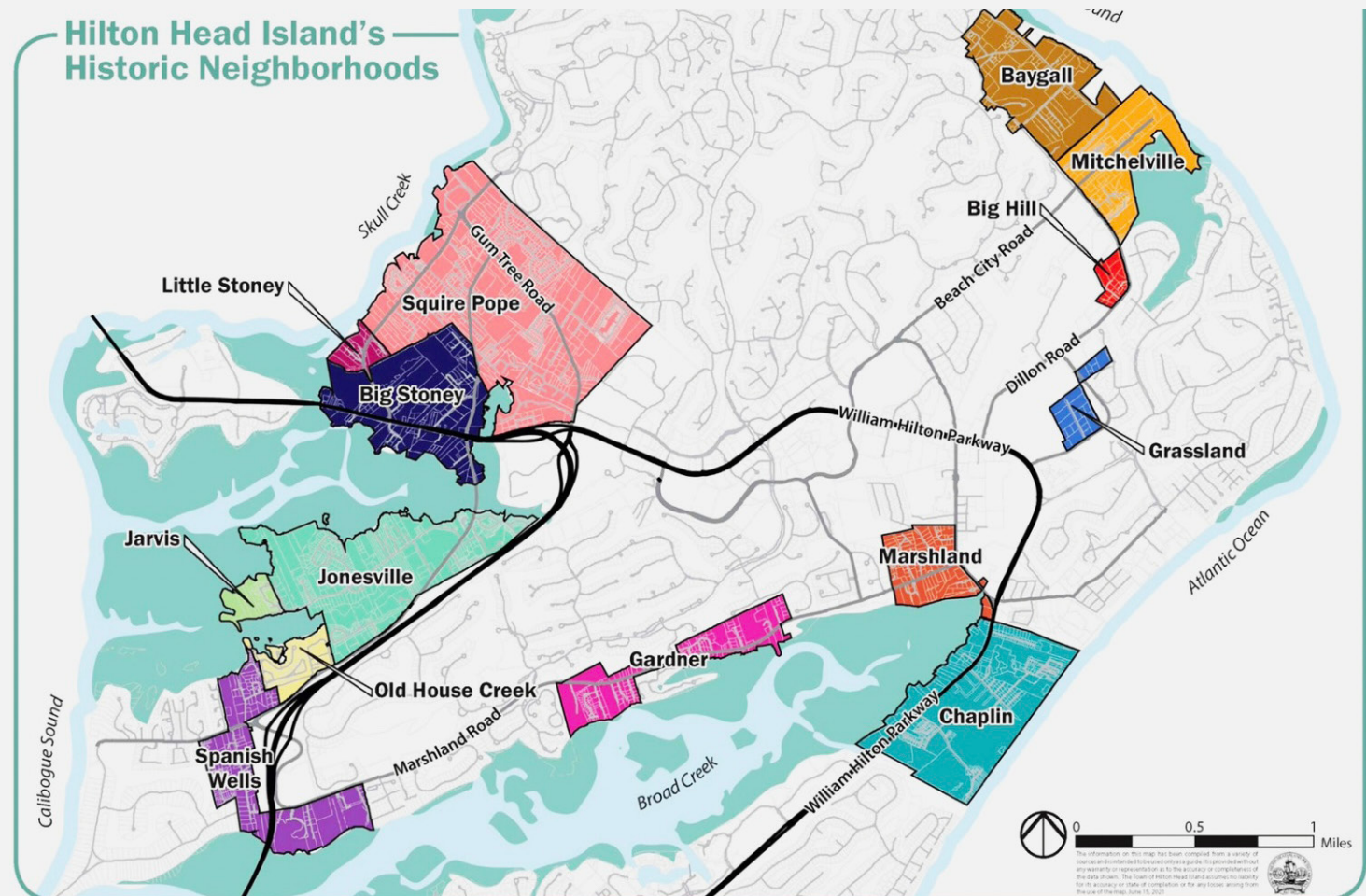
1. Build relationships with the Hilton Head Island-Bluffton Chamber of Commerce, the local destination marketing organization to insure more prominent, Gullah-centric advertising.

2. Secure prominent placement of Gullah-centric advertisements in the Hilton Head Island Airport.

Goal #2:

Develop and maintain strategic partnerships that will support the work of the Community Development Corporation.

- Establish the RCB Heritage Community Benefits Agreement to specifically advantage Gullah Geechee contractors and the Community Development Corporation.
- Establish strategic alliances with business, community, and organization leaders on Hilton Head Island.
- Continue to grow and develop strategic alliances with federal and state congressional representatives.
- Create collaborative opportunities for joint ventures with the Community Development Corporation in the development of both residential and commercial properties.





Goal #3:

Educate the Island community regarding the Community Development Corporation and the opportunities the organization presents.

- Host monthly meetings with topics of interest for community members.

- Support the Gullah Geechee Land and Cultural Preservation Task Force in educating Town Council and broader Hilton Head Island community.



Goal #4:

Increase access to capital and financial education.

- Secure funding to support the launch of a business loan program.
- Secure funding to support the launch of a real estate development loan program.
- Support and facilitate financial education and technical support for:
 1. Gullah Geechee residents and business owners
 2. Home ownership
 3. Commercial real estate development



Goal #5:

Support training and employment opportunities for Gullah Geechee youth.

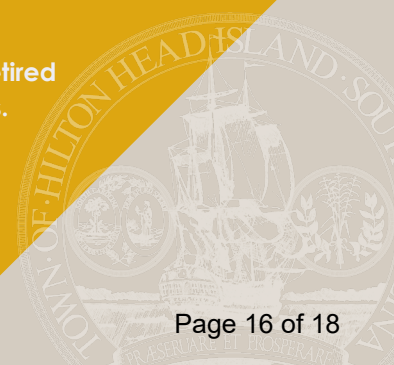
- Support the development of internship opportunities with various departments at the Town of Hilton Head Island.

1. Support the establishment of a Junior Fire Academy.

2. Support the creation of internship opportunities within Town Government Departments

3. Support internship opportunities with private sector businesses across the Island

4. Develop a volunteer network of retired professionals to support these efforts.



Strategic Plan

CONTACT US



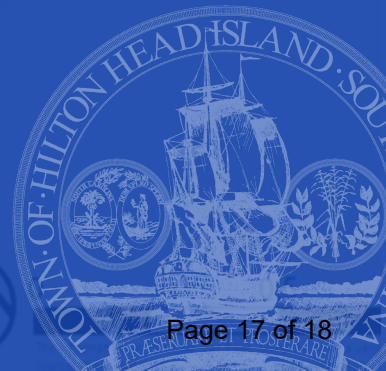
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TOWN OF HILTON HEAD ISLAND

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: January 8, 2023
SUBJECT: Discussion of the Establishment of an Account with the Community Foundation of the Lowcountry for the purpose of Planned Giving

RECOMMENDATION:

The Gullah Geechee Historic Neighborhoods Community Development Corporation along with the Community Foundation of the Lowcountry create a long-term partnership to accept planned giving gifts on behalf of the Gullah Geechee Historic Neighborhoods Community Development Corporation for various programs that the organization will begin embarking on.

BACKGROUND:

The purpose of the establishment of an account with the Community Foundation of the Lowcountry (CFL) is to create the infrastructure by which the Community Development Corporation can accept gifts from the benevolent community of Hilton Head Island that currently give through the CFL. This will allow those that currently gift through the CFL to continue to do so.

SUMMARY:

The Community Foundation of the Lowcountry (CFL) will receive gifts. The GGNHCDC will establish a long-term partnership to accomplish the goal of growing gifts. Together with Thomas Boxley, Executive Director for Gullah Geechee Historic Neighborhoods Community Development Corporation this partnership is expected to aid in the overall development of structured giving.