



**Town of Hilton Head Island
GULLAH GEECHEE HISTORIC
NEIGHBORHOODS COMMUNITY
DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION
COMMITTEE MEETING
Wednesday, January 17, 2024 – 6:00 PM
Minutes**

Call to Order

Chair Peterson called the meeting to order at 6:00 pm.

Board Members Present: Chair Shirley “Peaches” Peterson; David Ames; Alex Brown, Terry Brubaker; and Andre White

Board Members Absent: Pastor Louis Johnson

Adoption of the Agenda

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

New Business

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

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.

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 families that will be directly and indirectly impacted in the Stoney Community and to recommend an official course of action that incorporates mitigation strategies for the project.

It is recommended 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.

Thomas Boxley, Executive Director, addressed the Board and provided an update regarding the current status of the project. He stated that over the last few months, there has been a considerable amount of conversation with those who will be impacted directly and indirectly and shared that he has received positive feedback that can be later used during the mitigation process. He indicated that there are many concerns of safety and infrastructure by those who live and work along Highway 278. Those in the Stoney Community mentioned that they long to see the economic vitality return and cultural preservation represented and made a part of the gateway to Hilton Head. Lastly, Mr. Boxley, stated that a reoccurring theme that was mentioned to him was that there needs to be an additional entry and exit point for Hilton Head that does not impact any Gullah Historic Neighborhoods in the future.

The Board was encouraged by the conversations Mr. Boxley has had and looked forward to hearing more regarding following up with those within the Stoney Community, the Town, Beaufort County, and potential mitigation strategies for those impacted. Municipal consent has been asked of the Town by the end of January and at this time the Town has not been able to make a decision as there still is a need for further detailed information that has not been received by the Town to date. Mr. Boxley stated that he is continuing his discussions with those who will be impacted directly about what mitigation could potentially look like for them. He detailed that this project is broken into segments and the Town only has Municipal Consent over its jurisdiction and confirmed that Beaufort County is ready to move forward on its portion of the project (Moss Creek through Jenkins Island which includes the two current bridges). Many details will have to be worked through and the Board felt that a timeline is important so that everyone is kept informed during this process as a formal decision is expected to be made in the next 60 days.

Members of the public had comments for the Board not being in favor of the project as a whole, others were indifferent and there was much concern regarding the safety of an already impacted area and that widening the road could bring more safety issues.

Chairwoman Peterson thanked Mr. Boxley for the update and looked forward to hearing more.

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

Thomas Boxley, Executive Director, spoke to the Board regarding the review of the Gullah Geechee Historic Neighborhoods Community Development Corporations Strategic Plan 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, implementation will begin.

Mr. Boxley outlined the strategic plan for the Board and community present. He highlighted the mission, objective, and goals of the plan. The Board had several positive comments to Mr. Boxley regarding the fiscal year 2024-2026 Strategic Plan as did the public. The Community at large had positive thoughts regarding the Strategic Plan but did not want the hard work of the GGNHCDC to go unnoticed. There were many comments in favor of making sure that the word of the Gullah Geechee Historic Neighborhoods Community Development Corporation was getting out to the public at large by any means necessary.

Chairwoman Peterson thanked Mr. Boxley for his work on the Strategic Plan and looked forward to seeing the final version soon.

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

Thomas Boxley, Executive Director, for the Gullah Geechee Historic Neighborhoods Community Development Corporation, explained that the purpose of establishing 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. The Gullah Geechee Historic Neighborhoods Community Development Corporation (GGHNCD) 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 for various programs that the organization will begin embarking on.

Chairwoman Peterson stated that she wanted to thank Hilton Head Institute for providing the GGHNCD with seed money of \$4,000 to start the account with the Community Foundation of the Lowcountry. Mr. Boxley and Mrs. Peterson are in the process of establishing parameters for those funds and will work with the CFL to publicize on their behalf. These funds will be unrestricted, however, should the GGHNCD need to draw funds for projects, education, or loans within the Historic Neighborhoods they will be able to do so. Mrs. Peterson stated that she believes that many people wish to see the North End of Hilton Head Island revitalized and having this fund with the CFL would allow many to contribute and aid in those efforts. The endowment will allow the opportunity to those who are interested in preserving a Gullah presence and stabilizing the Gullah Neighborhoods an opportunity to give funds and allow the GGHNCD to assist in ways that a normal government entity would not be able to. The Board was very encouraged by the establishment of this account, and they look forward to the next steps in this process.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 7:38 pm.