



Town of Hilton Head Island

Gullah Geechee Historic Neighborhoods Community Development Corporation Meeting

**Wednesday, November 20, 2024, 10:00 AM
1 Town Center Court, Hilton Head Island, SC
Benjamin M. Racusin Council Chambers**

The meeting can be viewed on the [Town's YouTube Channel](#), the [Beaufort County Channel](#), and Spectrum Channel 1304.

- 1. Call to Order**
- 2. Adoption of the Agenda**
- 3. Approval of the Minutes**
 - a. Regular Meeting Minutes of September 18, 2024
- 4. Unfinished Business**
 - a. 2024-19 Wayfinding Solution Development Update - Thomas Boxley, Executive Director for the Gullah Geechee Historic Neighborhoods Community Development Corporation
- 5. New Business**
 - a. Discussion of the Stoney Neighborhood Revitalization Grant Program - Thomas Boxley, Executive Director for the Gullah Geechee Historic Neighborhoods Community Development Corporation
 - b. Discussion of the Small Business Loan Program - Thomas Boxley, Executive Director for the Gullah Geechee Historic Neighborhoods Community Development Corporation
 - c. Discussion of the Real-Estate Loan Program - Thomas Boxley, Executive Director for the Gullah Geechee Historic Neighborhoods Community Development Corporation
- 6. Public Comment - Non Agenda Items**
- 7. Presentation and Recognitions**

- a. Recognizing the Contributions of Board Member David Ames

8. 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
COMMITTEE MEETING
Wednesday, September 18, 2024 – 10:00 AM
Minutes

Call to Order

Chair Peterson called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m.

Board Members Present: Shirley “Peaches” Peterson; David Ames; Alex Brown; Pastor Louis Johnson and Andre White

Board Members Absent: Terry Brubaker

Adoption of the Agenda

Mr. Ames moved to adopt the agenda. Mr. Johnson seconded. Motion carried 5-0.

Approval of the Minutes

Regular Meeting Minutes of May 15, 2024

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

Special Orders

Election of Chair, Vice Chair, Secretary and Treasurer

Mrs. Peterson opened the floor to nominations for Chair, Vice-Chair, Secretary and Treasurer.

Mr. Brown made a motion to elect Shirley Peterson as Chair. Mr. Ames seconded. Motion carried 4-0.

Mrs. Peterson made a motion to elect Pastor Louis Johnson as Vice Chair. Mr. Ames seconded. Motion carried 4-0.

Mrs. Peterson made a motion to elect Andre White as secretary. Mr. Ames Seconded. Motion carried 4-0.

Mrs. Peterson made a motion to elect Alex Brown as treasurer. Pastor Louis Johnson seconded. Motion carried 4-0.

Unfinished Business

Discussion of Request for Proposals 2024-19 Wayfinding Solution Development Update– Thomas Boxley, Executive Director for the Gullah Geechee Historic Neighborhoods Community Development Corporation

As part of the approved strategic action plan to honor the cultural history of the Gullah Geechee community and enhance tourism, Mr. Boxley informed the board that a contract for developing wayfinding solutions has been executed. The contractor selection process, specifically focused on Gullah heritage and historic sites, was completed in August, with the contract finalized around September 6. This initiative will include a digital application, enabling tourists and visitors to use technology for an enriched experience at culturally significant sites within the Historic Gullah Geechee Community.

Mr. Boxley introduced Kujanga Jackson, CEO of Solaos. Mr. Jackson provided an overview of his company and expertise, highlighting the use of cutting-edge artificial intelligence technology in creating immersive landmark experiences. He explained how sound and audio narration could be digitally integrated to recreate and enhance the storytelling of selected sites. Visitors will be able to use their smartphones to interact with these locations and access detailed historical and cultural information. Mr. Jackson also shared his previous projects, such as the Greenwood Rising XR Walking Tour, 51 Steps to Freedom Tour, and Historic Black Colleges League Pass+, which demonstrate his commitment to preserving and amplifying cultural narratives through interactive technology. He emphasized the importance of capturing stories from the past in innovative ways, showcasing his passion for this work.

During the discussion, Mr. Jackson and Mr. Boxley outlined the project timeline, potential demo dates, and platform release plans for both iOS and Android. They also touched on the number of stops, the integration of audio narration, and interviews with prominent members of the Gullah community.

The Board responded positively to the presentation, showing enthusiasm for the involvement of local students in the project. They also raised questions about the app's pricing for end-users, the possibility of adding more sites before completion, and ensuring the Gullah community's story is comprehensively and authentically told. Board members discussed the importance of collaborating with the HHI-Bluffton Chamber of Commerce to broaden the narrative that Hilton Head is more than just beaches and golf. They saw this project as an opportunity to engage visitors with lesser-known historical and cultural stories. Members also expressed excitement about including significant sites no longer physically visible, such as the Gullah Flea Market and Abe's Restaurant and Motel, preserving their legacy through digital storytelling.

The board thanked Mr. Jackson and expressed their enthusiasm for collaborating with Solaos moving forward.

Chair Peterson asked for public comment.

There was no public comment at this time.

Public Comment – Non Agenda Items

There was no request for public comment.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 10:58 a.m.

Approved:

The recording of this meeting can be found on the Town's website at www.hiltonheadislandsc.gov.



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 Orland, Town Manager
DATE: November 20, 2024
SUBJECT: 2024-19 Wayfinding Solution Development Update

RECOMMENDATION:

No action is required. This item is presented as a status update.

BACKGROUND:

Aligned with our strategic action plan to honor the cultural history of the Gullah Geechee community and enhance tourism, we have engaged Solaos to develop wayfinding solutions.

SUMMARY:

On November 7-8, 2024, Solaos conducted its first site visit to Hilton Head Island. The purpose of this visit was to initiate data collection and gather information on proposed sites. During their visit, the contractors engaged with key stakeholders, including representatives from the Town of Hilton Head Island, the Office of Cultural Affairs, and a diverse group of Gullah elders.

Solaos is scheduled to return in the first quarter of 2025 to provide an update and document additional assets essential to the project's success.



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 Orland, Town Manager
DATE: November 20, 2024
SUBJECT: Discussion of the Stoney Neighborhood Revitalization Grant Program

RECOMMENDATION:

This item does not require approval and serves as an introductory discussion. It will be scheduled for formal vote in the 1st quarter of 2025

BACKGROUND:

In alignment with our strategic goal of stabilization and preservation of historic Gullah Geechee neighborhoods, the CDC proposes this program to provide support to the property owners in the Stoney neighborhood.

SUMMARY:

The Stoney Community Improvement Grant Program is designed to assist long-standing residents and property owners in the Stoney neighborhood, a community significantly impacted by the construction and development of Highway 278/William Hilton Parkway since 1956.

Eligibility Requirements:

1. Residency
 - Continuous residency in Stoney for at least 25 years (verified by deed or tax records).
 - Priority for applicants with multi-generational ties, particularly Gullah descendants.
 - Property must be located within the historic boundaries of Stoney.
2. Ownership:
 - Applicants must own the property requiring repair.
 - Ownership should ideally predate the William Hilton Parkway development.

3. Income:

- No strict income cap, but priority for fixed or lower-income households.

4. Impact Documentation:

- Applicants must show evidence of damage due to Highway 278 development (e.g., flooding, structural damage), supported by photos or reports.

Eligible Uses of Funds:

- Structural repairs (foundations, interior walls, etc.).
- Noise and air pollution mitigation (e.g., weather stripping, window replacements, door replacements).
- Water and drainage improvements (grading, erosion control).
- Development support services such as property valuation appraisal
- Demolition of unsafe structures.
- Driveway repairs.
- Other uses evaluated individually for need and feasibility.

Process:

1. Submission:

- Applicants complete an application that includes proof of residence, ownership, and damage documentation.

2. Evaluation:

- CDC representatives conduct site visits and create reports supporting the application.

3. Award:

- Applicants are notified of awards.
- Timelines for work completion are set in collaboration with property owners.
- Certified contractors are selected to carry out repairs within the agreed timeframe.

Next Steps

- A legal review will be conducted.
- Further coordination with the Town of Hilton Head Island finance department.



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 Orland, Town Manager
DATE: November 20, 2024
SUBJECT: Discussion of the Small Business Loan Program

RECOMMENDATION:

This item does not require approval. This will serve as an introductory discussion. It will be scheduled for a formal vote during the 1st quarter of 2025.

BACKGROUND:

Aligned with our strategic action plan to enhance access to capital, the CDC proposes this program to support the Gullah Geechee business community.

SUMMARY:

The Small Business Loan Program is designed to address long-standing challenges in accessing capital within the Gullah Geechee business community. The program aims to provide financial assistance ranging from \$5,000 to \$50,000, depending on the applicant's demonstrated need and available funding.

Eligibility and Process:

- Applications will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis.
- Required supporting documents include:
 - Tax returns
 - Credit report
 - A letter or statement of decline from a traditional financial institution.
- Applicants will be assessed on their financial need and ability to repay the loan
- Lower credit scores will not automatically disqualify applicants.
- The program will coordinate with the Town of Hilton Head's finance department for application review and fund distribution.

Next Steps:

- Legal review of the program.
- Further process development in collaboration with the finance department.

This initiative supports the Town's commitment to fostering sustainable growth and economic opportunity within the Gullah Geechee business community.



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 Orland, Town Manager
DATE: November 20, 2024
SUBJECT: Discussion of the Real-Estate Loan Program

RECOMMENDATION:

This item does not require approval and serves as an introductory discussion. It will be scheduled for formal vote in the 1st quarter of 2025.

BACKGROUND:

As part of our strategic action plan to increase access to capital, the CDC is proposing this program to support real estate development within the Gullah Geechee community.

SUMMARY:

This program seeks to address long-standing capital access barriers faced by Gullah Geechee property owners. The program will provide loans ranging from \$10,000 to \$100,000, based on the applicant's needs and the availability of funding.

Eligibility Criteria:

- Applicants must demonstrate financial need and the ability to repay the loan.
- Required supporting documentation includes:
 - Tax returns
 - Credit report
 - A letter or statement of decline from a traditional financial institution
- Clear title to the property to be developed is mandatory.

Program Objectives and Scope:

- Funding is restricted to real property development, excluding manufactured housing, to encourage permanent housing solutions.
- The goal is to promote land value appreciation and develop revenue streams for residents who own land but lack the capital for its development.

Program Process:

- Applications will be reviewed by CDC staff in collaboration with the Town's finance department.

- Lower credit scores will not be a sole disqualifying factor.
- The selection and fund distribution process will be coordinated with the Town of Hilton Head's finance department.

Next Steps:

- A legal review will be conducted.
- Further coordination with the Town of Hilton Head Island finance department.