



Town of Hilton Head Island

Gullah Geechee Historic Neighborhoods Community Development Corporation Meeting

**Wednesday, February 21, 2024, 10:00 AM
1 Town Center Court, Hilton Head Island, SC
Benjamin M. Racusin Council Chambers**

- 1. Call to Order**
- 2. Adoption of the Agenda**
- 3. Approval of the Minutes**
 - a. Regular Meeting Minutes of November 13, 2023
 - b. Regular Meeting Minutes of November 30, 2023
- 4. Appearance by Citizens**
- 5. Unfinished Business**
 - a. 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
- 6. Chairman's Report**
- 7. Adjournment**

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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
COMMITTEE MEETING
Monday, November 13, 2023 – 3:00 PM
Minutes

Call to Order

Chair Peterson called the meeting to order at 3:00 pm.

Committee Members Present: Chair Shirley “Peaches” Peterson; David Ames; Alex Brown, Terry Brubaker; Pastor Louis Johnson; Andre White

Adoption of the Agenda

Mr. Ames moved to approve the agenda as presented. Mr. Johnson seconded. Motion carried 5-0.

New Business

Gullah Geechee Historic Neighborhoods Community Development Corporation Strategic Plan – Thomas Boxley, Executive Director for the Gullah Geechee Historic Neighborhoods Community Development Corporation

Thomas Boxley, Executive Director, addressed the committee regarding the formation of the strategic plan. He detailed the proposed timeline, the importance of the Town’s Historic Neighborhoods, and how their involvement is key to the finalization of the strategic plan.

Committee members asked questions and made comments regarding the formation of goals for the strategic plan, potential impacts they as a committee could encounter, plans for mitigation if needed, and the importance of future planning.

The Committee broke off into small planning groups which aided in the ability to interact with one another and Mr. Boxley regarding the strategic plan. They spoke about various topics that would be considered for addition to the strategic plan.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 4:54 pm.



Town of Hilton Head Island
GULLAH GEECHEE HISTORIC
NEIGHBORHOODS COMMUNITY
DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION
COMMITTEE MEETING
Thursday, November 30, 2023 – 9:00 AM
Minutes

Call to Order

Chair Peterson called the meeting to order at 9:00 am.

Committee Members Present: Chair Shirley “Peaches” Peterson; David Ames; Alex Brown, Terry Brubaker; Pastor Louis Johnson; Andre White

Adoption of the Agenda

Mr. Ames moved to approve. Mr. Johnson seconded. Motion carried 5-0.

Approval of the Minutes

Special Meeting Minutes of October 12, 2023

Mr. Ames moved to approve. Mr. Brubaker seconded. Motion carried 5-0.

Unfinished Business

Gullah Geechee Historic Neighborhoods Community Development Corporation Strategic Plan – Thomas Boxley, Executive Director for the Gullah Geechee Historic Neighborhoods Community Development Corporation

Thomas Boxley, Executive Director, addressed the committee to provide an update on the strategic plan which also included an updated timeline for completion of the strategic plan.

Committee members asked questions, made comments, and provided feedback regarding the information he presented from the previous meeting.

The Committee then broke off into small planning groups as they did at the previous meeting to interact with one another and Mr. Boxley regarding the strategic plan. They spoke about various topics that would be considered for addition to the strategic plan. During this time Mr. Boxley also answered questions from citizens regarding various topics of interest about the Gullah Geechee Historic Neighborhoods Community Development Corporation.

New Business

Consideration of the 2024 Meeting Schedule for the Gullah Geechee Historic Neighborhoods Community Development Corporation – Thomas Boxley, Executive Director for the Gullah Geechee Historic Neighborhoods Community Development Corporation

Thomas Boxley, Executive Director, spoke to the committee regarding the proposed 2024 meeting dates. He informed the committee and those present about the addition of quarterly evening meetings that will be held to accommodate members of the Community who work during the day.

Mr. Ames moved to approve. Mr. Brubaker seconded. Motion carried 6-0.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 10:56 am.



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: February 21, 2024
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 (GGHNCDC) formalized a draft fiscal year 2024-2026 Strategic Plan. With the community's involvement, Thomas Boxley, Executive Director of the GGHNCDC, will present the draft of the strategic plan for final approval by the Board of Directors. At the January 17, 2024, GGHNCDC meeting, the board weighed in on the draft strategic plan and provided feedback and comments for future board consideration at its February meeting for potential consideration and adoption.

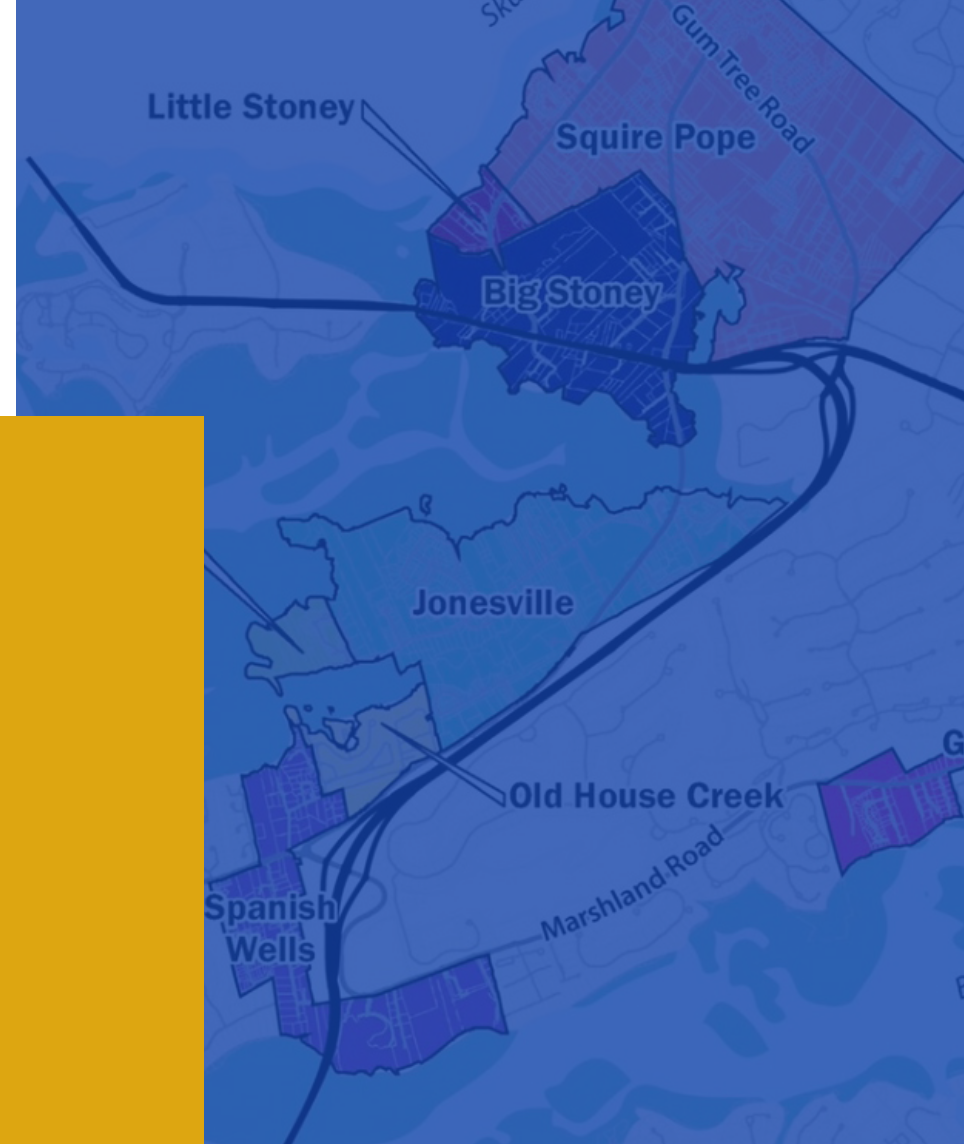
ATTACHMENTS:

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 DRAFT



PHONE

Thomas Boxley
Executive Director
843-341-3097



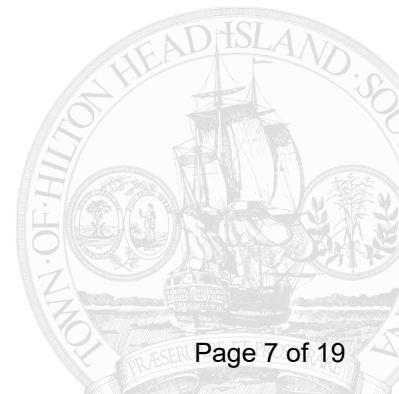
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1 Town Center Court
Hilton Head Island, SC
29928



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 by the Town of Hilton Head Island in 2022 as a South Carolina not for profit corporation to support the advancement and sustainability of the historic and culturally sensitive Gullah Geechee communities of Hilton Head Island.





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 as pertains to specific areas of study. The SWOT Analysis aims to identify the positive and negative forces that can potentially impact desired outcomes. Our approach for gathering this information was a community centric approach that involved members of the community at large.

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 in attendance who chose to speak publicly are 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 to political groups, public agencies, private groups and large businesses – some of which carry biases towards the Gullah people
- Gullah community has a lack of trust in town government
- Past administrations of Town government have not been receptive to change that benefits Gullah people and neighborhoods
- The Fraser impact – planned unit development caused gentrification and the creation of a class and caste system that negatively impacted Gullah communities
- Lack of youth involvement and succession planning
- Historical lack of priorities that benefit Gullah people

02

Weaknesses (continued)

- Education regarding Gullah history
- Process for cultural awareness – historically the Gullah culture has been an after thought

03

Opportunities

- Town's current willingness to invest human, financial, and land resources in support of Gullah community efforts
- Adjustment of town meeting times (create an opportunity for broader participation)
- Gullah participation in town hall processes – increased appointment to boards and commissions
- Public/private/institutional partnerships
- Entrepreneurial joint ventures that include but aren't limited to:
 - Business formation
 - Property stabilization
 - Contracting opportunities
- 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
- 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

In 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 meetings was to collect information to inform and shape our strategic plan. Additionally, a survey was disseminated electronically and in hard copy among Gullah community through diverse networks. The insights gathered from these meetings and surveys guided the development of our strategic plan for 2024-2026.

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 an equitable financial settlement, a land swap, or a combination of both.
2. There MUST be a provision in place that provides funding in support of appropriate access to (a safe turning lane), signage, and parking at the Jenkins cemetery – a Gullah 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.
4. 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.
5. Prominent public art installations and wayfinding elements showcasing Gullah heritage
6. Town Council crafts a formal position statement that requests a commitment from Beaufort County and SCDOT to refrain from impacting the Stoney community when considering future expansion concepts
7. Revision of proposed right of way acquisition plan to include safer design strategy and minimization of property acquisition requirement
8. Provide funding in support of legal counsel for impacted property owners along the WHP corridor

Goal #1: *Continued*



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

- **Land Management Ordinance** – the CDC will actively participate in amending the land management ordinance on behalf of the historic Gullah neighborhoods

- **Support the preservation of Gullah cemeteries**

1. Support the clearing of ownership and title related issues as needed

2. Support the development of right of way agreements with gated communities that impedes future encroachment

- **Support increased tourism to Gullah landmarks and cultural sites through marketing and outreach efforts**

1. In collaboration with the Destination Marketing Organization (Hilton Head-Bluffton Chamber of Commerce) develop prominent, Gullah-centric advertising

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

3. In collaboration with the Destination Marketing Organization establish connections with tourist point of origin locations to place Gullah centric advertising

3. Develop way-finding tools to include technology utilization that highlights Gullah historic sites, elder historic narrative and landmarks

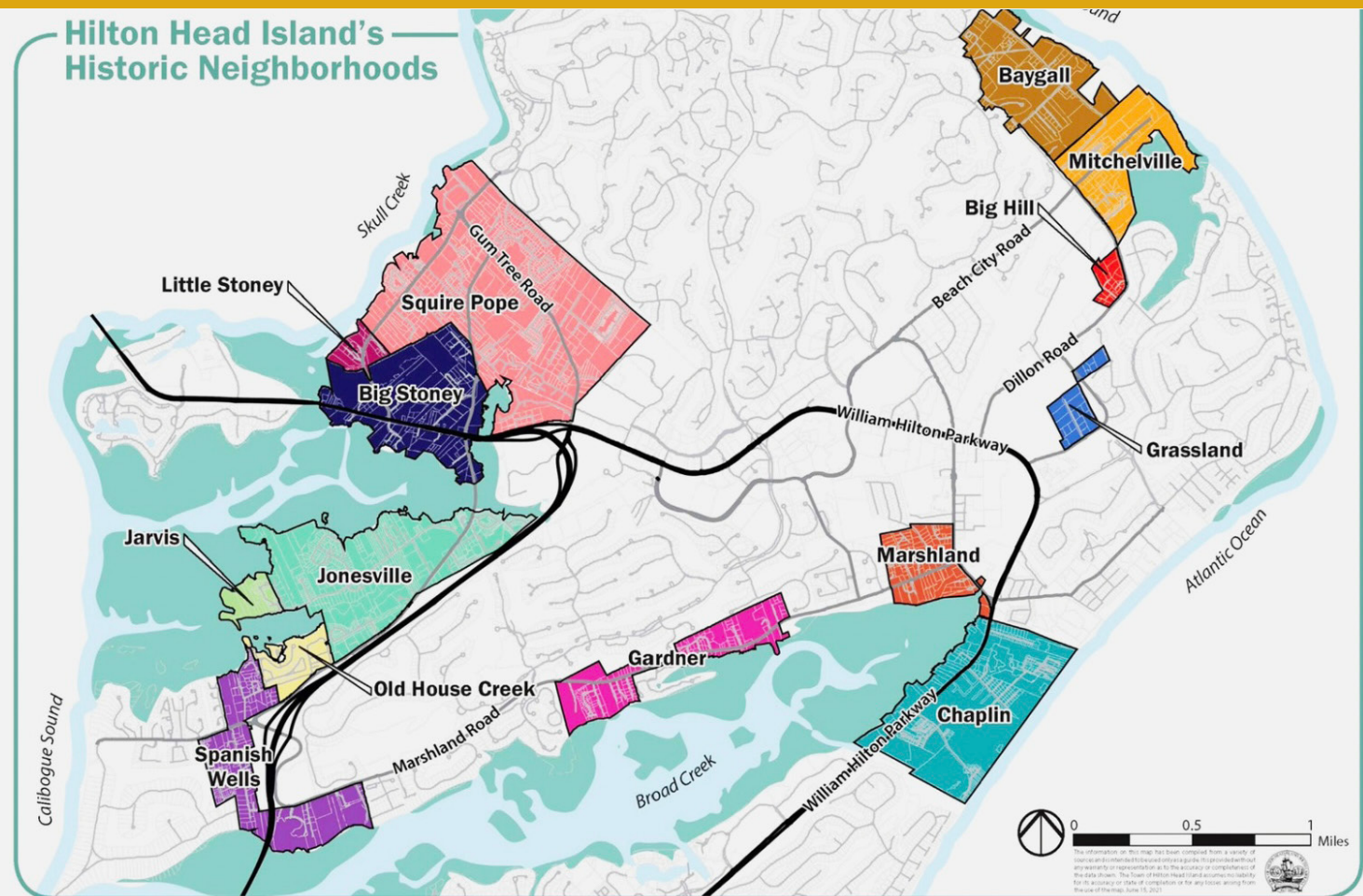
4. Garner a relationship with the Hilton Head Island-Bluffton Chamber of Commerce newest organization, the Gullah Geechee Business Coalition



Goal #2:

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

- Establish strategic alliances with business/community leaders and organizations on Hilton Head Island, Beaufort County and the coastal region in support of the historic Gullah neighborhoods
- Continue to grow and develop strategic alliances with congressional representatives (federal and state)
- Create joint venture opportunities for partnership in the development of residential and commercial properties with property owners in the historic neighborhoods



Goal #3:

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



- Host bi-monthly community meetings based on topics identified via the community survey
- Presentations to organizations across the Island and region such as Hilton Head Island Bluffton Chamber of Commerce, Rotary Club and others
- Support the Gullah Geechee Cultural Preservation Task Force's recommendations regarding education and outreach including but not limited to:
 1. Development of onboard educational training regarding Gullah heritage for new employees
 2. Property taxation
 3. Land management ordinances
 4. Development processes



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 as strategy to create equity and generational wealth
 3. Commercial real estate development



Goal #5:

Support training and employment opportunities for Gullah Geechee youth.

- Support the development of full and part time employment and internship opportunities with various departments at the Town of Hilton Head Island

- Identify other community based businesses, anchor institutions and employers that are willing to support full and part time youth employment opportunities (examples include but are not limited to Hargray, Technical College of the Low Country, Beaufort County Independent School District USCB-Hilton Head Island, Public Service Districts, Palmetto Electric)

Strategic Plan

CONTACT US



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