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3 GULLAH-GEECHEE CULTURAL HERITAGE CORRIDOR

4 PUBLIC HEARING - BLUFFTON, SOUTH CAROLINA

5 July 27, 2009

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1 (The proceeding commenced at 5:40 P.M.)

2 COMMISSIONER CAMPBELL: I want to thank you

3 all for coming. And my name is Emory Campbell. I'm

4 one of the 15 commissioners for the Gullah Cultural

5 Heritage Corridor. We have 25 commissioners all total.

6 Fifteen of us are commissioners and we have ten

7 alternates.

8 What we're going to do tonight, before we hear

9 from you, is to have Commissioner Cohen come up and

10 give us an invocation and introduction of the

11 commissioners, and then we'll have an overview of the

12 commission, which I'll do, then we'll have your

13 comments. Thank you. This is your night.

14 COMMISSIONER COHEN: Okay, I'm just saying

15 hello. And, of course, I want to welcome you to our

16 Gullah-Geechee corridor meeting. We have a combined

17 meeting tonight, Hilton Head Island and Bluffton. And

18 we're here to seek your input for the vision, mission

19 and purpose of the National Heritage Area.  
20 So, of course, I'm Louise Miller Cohen. I'm one  
21 of the 25 commissioners. And Commissioner Campbell is  
22 a commissioner and he's also chair of the Commission.  
23 I see another commissioner walking in. All right.  
24 And, of course, we have commissioner Charles Hall with  
25 us. And I just saw Commissioner Nicole Green walk in.  
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1 Mr. Hall, would you stand, please.

2 COMMISSIONER HALL: Hi.

3 COMMISSIONER COHEN: And we have Ms. Nicole  
4 Green, commissioner, that just walked in, all the way  
5 from Charleston. And, of course, we have Andrea Barber  
6 here, who is an intern with us for the summer, working  
7 with our coordinator, Michael Allen, who could not be  
8 here tonight.

9 And then I'm going to ask you if you would  
10 introduce yourselves to us because I might be  
11 overlooking someone. I don't want to do that tonight.  
12 I know we have Laura Bush here from the school board,  
13 as well as others. So I'm going to ask everybody to  
14 just stand and introduce yourself to us, please. That  
15 way, you can't accuse me of overlooking you. Who's  
16 going to be first?

17 (Discussion held off the record.)

18 COMMISSIONER COHEN: We will let you  
19 introduce yourself later. I take instruction from the  
20 boss.

21 All right. Let's see. What's next on the agenda?  
22 Well, I guess it's our custom to pray before we get  
23 started with our meetings. And I don't want to go  
24 against that tonight because I know we have elders  
25 here. And, of course, if the elders are not here, the  
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1 spirit of the elders are here. And they would want me  
2 to do that. So if you would just pray with me.

3 (Invocation.)

4 COMMISSIONER COHEN: So, now, we're going to  
5 ask Commissioner Campbell if he would please come  
6 forward.

7 COMMISSIONER CAMPBELL: Thank you very much,  
8 Commissioner Cohen. We have formalized this Commission  
9 to the extent that we address everybody,  
10 "Commissioner." Makes us feel as if we're getting  
11 paid. But, again, thank you for coming.

12 The Gullah Heritage Corridor starts in Wilmington,  
13 North Carolina, and ends up in Jacksonville, Florida,  
14 from the ocean, 30 miles inward. And this historic

15 body of land has been where Gullah people have lived  
16 over the last 150 years. Many of them settled there  
17 after the Civil War. The Gullah culture, as you all  
18 know, is one of the most unique cultures in American --  
19 in America. And so, some 12 to 15 years ago, a group  
20 decided that they wanted to make an effort to try to  
21 preserve the culture, got the attention of Congressman  
22 Jim -- James Clyburn, who then asked the National Park  
23 Service to do a resource study, to see what it is along  
24 that corridor that should be preserved.

25 The Resource Study took two years and was  
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1 published, I think, in 2002. Big, thick book. From  
2 that study, Congressman Clyburn, James Clyburn,  
3 introduced legislation into Congress for the heritage  
4 area, for the Gullah people, Gullah-Geechee people.

5 There are more than 50 heritage areas in the  
6 country. This is the first and only one so far that  
7 concentrates on the preservation of African-Americans.  
8 And so, legislation was passed in 2006, signed by  
9 President Bush. And the law states that because of the  
10 uniqueness of this culture, a commission shall be named  
11 to work to come up with a management plan on how this  
12 culture should be preserved.

13 And among the things that we're doing in the  
14 management plan is to get input from you, the public,  
15 on items that you would like to see preserved, stories  
16 that you would like preserved, environmental parts of  
17 the area that you would like to see preserved, and also  
18 some ideas on how you think they should be. In the  
19 future, we will be partnering with towns and county  
20 governments and state governments and, hopefully,  
21 having ordinances that will protect the culture  
22 wherever appropriate. What this Commission is set out  
23 to do is, for ten years, to do this in ten years.

24 And I know some of you may have heard that we were  
25 supposed to have gotten a million dollars a year for  
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1 ten years. You know our government. We don't have  
2 much money. And so we have not gotten that amount of  
3 money. What we have gotten so far is \$150,000 for each  
4 of the two years we've been in existence. Those funds  
5 have been used to contract with a management services  
6 agency in Denver, Colorado. And they are taking input  
7 from what you say tonight and they are going to work  
8 with us in putting together a management plan. So  
9 they'll be taking most of the first allocations of  
10 monies. The rest of the funds they use for us to

11 travel to meetings. We have these meetings here, and  
12 for recording meetings like this. So that takes care  
13 of the money question.

14 The purpose, the mission statement, says that we  
15 are trying to nurture -- we are to nurture and  
16 facilitate understanding and awareness of the  
17 significance of the Gullah-Geechee history and culture.  
18 Second, we want to sustain and preserve lands and  
19 cultural assets within the coast of South Carolina,  
20 Georgia, North Carolina and Florida. And, lastly, we  
21 want to educate the public on the value and importance  
22 of the Gullah-Geechee culture. That's our mission.

23 And so you are here tonight to tell us what you  
24 think. You want to come to the microphone. If you  
25 have any questions, one of us will try to answer. But  
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1 we want to hear from you. We're not here to answer  
2 your questions; we're here to listen to you and your  
3 ideas and also on your suggested items that you would  
4 like to see preserved. They don't have to be physical  
5 items. They can be stories. They can be art forms,  
6 any such thing that you can think are connected to our  
7 culture. Okay. Whoever wants to be first, come and  
8 take the mic. We'd like for you to stand here because  
9 we do have a videographer and they're going to take  
10 your picture. She is going to -- she is going to  
11 record every word you say.

12 (Discussion held off the record.)

13 MS. MITCHELL: I'd like to say good evening  
14 to each and every one of you. And my name is Lucille  
15 Mitchell. I live in Bluffton. I have two daughters.  
16 My husband is William Mitchell. And we have been  
17 here -- I have been in Bluffton for 42 years. And I  
18 have always been a citizen of the Lowcountry. I'm born  
19 and raised in Ridgeland, South Carolina. And I just  
20 wanted -- I don't have a whole lot to say. I know that  
21 this is a very worthwhile cause. And I'm so happy that  
22 I attended St. James yesterday; otherwise, I may not  
23 have even gotten to know that this was going on today.

24 The one thing that I wanted to say is that to help  
25 to preserve the Gullah-Geechee culture, I just want to  
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1 say that I would like to see this taught in the public  
2 school system, if not as a regular subject, as an  
3 elective, so that those of us who don't know anything  
4 about this culture, it's such a beautiful culture.  
5 Maybe we could keep our children aware of what's  
6 happening. As time goes by, it seems as though our

7 children are losing the Gullah, the Gullah-Geechee  
8 culture, in the everyday walk of life. So I would just  
9 like to see this as an elective in the public school  
10 system. And if, if anyone wants to take on that task,  
11 I'm not sure I know how to do it, but I'll be able --  
12 I'll be willing to help anybody who takes on that task.  
13 Thank you.

14 COMMISSIONER CAMPBELL: Don't be bashful.  
15 Open mic.

16 MR. BARNWELL: Good evening. You have so  
17 many microphones up here. I am not a shy person. My  
18 name is Thomas C. Barnwell, Junior. I am a native of  
19 across the water, called Hilton Head Island, South  
20 Carolina. And I've only been there for 74 years.  
21 I'm happy, Dr. Campbell and Ms. Cohen, and all of  
22 the other members of the Gullah-Geechee corridor, to be  
23 here this evening, to share a few comments. And I'm so  
24 thankful to all of the political persons that helped to  
25 make this happen.

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1 I'm very pleased and thankful because in 1969, in  
2 February 14, 15 and 16, I, along with many other  
3 persons from South Carolina, testified before the U.S.  
4 Senate Committee on Nutrition and Human Needs regarding  
5 several needs of Beaufort County and the state of South  
6 Carolina. And I hold in my right hand the -- a copy of  
7 the original document. And it says, Nutrition and  
8 Human Needs. Select Committee on Nutrition and Human  
9 Needs of the United States Senate, 19th Congress,  
10 Second Session, 91st Congress, First Session, Nutrition  
11 and Human Needs, Part 4, South Carolina, Washington  
12 D.C. February 18, 19 and 20, 1969.

13 Now, this document is an official record in  
14 Washington D.C. And I want to call your attention to  
15 the fact that in this document, many of us at that time  
16 indicated many needs not only of the town of Bluffton,  
17 but the entire county of Beaufort and the state of  
18 South Carolina. And to make a long story short,  
19 Bluffton was a place that people didn't know about  
20 until a doctor named Donald Gatch discovered the  
21 intestinal parasites in this community. And it created  
22 some heart problems for a lot of people. When I say  
23 heart problems, I'm talking about running temperature  
24 of people up. Because they did not want that kind of  
25 information at that time to be made public. And as a  
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1 result of those hearings, Beaufort-Jasper Comprehensive  
2 Health Services is one of the major organizations that

3 grew out of those hearings.

4 And many other things happened. Daufuskie Island  
5 was discovered and many other things got discovered.

6 And we're very pleased that Dr. Campbell and the  
7 corridor commission members is picking up the torch and  
8 is moving forward.

9 Now, there are a few things that I would like to  
10 ask for your help and consideration with, as it relates  
11 to the broader community or communities. Thank you.

12 The first one is, there is a desperate need to  
13 help families that are original families of this area,  
14 who have -- for those of you who do not know, who came  
15 here recently, have heirs' property. And that is a  
16 major problem. I would like to suggest that the  
17 corridor staff, when it can and will be able to do so,  
18 contact the National Consumer Cooperative Bank. It is  
19 a bank that is federalized and has the authority to do  
20 business in all states in the United States. It has  
21 the adequate assets to be of assistance. And I'm  
22 asking that you consider immediately making a revolving  
23 loan program available, with funds set aside for legal  
24 assistance on a revolving basis, to help families  
25 declare their heirs' property.

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1 That is extremely important, the need to assist  
2 all communities locally with culture preservation. And  
3 I applaud the first speaker that mentioned about the  
4 culture being shared with the school systems. I think  
5 that's fantastic.

6 However, I would like to jump right into one area  
7 that is extremely important to the local Beaufort  
8 County and persons on a national basis, and that is a  
9 community called Mitchelville, on Hilton Head. We  
10 would certainly hope that each of you will encourage  
11 your counterparts to join you in helping to make  
12 Mitchelville part of a national park. It is located on  
13 Hilton Head, at -- approximately close to the end of  
14 Beach City Road. And at one point, back in the 1800s,  
15 there were more than 20,000 troops on Hilton Head.  
16 That was the first town organized after slaves were  
17 freed. And it was the first compulsory education  
18 system developed in that community. It had its own  
19 government, set up and operated for many years. Now,  
20 we certainly hope that members who are present from the  
21 county and the state delegation will join hands in  
22 helping to make this happen. There are many firsts  
23 about Mitchelville. I will not dwell on that.

24 We'll jump to another area: Local cemeteries.

25 Some of you, as you drive to Hilton Head, you go  
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1 through a little island, you probably don't pay much  
2 attention to it, called Pinckney Island. It is not  
3 public to many persons, but Pinckney Island has two  
4 old, native cemeteries. There are two of them over  
5 there. And most people don't even know they're there.  
6 I certainly hope the corridor will, will help, in some  
7 way, to allow those two cemeteries to be identified and  
8 allow families throughout the country, wherever they  
9 might be now, to be able to come and visit there. As  
10 far as cemeteries on Hilton Head, we're having some  
11 challenges there, too. And we certainly hope -- I can  
12 mention one, the Talbot Cemetery, for example. The new  
13 residents of the area surrounding the Talbot Cemetery,  
14 not all of them, some of them, have challenges of the  
15 vehicles taking the remains down into the area and turn  
16 around and come back out; it hurts the grass. So we  
17 certainly are not asking the Commission to be police,  
18 but we're asking you to, if you could possibly, send  
19 the word up higher that we need help in those areas.  
20 And wherever the legal opportunity might allow itself  
21 to come, we would appreciate assistance in that area.

22 Certainly, there is a great need for overall  
23 economic development in the area.

24 And, of course, now, most of the local towns are  
25 going through a five-year plan, as they referred to it,  
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1 as their comprehensive plans. And in that  
2 comprehensive plan, they are doing buffers and  
3 setbacks. Those buffers and setbacks are very good.  
4 I'm a developer. I adhere to them. But there are some  
5 native landowners whose properties are divided within  
6 the family, that these buffers and setbacks are not  
7 going to allow them to remain on their lands over a  
8 period of time, especially if a hurricane comes through  
9 here and people will have to rebuild their homes. They  
10 might find some severe challenges that they face in  
11 terms of being able to remain in the locations that  
12 they're in because of the sizes of their property that  
13 they have inherited from family members.

14 And we certainly hope that this Commission will be  
15 kind, to help those in the Hilton Head community that's  
16 working very hard to develop the native Gullah museum  
17 on Gum Tree Road. We will definitely need a museum  
18 architect to help us with the design because the site  
19 is not very large and we will need technical  
20 assistance, not only in that area, but with the

21 artifacts as well.

22 I apologize for taking so long, but I'm very old.

23 Thank you very much. And I hope you have all of those  
24 things that I said. Congratulations.

25 MS. OVENS: I'm Pamela Ovens. I'm from  
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1 Hilton Head Island. I'm president of the Beaufort  
2 County Historical Society. It was started in 1939.  
3 We're the oldest association in Beaufort County  
4 dedicated to the study and preservation of history.  
5 The purpose of our society is for the collection and  
6 dissemination of accurate historical data with  
7 particular emphasis of those in Beaufort County, the  
8 proper marking and preserving of its historic sites,  
9 and the study of history in general. I strongly urge  
10 that the Mitchelville project be part of the  
11 Gullah-Geechee Cultural Heritage Corridor.

12 Thank you.

13 MS. BUSH: Good evening. Let me apologize  
14 now because I will be stepping out for another meeting  
15 when I leave the podium. My name is Laura Bush. I'm a  
16 native of Bluffton and also cover this area on the  
17 Beaufort County Board of Education.

18 My family, the Mitchell family, comes from Spring  
19 Island, which is where Callawassie Island is. Lot of  
20 families were slaves on Spring Island. And the Bush  
21 Family, I think, were some of the farmers and slaves  
22 that lived on Bellfair. So we have a very rich history  
23 in this community.

24 Another thing I'd like to suggest that this  
25 project take a look at, when I was attending school  
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1 here in Bluffton, the only high school in Bluffton for  
2 blacks, African-Americans, the Hilton Head students  
3 came over to Bluffton for their high school. And  
4 we were -- I'll say I was, because the dialect was  
5 different. And I always thought, when we talked about  
6 the Gullah-Geechee corridor or heritage, it was only  
7 those communities that were on the water or that --  
8 those that were disconnected from the mainland. I  
9 didn't see it as being Bluffton, which was, you know,  
10 always on the mainland. And so that was my concept for  
11 many years of what Gullah-Geechee was. Because,  
12 certainly, the dialect on St. Helena Island, Daufuskie  
13 Island and Hilton Head, and compared to Bluffton and  
14 the other places, was certainly different. So that was  
15 my, my thoughts on that.

16 I do concur that we need to spend more time



17 introducing this into our schools. There is a  
18 smattering of it, but it has to be really fully  
19 developed. So I certainly support that.

20 I also support oral histories. We are losing our  
21 older citizens. And they have a very rich history. We  
22 need to find a way to capture it. We have a lady, a  
23 relative of mine, who lives in, in Mitchelville, which  
24 is a part of Ridgeland, who will be 99 this year. We  
25 have a cousin of mine who will be, I think, 96 or 97.

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1 Can you imagine the kind of history they can share with  
2 us? And those are only a few, I mean, that we have,  
3 that we can certainly get their oral histories from.

4 There are a number of buildings in Bluffton. The  
5 history of Bluffton, as I was told, is that many years  
6 ago Bluffton had a number of black entrepreneurs. We  
7 owned businesses in Bluffton. We had tailors. We had  
8 shopkeepers. You know, Michael C. Riley himself was  
9 the first member from our community on the Board of  
10 Education and now has a school named after him. We  
11 have a very rich history here in Bluffton we need to  
12 figure out a way of capturing. And there are some  
13 buildings left in this community that we -- that speaks  
14 to that heritage. On the corner of Calhoun Street,  
15 that building, that, that masonry building that sits  
16 there, was an old store. A number of our black  
17 families who owned that building, have been picked up  
18 out of the historical society as historical housing and  
19 labeled as such. So we certainly need to be very  
20 cognizant of that.

21 The art culture in Bluffton. My mother, for  
22 instance, 87 years old, is still quilting. That's a  
23 losing form of art. I certainly could not. I'm not  
24 going to follow in her footprints. I don't know a  
25 thing about quilting. My daughter may. But we're

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1 losing that. But that's something we should find a way  
2 to capture.

3 I support (inaudible) with his land ownership and  
4 clearing titles. That's something we talked about.  
5 There are certain programs that do that, but we need to  
6 make a very major effort to put that forward because  
7 that is something we really have to do.

8 As we progress and as we plan in our  
9 communities -- when I grew up in Bluffton, there was  
10 one square mile. I think maybe we had 500 people.  
11 Bluffton today is nothing like Bluffton when I grew up.  
12 And so we're planning -- with progress come changes.

13 So we're not allowed to raise the goats and we're not  
14 allowed to have the cows. We're not allowed to have  
15 the farms. We're not allowed to have those things.  
16 And so now you're told how to use your property. So  
17 we, black folks, have lost that use of their property  
18 because of the growth in our communities. Not that we  
19 don't welcome the growth, but somehow there should have  
20 been a meeting of the minds to keep some of those  
21 things that we grew up with, that we've lost.  
22 I'm checking my list. So those are the things  
23 that I think, if you would give some thought to those,  
24 I would certainly like to, to be a part of any effort  
25 to pursue any of these.

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1 But I do think the oral histories, because it  
2 fascinates me, when I sit down and talk to the elders,  
3 about how things were. And, and our children have no  
4 concept, no concept of how it was back then. I think  
5 somehow we need to try to capture that. Thank you so  
6 much.

7 REVEREND GREEN: Good evening. I'm Reverend  
8 (inaudible) Green from here in Bluffton. And I'm  
9 pastor of St. John the Baptist Church. Also I'm so  
10 happy to be able to get up after Ms. Bush because of  
11 some things that we are working on. And I hope that we  
12 could work on these projects together.

13 Here in Bluffton, we have started a museum within  
14 our church called the Hand-Me-Down Gullah Museum. And  
15 the reason why we changed it to Gullah-Geechee -- and  
16 when -- I thank Sister -- Ms. Ann Cook for the sending  
17 me the e-mail about this today because it's time for us  
18 to work together.

19 My family also is from Spring Island, which is  
20 relatives of Ms. Bush, the Mitchell family. My  
21 grandmother is from Spring Island. All the stories  
22 that she used to tell was very exciting to me. But I  
23 couldn't understand what she was saying when she used  
24 to come visit us. I thought she was from a different,  
25 not planet, but from a different country, because we

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1 couldn't understand it. But she was always saying she  
2 was Geechee. So I never heard the word Gullah till  
3 maybe about five years ago because my grandmother said  
4 she was Geechee. And that was a word that we really --  
5 that stuck in my mind. And I really wanted to know  
6 more about her heritage, so I really started studying  
7 it a lot.

8 We have a book that's getting ready to come out.

9 We're working, along with Spring Island, called the  
10 Hand-Me-Down Gullah, because our relatives hand us down  
11 stories. And as Ms. Bush was saying, we're working  
12 with Penn Center, with Dr. McKenzie. And it's called,  
13 Tell Me Your Stories. And the young people will be  
14 coming together and they will be interviewing the older  
15 people, to find out what it was like in Bluffton many  
16 years ago. So we are incorporating the young people.  
17 And I think that's where we're really going to start  
18 and keep this going, bring in the young people. So  
19 that is our goal, to bring in the young people. They  
20 will be doing the interview. Really, Ms. Bush and  
21 everybody else know, we'll be in the paper when this  
22 will start, this called, Tell Me Your Story.

23 Penn Center has been a great inspiration to me and  
24 mentoring the Hand Me Down Gullah Museum. Also, you  
25 can go by. We have displays and pictures dealing with  
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1 a lot of the stuff that the African-American and the  
2 black culture had been contributing to Bluffton.

3 And one of the things I really would like to say  
4 is that I'd like to give thanks to Attorney Craig  
5 Smith. He's helped us work on our 501(c)(3). We have  
6 already got our 501(c)(3) and it should be finished  
7 soon. So we are doing some work.

8 And I want to apologize, I have not really been  
9 getting out to everybody that there is a museum  
10 starting here in Bluffton. And it's being housed at  
11 St. John the Baptist Church, and it's 103 Pritchard  
12 Street. So I would like to say to the corridor that we  
13 would really love for you to adopt us and help us, help  
14 us with this project that we're working on. So you can  
15 get in touch with me and I'll make sure I make myself  
16 available unto you because we're working with the Boys  
17 and Girls Club and all the churches in this area,  
18 putting together the youth, the youth of today learning  
19 about tomorrow.

20 Thank you.

21 MS. LAWRENCE: I'm Louise Lawrence and I'm  
22 representing Mitchelville tonight. And I wrote down  
23 what I was going to say because I have -- you know, I'm  
24 one of those people, if I got to talking, I just would  
25 never shut up. If I write it down, that's all I'll say

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1 and then I'll sit down.

2 Mitchelville was a town established in 1862 on  
3 Hilton Head Island by Union Army General Ormsby  
4 Mitchel. General Mitchel felt that the former slaves

5 should be learning how to live as free people. And for  
6 the first time, the freedmen were paid for their labor.  
7 They were given lumber on which to build a house.  
8 Streets were laid out. And one-quarter acre lots were  
9 picked. All of this was on a field that had been part  
10 of the Drayton Plantation. They had elected officials,  
11 laws addressing such things as community behavior and  
12 sanitation. Taxes were collected and a school was  
13 built. Compulsory education for all children between  
14 ages six and 15 was enforced. Northern missionaries  
15 came to teach these schools. This was the first  
16 compulsory school laws in South Carolina. There were  
17 three praise houses or churches built. There were  
18 about 1,500 residents of this town and most of the  
19 black population on Hilton Head Island is descended  
20 from these 1,500 citizens.

21 The mission of the Mitchelville project is to  
22 secure the funds with which to create a living replica  
23 of this town, depicting the life and times of the  
24 former slaves. This project will require the  
25 acquisition of three acres of land that is located in  
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1 the exact place where the original town was built. We  
2 respectfully ask that Mitchelville be included in the  
3 Gullah-Geechee Corridor.

4 The town remained intact until the 1870s. In  
5 1875, the original tract was offered to the Drayton  
6 family. The Drayton family sold it to March Gardner.  
7 March Gardner was an African-American. And most of the  
8 people who lived in the vicinity of this land are  
9 families members who still attend the churches that  
10 were started in 1860.

11 This is the main reason that I think Mitchelville  
12 really needs help. February the 6th, 1862, William  
13 Tecumseh Sherman issued General Order 9, which  
14 requested a census for the slaves from the high-favored  
15 philanthropic people in the North. Help came from two  
16 or three sources. But on April -- in April of 1862, he  
17 sent a military order out that issued -- freed the  
18 slaves on the sea islands. On January the 1st, 1863,  
19 President Abraham Lincoln issued the Emancipation  
20 Proclamation, freeing all slaves in the Confederate  
21 states. The slaves on Mitchelville were actually free  
22 before the Emancipation Proclamation was read. That's  
23 what makes it absolutely -- it's -- it just really will  
24 be a sin not to have this place saved.

25 Thank you.

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1 MR. WHITAKER: Good evening. My name is Bart  
2 Whitaker. I am the executive director of the Binyah  
3 Foundation. The Binyah Foundation was established in  
4 support of the historical and cultural preservation  
5 efforts of Daufuskie Island in specific and the  
6 Lowcountry in general.

7 And here with us today I'd like introduce a couple  
8 of our boards members, Ms. Sally Ann Robinson, a  
9 sixth-generation Daufuskie resident and noted author  
10 and celebrity chef. And Robin Townsend, Daufuskie  
11 Island resident. And it was these two ladies' idea to  
12 start the Binyah Foundation.

13 And I'll tell you a little bit about what our  
14 current projects are. First, we're providing some  
15 marketing assistance to several Gullah festivals that  
16 range from Beaufort to St. Helena and Hilton Head and  
17 Daufuskie Island. We're working with Palmetto Trust,  
18 the Daufuskie Island Historical Society, and SCAD, the  
19 Savannah School of Art and Design, to save, renovate  
20 several historical structures on Daufuskie Island.

21 And also here with us today is Mike Bedenbaugh  
22 with the Palmetto Trust.

23 Not here with us today is probably the most  
24 important person, a gentleman by the name of Daves  
25 Rossell. He's the professor of historical architecture  
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1 at the Savannah School of Art and Design.  
2 Mr. Rossell's classes have been visiting Daufuskie  
3 Island for over five years and they have identified,  
4 categorized and developed architectural and  
5 construction plans for the renovation for the majority  
6 of the historical structures on Daufuskie Island. Our  
7 plan is to save as many of these homes and buildings as  
8 possible and to create an era of historical structures  
9 of Daufuskie Island describing the time frame of the  
10 early 1900s and the mid 1900s, when shellfish and  
11 timber industries kept the island busy and prosperous.  
12 At that time, there were more than 2,000 local  
13 residents living on the island. And we are now down to  
14 under 20.

15 Lastly, we are also working on our own Binyah  
16 Foundation fund-raiser, a series of events which will  
17 be scheduled for the end of October, 17th and 18th, of  
18 this year. They include the Daufuskie Island golf  
19 shoot-out, hosted by LPGA Hall of Famer and Savannah  
20 resident, Savannah-born, as I mentioned, Hollis Stacy,  
21 with the LPGA. Other noted local residents who have  
22 committed to play and support us include former Tennis

23 Hall of Famer, Stan Smith, and Daufuskie Island  
24 resident and NHL Hall of Famer, Mark Messier. We're  
25 currently looking for other concerned residents or  
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1 people of interest that might want to lend their name  
2 and time to our events. Also, on Sunday, October 18th,  
3 we have a Daufuskie Island Lowcountry Festival. This  
4 would be our sixth year. It will be at Freeport  
5 Marina. And, lastly, we will be hosting a news  
6 conference during the week of August 10th, which y'all  
7 are invited. We will get the word out to everybody.  
8 And we'll have additional announcements and plans to  
9 share at that time. And cooking will be provided by  
10 Sally Ann Robertson and Hilton Head resident and  
11 Realtor, Bubba Ward. We'll probably be on his property  
12 there, down at Spanish Moss end of the island.

13 Thank you.

14 MS. ROBINSON: Hello, everybody. I'm want to  
15 say thank you and it's a pleasure to be here. My time  
16 is short because I got to go to work. But I made a  
17 promise to myself that I had to be here because this  
18 was so important.

19 I am a born native of Daufuskie Island. And I  
20 stand here today because I see and hear all the stories  
21 of folks who was on the island, sea island, long before  
22 me, and tell the stories of the life that I grew up  
23 living.

24 Today, my children really does not know that life  
25 because during their time an education was the thing  
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1 that they had to leave the island for. And the reason  
2 for that was, after the eighth grade, we had come to  
3 the mainland. Well, that drew them away from the  
4 island, their heritage, their culture. And they came  
5 to the mainland.

6 Like myself, I ended up going to Savannah. For  
7 me, it was really not just a culture shock, it was a  
8 shock to be able to not know where I fit in, not  
9 because of color but because of who I was and where I  
10 was from. It was my dialect, that people saw me as  
11 somebody different. They told me that I couldn't fit  
12 in because I didn't know how to talk. Well, for years  
13 I spent time losing my identity basically because I  
14 didn't know where I belonged. I was not taught it. It  
15 was not accepted where I went. So I still had to  
16 preach and practice how and where and when and where do  
17 I go as far as a Daufuskian and belong? Well, for  
18 years, I first had to learn how to talk like everybody

19 else, which I didn't understand was so different from  
20 myself, okay? Second, because I live on an island that  
21 still had the culture of the old ways, the outdoor  
22 plumbing, the oil lamp and so forth, I wasn't like  
23 everybody else.

24 While -- when I heard Ms. Mitchell talk about  
25 education, Mr. Barnwell talk about heirs' property,  
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1 there's also another problem we have, our kids not  
2 knowing who they are. Our kids are not identified as  
3 Gullah-Geechee, not even something from the Lowcountry.  
4 You ask them their family, they really don't know who  
5 some of their family is. I would really like to see  
6 the corridor also help the family tree, families get  
7 together and find their family tree. Because so many  
8 does not know their family tree. And I think that is  
9 very sad.

10 I sit with my mom, who is 86 years old. I'm the  
11 author of two cookbooks. But in my cookbook, I talk  
12 about stories. Because I could not have written these  
13 books without the stories that I grew up with, how  
14 they -- how we planted the seeds and grew them and  
15 farmed and everything.

16 I tell my kids this. And they say, Oh, momma,  
17 you're just old-fashioned.

18 And I look at them and say, Don't knock  
19 old-fashioned because old-fashioned got you here, okay?

20 And they really, really think that it's funny, but  
21 it's not because they're losing their identity here.  
22 So I would love to see kids identify themselves with  
23 their culture and learn their roots and who their  
24 families are.

25 Because another thing is happening, that I see  
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1 every day, is that kids are having families. They  
2 don't know who they are. It's too late when they have  
3 babies and things happening. And then they say, Oh,  
4 that's your cousin. It's too late. Kids don't know  
5 where they're coming from.

6 And I'm residing in Savannah. I am moving back  
7 home because Daufuskie -- I was born there. I love it  
8 there. And I'm going home, to make sure that my  
9 children identify with their roots there. As sixth  
10 generation, I am very proud to be from there.

11 And I just want to say thank you and see y'all  
12 when you get there.

13 MR. MITCHELL: Good evening, everyone. My  
14 name is James Mitchell. And I'm president and CEO of

15 Native Island Business and Community Affairs  
16 Association and also the Hilton Head Island Native  
17 Community Association.

18 And, Dr. Campbell, I want to thank you and the  
19 other Commission members for coming out here and  
20 traveling all around the -- all around the corridor,  
21 listening to what people have to say, their wants and  
22 needs. I hope you have a lot of money, because you  
23 have a lot of wants and needs. And, hopefully, you  
24 guys will be able to, to go through them and hopefully  
25 help us to do what we can to preserve this Gullah

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1 culture.

2 The reason I'm here, as president and CEO, is to  
3 let you know about -- I know we had y'all make your  
4 presentation at our Freedom Day event, which is a part  
5 of our Hilton Head Island Gullah Celebration. And I  
6 know you heard some of our needs and wants there. But  
7 I'm going to reiterate them this evening.

8 And one of them, obviously, one thing, one of the  
9 activities or initiatives that we do as a part of the  
10 Native Island Business and Community Affairs  
11 Association, which I will refer to as NIBCAA, is the  
12 Gullah -- Hilton Head Island Gullah Celebration, which  
13 we've been doing now for -- we're going into our 14th  
14 year. And what we're definitely interested in doing is  
15 having that become one of the main events that is  
16 promoted and also sponsored, if you will, by the, by  
17 the Gullah-Geechee Heritage Corridor. We have -- one  
18 of our missions with the Gullah celebration, as you  
19 probably well know, is to definitely promote, protect  
20 and preserve the Gullah culture. And that's something  
21 we've been doing now for going on 14 years. And,  
22 basically, we try to showcase all aspects of the  
23 culture, you know, in music, food. Many of the people  
24 in here have participated, many of the -- let's say the  
25 protectors and preservers of the culture, we're well

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1 aware of and have worked with us through the years in  
2 preserving the culture. So we definitely want your,  
3 your support with assisting us in continuing to promote  
4 and showcase the culture.

5 NIBCAA, over the years, has been in operation for  
6 15 years. We've had a number of initiatives that we've  
7 supported.

8 We've worked on the heirs' property issue, which  
9 we heard earlier this evening, Mr. Barnwell and others  
10 have talked about. And we definitely want you all to



11 support that initiative. We have been working on that  
12 now for many years. And, surprisingly, heirs' property  
13 continues to be a problem. Hopefully -- we've had a  
14 number of workshops on that initiative, but further  
15 work needs to be done.

16 We've talked about economic development. That's  
17 going to be -- that's paramount in our community.  
18 We've talked about businesses in the Bluffton area.  
19 We've experienced the same problems on Hilton Head.  
20 And despite the fact that NIBCAA had a microloan  
21 program and we have made over two and a half million  
22 dollars, to somewhere toward 180 small businesses in  
23 and around Beaufort, Hilton Head, Bluffton, to try to  
24 promote, start-up and establishment of small  
25 businesses. That is definitely something that's needed  
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1 and -- in this community, because many of our small  
2 businesses, especially minority and African-American  
3 businesses, are still having problems trying to get  
4 capital, believe it or not. So whatever you can do to  
5 help with that initiative.

6 We heard a number of people speak to Mitchelville.  
7 And I'm here basically to underscore and provide  
8 additional support for that effort because that also is  
9 an initiative that's coming out of one of our  
10 organizations, which is the Hilton Head Island Native  
11 Community Association. And we have, as you can see,  
12 some people who are very, very enthusiastic and almost  
13 zealous about the Mitchelville project. And we're --  
14 it's -- it's a new initiative. And, hopefully, we will  
15 be able to move that forward with the help of the  
16 Gullah-Geechee Heritage Corridor, as well as some  
17 working with the Town of Hilton Head and the county.  
18 Because all of those players are going to have to play  
19 an integral part in seeing that project come to  
20 fruition.

21 The Gullah celebration, which I mentioned earlier,  
22 during the year, we reach anywhere -- during the month  
23 of February, we have something in the neighborhood of  
24 15 events. And during that, during that month, we  
25 reach anywhere -- well, I'm sure, through the Internet  
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1 and other places, we reach hundreds of thousands of  
2 people. But during that month, we bring anywhere from  
3 10 to 15,000 people to this island during the month of  
4 February. So our influence in that regards is out  
5 there and reaching a lot of people.

6 And we think that we can do a whole lot of help

7 and working to preserve and protect and promote the  
8 Gullah culture. And thank you very much and (remarks  
9 in Gullah.)

10 MR. BEDENBAUGH: Thank you. I'm Michael  
11 Bedenbaugh. I'm executive director of Palmetto Trust  
12 for Historic Preservation. We are a statewide  
13 nonprofit 501(c)(3) and we are partnered with the  
14 National Trust. And our task is simple: It is to save  
15 our architectural heritage. And there is nothing more  
16 important to us of the communication of culture and  
17 history than the buildings that our ancestors built,  
18 lived (inaudible.) Ms. Bush about the brick store on  
19 the corner. If you want our descendants and people  
20 generations from now to know what Bluffton looked like,  
21 we have to keep some of the buildings that we have and  
22 save them. And not -- I mean, this is a beautiful  
23 area. Don't get me wrong. But it's a "Disneyfied"  
24 version of what the Lowcountry town is supposed to look  
25 like. And that's what we want to make sure that we  
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1 protect.

2 We do this through several ways. One is through  
3 advocacy, to get out and talk about it. We've created  
4 a list called the Most Endangered List. National Trust  
5 has the 11 most endangered and we have -- being South  
6 Carolina, we figure we need more than 11. We have them  
7 on [palmettotrust.org](http://palmettotrust.org).

8 And the strongest tool that we have to protect  
9 buildings is through easements, preservation easements,  
10 that owners either voluntarily donate to the Palmetto  
11 Trust, then we oversee these buildings so that no  
12 matter who owns the structure, it must be maintained,  
13 must be kept as per the standards that are negotiated  
14 between the original grantor and grantee, which is us.  
15 We also capture them through selling the property. We  
16 actually will purchase the property, if it's for sale,  
17 and market it to people who will promise and sign  
18 covenants that they will maintain these structures this  
19 way.

20 The charitable needs of small towns are not strong  
21 enough to turn every historical piece of property into  
22 a museum. Can't do it. We need to put people back in  
23 them, put life, love, family back in these buildings.  
24 And these owners will be committed to protecting them.  
25 And the Palmetto Trust every year will be investigating  
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1 these and making sure they're maintained.

2 I want to really emphasize with the Heritage

3 Corridor that we would love to be you partner in this.  
4 Because y'all mentioned about the zoning issue, which  
5 is a tremendous one. But you've got the private  
6 organization of the Palmetto Trust that's over the  
7 whole corridor. So if there's any sort of issues with  
8 zoning in, you know, in the area there, we can help  
9 take easements and protect these structures. You have  
10 Preservation North Carolina, with (inaudible) North  
11 Carolina and you have Georgia Preservation and also  
12 Florida as well. So we here in South Carolina are  
13 ready to help partner with that and to help protect  
14 these buildings. And there you go.

15 Check out our Web site, [palmettotrust.org](http://palmettotrust.org). And  
16 thank you all.

17 MS. RICHARDS: Good evening, everyone. I'm  
18 Maureen Richards with the Heyward House and the  
19 Bluffton Historical Preservation Society. And I do  
20 have, this time, prepared what I was to say, because I  
21 tend to get side-tracked a little bit and become a  
22 little bit too longwinded.

23 First of all, I have been working with the Society  
24 and many of you for -- since 2003. And over the years,  
25 I have learned of at least five or six significant  
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1 cultural resources in Bluffton, specifically  
2 architectural resources, which I feel should be  
3 recognized along an African-American trail, if we  
4 could. And those properties are the, of course, the  
5 slave quarters at the Heyward House, which has been  
6 restored with the help of the Savannah College of Art  
7 and Design, and also the African-American Episcopal  
8 Campbell Chapel and the AME Church, St. John the  
9 Baptist Church. Gwen is here. Yes. And your Hand Me  
10 Down Museum, so excited for you. Also, First Zion  
11 praise house on Simmonsville Road, significant resource  
12 that needs to be protected. And the Garvin House, the  
13 freedman's cottage, which is being -- it's stabilized  
14 for now. And we are -- we're reviewing a preservation  
15 plan and a restoration plan with the Town of Bluffton  
16 for that significant resource. And if we could connect  
17 those and create a trail, a heritage -- an  
18 African-American heritage trail here in Bluffton and  
19 then link into the nationally recognized Gullah-Geechee  
20 Corridor, it's just a win-win situation for everyone.  
21 And so I would just like you all to think about that.  
22 And if you have any questions or comments, or if I can  
23 become a part of any think tank along those lines, I'd  
24 be happy to. And you can always reach me at the

25 Heyward House.

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1 Thank you. Next?

2 AUDIENCE MEMBER: Thank you. My name is

3 Richard (inaudible.) And I'm a native of Hilton Head

4 Island South Carolina, where I was born and bred

5 practically educated there.

6 Someone spoke earlier that during our education,

7 we had to leave the island to continue our education.

8 And I was one of them.

9 What I have to say -- I didn't bring a written

10 statement with me tonight. I just thought it was

11 something -- and this is the churches, our

12 Gullah-Geechee people religion. Here, right here in

13 Beaufort and on Hilton Head, we have AME church,

14 churches. And some of you may not know, but the AME

15 church was founded by Dr. Richard Allen who was an

16 African-American. Now, these churches are buildings

17 that have been built. So what I would like to see,

18 when we -- if we get a chance, Ms. Mitchell, to get

19 into the schools to inform our middle and high school

20 students, this could be mentioned, how these churches

21 were founded and who found them.

22 I'm a Baptist. I'm not a Methodist. So

23 (inaudible) these people sing from the books and we

24 sing from the shuffle. I'm not a preacher.

25 So that's what I have to say, if we could keep

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1 that in mind. The Green Chapel AME church on Hilton

2 Head Island, South Carolina, is the oldest AME church

3 in the state of South Carolina. And you have here

4 Allen Chapel. So I would like to see that continue.

5 Thanks.

6 MR. CAMPBELL: Good evening. My name is

7 Ervin Campbell. And I'm speaking on -- well, I'm

8 speaking on behalf of the Native -- Native Island

9 Business Community Affairs and Association and also as

10 a citizen. I've been in this area now for 62 years.

11 Seems like it was just yesterday.

12 But I want to reiterate some of the things that we

13 spoke of earlier, and education was one of them.

14 Education is an influence of this whole -- for

15 maintaining or preserving our culture. And I look,

16 when I say education, we talk about the home, the

17 churches, the communities, schools, civic organizations

18 and businesses. I feel that if, if all of those

19 individuals of us are pretty much aware of the Gullah

20 culture and we can we can teach our children. So, Mr.

21 Commissioner, I would love to see somebody -- I would  
22 love to see an educational help established somehow,  
23 where we can teach families.

24 We have family reunions in all our region. Hilton  
25 Head, Bluffton, a lot of family reunions. But if we  
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1 can come up with a more structured family reunion,  
2 where we can ensure our history of those families are  
3 being taught at those reunions.

4 The churches, our churches, we have mostly  
5 leadership imported. The pastors are coming into our  
6 communities and they're not pretty much aware of our  
7 culture. So that can be a teaching aspect.

8 And, of course, the civic organizations and  
9 businesses, for sure, have come in this, in our  
10 community and do not know anything about our culture.  
11 So that educational help is so important there.

12 And, of course, incorporate something in the  
13 school, be it formal or informal, about our culture.

14 And then, the other thing, Mr. Commissioner, we  
15 would love to see some attractive means to our  
16 landowners so we won't have to sell our property, some  
17 attractive means from the economic side on how we can  
18 develop our property so we won't have to sell.

19 The other thing that I would want to touch on is  
20 the access to our waterways and creeks. Some of our  
21 accesses to those waterways and creeks have been --  
22 have gone because of the development. And, of course,  
23 harvesting of the seafood here in this area has not  
24 only kept food on our table as families, but it was a  
25 means of making money for our families as well. And  
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1 that, that particular aspect of actually harvesting  
2 seafood and selling it as an occupation is gone. And  
3 we, who were brought up here around the waterways,  
4 that's not only just a livelihood for us, but we feel  
5 good about it from our heart, when we work and, and  
6 love doing what we do and making money from it, and  
7 harvesting seafood here. And if we could sell it here,  
8 what -- I mean, we got oodles of restaurants here. So  
9 if we can sell it here, boy, that would be wonderful.

10 Okay, I think that I've got it all. Thank you.

11 MR. EVANS: I think -- I think there seems to  
12 be some confusion among the blacks here about the  
13 Gullah-Geechee thing. For me, as a white, I have no  
14 idea. I've heard that Gullah comes from Angola.  
15 Doesn't make a bit of sense. Maybe Geechee comes from  
16 Ghana. But none of that makes sense. It should be

17 unrelated to the actual, you know, country, perhaps.  
18 But I think maybe the definition of it has really been  
19 confusing to me from the beginning.

20 And the other thing that I worry about a little  
21 bit is that if we establish, say, Mitchelville and it  
22 gets interpreted by the native islanders as the way it  
23 should be represented to the rest of the nation, and  
24 then we drop it all in the lap of these college --  
25 probably white kids -- in the National Park Service,  
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1 what are they going to do to that interpretation? And  
2 I think we have to make sure this Commission protects  
3 the interpretation of what you're trying to create  
4 here, you know, rather than dumping it into some, you  
5 know, outside group's area to deal with.

6 You know, it's -- I shouldn't say it, but, I mean,  
7 even a person like this could put a slight slant on  
8 what we've been telling. I'm not trying to say that.  
9 But that's what I see happening in Washington, when it  
10 gets up to Washington Park Service. But I think the  
11 interpretation should be done by y'all and be protected  
12 by you, you know, by y'all. Anyway...

13 PARTICIPANT: Would you state your name for  
14 the record, sir.

15 MR. EVANS: Oh, Peter Evans.

16 MR. BROWN: Good evening. I'm Oliver Brown  
17 and I live here in Bluffton. And I serve on the town  
18 council here in Bluffton. And I happen to be born in  
19 Savannah.

20 And I'm going to echo some of the sentiments that  
21 we already stated here this evening. And I  
22 particularly like what Sally said in that because I'm a  
23 victim, as I'm going to say, of leaving this area,  
24 leaving the islands, to go to be educated, which my  
25 mother did. And, and she lost her accent completely.

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1 You couldn't tell where she was from. She was a school  
2 teacher. And our heritage is just so, so very  
3 important. Therefore, I didn't develop an accent. My  
4 children don't, or don't speak the language, if you  
5 will. And I think it's so important that we just  
6 reclaim our language, our culture, because it's so  
7 important. I searched my background and I found my  
8 ancestry all over these islands.

9 Mr. Barnwell said something that was very  
10 interesting to me, the cemeteries are on Pinckney  
11 Island. My grandfather was born on Pinckney Island.  
12 My father was born on Pinckney Island. My mother was

13 born on Hilton Head. My great-grandmother was born on  
14 Daufuskie. You see? And I have -- and between Hilton  
15 Head, Daufuskie -- and my other grandmother was born on  
16 Bulls Island. You see? So my whole heritage revolved  
17 in these islands, in the sea islands.

18 I remember as a child I came to Hilton Head and  
19 first came to Hilton Head before there was a bridge.  
20 And my grandmother called said, (remarks in Gullah.) I  
21 didn't know, just like you, I didn't know what she  
22 said. But I never did to try to learn.

23 And it was -- it's so important that we reclaim  
24 these cultural values. And I'm -- you have my full  
25 support of this endeavor because this is who we are.  
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1 Should we just let it go? I think not.

2 COMMISSIONER CAMPBELL: Is there anyone else  
3 that would like to say something? We've got a few  
4 minutes left.

5 In the meantime, I want to recognize a  
6 commissioner that came in late, the honorable Ron  
7 Daise, Ron, the Gullah Gullah Island man. Mr. Daise  
8 represents South Carolina, so do Louise Cohen and  
9 myself and Nicole Green. We all from South Carolina.

10 Please, everybody, sign up before you leave. Sign  
11 your sheet and leave the address, please, so that we  
12 can be in touch with you.

13 And then we have Mr. Charles Hall, who is  
14 representing Georgia.

15 This corridor is 400 miles long, 400 miles long,  
16 some 30 or more counties. And so we have a big job  
17 coordinating this entire corridor. And that's why it's  
18 so important for us to get all of your input. Don't  
19 have any staff yet, but we're working on that. And  
20 with all the input that I've heard tonight, we're going  
21 to need a lot of staff and a lot of money.

22 The other thing you should know -- come up,  
23 Mr. Barnwell -- is that we have to match either in kind  
24 or cash all the funds that we get from the federal  
25 government. So the more we get from them, the more  
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1 money we have to raise, and all in-kind and cash. So  
2 we accept cash donations as well as donated time.

3 MR. BARNWELL: Thank you. Thank you very  
4 much, Dr. Campbell.

5 A couple of -- a couple of things that I did not  
6 put emphasis on. One was the heirs' property. I was  
7 trying to move as rapidly as possible because of the  
8 wide number of persons to come up here and give their

9 statements. And heirs' property that we have today,  
10 it's so important, if that -- or those properties that  
11 we're living on, wherever it is, in North Carolina,  
12 Georgia, Florida, wherever, if the people who work hard  
13 and secure those parcels of real estate did not do  
14 that, those of us that are enjoying the opportunity of  
15 having heirs' property today would not be on those  
16 parcels of land if those persons did not make the  
17 sacrifices that they made.

18 Now, I'm going to go to another level very, very  
19 quickly because I was able to encourage my family  
20 members on the Barnwell side of the family that owned  
21 property in the Squire Pope area to electively form a  
22 limited liability corporation. And we together have  
23 put our land in a position that we now have a long-term  
24 lease.

25 Now, I want to tell this Commission that I have  
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1 done, with the help of my family members, a small  
2 booklet that I did not bring tonight. But I shared it  
3 with Mr. Daise. Didn't even share it with the  
4 Commissioner, Chairperson. But I had Mr. Daise to just  
5 glimpse it one day. And I said, If you guys -- if  
6 y'all as a commission ask me to share this information  
7 with you, I will do that. That's the other reason I  
8 came back up here.

9 The other part, the other section that I did not  
10 mention, that needs to be in the record since it's in  
11 this area and Jasper County is contiguous, is the new  
12 proposed port that is being discussed and planned for  
13 Jasper County. That's going to come close to Savannah.  
14 The economic impact of that port is going to have a  
15 major influence not only on Jasper County but Daufuskie  
16 Island as well. And it is extremely critical to ask  
17 the existing members of the corridor to please do what  
18 you can to communicate positively with Mr. Bill Bethea,  
19 who is president and the chairman of that commission  
20 for the two states, to please include your information  
21 and your material with their public relations person or  
22 persons that will be coming on board. Because the  
23 growth that will come from that port, growth and  
24 expansion, is going to have a major land impact on the  
25 native residents of the lower part of Jasper County,  
0045

1 first, and then it's going to grow very rapidly from  
2 Jasper, into Hampton and above.

3 And it is because of the experience that I have  
4 observed on Hilton Head that I felt it's critical to



5 ask you to allow me to cover those two points. Thank  
6 you, sir. Appreciate it.  
7 Oh, there is a third one: Tabbies. There are  
8 tabbies that are owned by families and individuals in  
9 Beaufort County. And they need to be protected.  
10 They're on private land, in many cases. The Woodland  
11 Club on St. Helena Island, I understand, own tabbies.  
12 My family and I own a tabby, the most preserved tabby  
13 on Hilton Head. And, right now, Mr. Brooker is in the  
14 process of having a person to work on the tabby that we  
15 own on Squire Pope Road. And we cannot get any funds  
16 by way of any organization to this point to help us to  
17 keep it from deteriorating.

18 Frank, you can print that, okay?

19 And I'm not being difficult to point out Frank,  
20 but that it is difficult. We have not been able to  
21 find a party through the State to help us to preserve  
22 and protect that tabby. Now, we want the public to be  
23 able to see it and enjoy it, but we have to protect it  
24 first. And we're using our own family resources to  
25 begin to do that.

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1 And thank you very much for allowing me to say  
2 those three, four things.

3 COMMISSIONER CAMPBELL: Okay. You have  
4 another chance after we leave tonight. We have comment  
5 cards in the back. You can pick one up. And if you  
6 get home and think of anything, just jot them down and  
7 put them in the mail. They're already paid for, no  
8 postage necessary. Okay.

9 COMMISSIONER DAISE: And if they could turn  
10 them -- send them in within a week, that would be  
11 greatly appreciated.

12 COMMISSIONER CAMPBELL. Yes. We are closing  
13 in on time lines, so please get your comments in.  
14 We're in Hardeeville tomorrow night and Pineville, and  
15 that will be it in terms of public comments in person.  
16 But just get these cards in to us.

17 Anything, Commissioner?

18 Any other commissioner have anything to say?

19 Mr. Hall, anything?

20 COMMISSIONER HALL: Well, it's good being  
21 here, since I -- Charles Hall, commissioner.

22 COMMISSIONER CAMPBELL: You better come up so  
23 he can get you on television. Right here, so you can  
24 talk in the mic.

25 COMMISSIONER HALL: Good evening. I'm

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1 Charles Hall, commissioner with the Gullah-Geechee  
2 culture and also a native of another barrier island,  
3 Sapelo. As was stated earlier, I represent Georgia.  
4 But my wife and I, we live in Hilton Head, so I feel  
5 I'm a part of both.

6 And we just today met with our state commissioner,  
7 the new director of the DNR. And many of the points  
8 that you made tonight we talked about, preserving the  
9 tabbies, rights to waterfront land retrieval. And all  
10 of these things are very important.

11 So, hopefully, if anyone can think of any idea or  
12 anything that wasn't said, it's important that you get  
13 it recorded. Because once all of this information is  
14 assembled, we hope to come up with one of the best  
15 plans. So we can only do it with your input.

16 It's good being here and good seeing so many  
17 people.

18 COMMISSIONER CAMPBELL: Well -- well, if  
19 there are no other comments, I just want to thank you  
20 all for coming.

21 I want to thank the staff. We have one intern on  
22 staff, and that's Ms. Andrea Barber. Want to thank  
23 Ms. Ridenour, our reporter, and the photographer in the  
24 back for recording this for us.

25 But, most of all, want to thank you for coming and  
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1 taking the time to give your comments.

2 Now we'll have the benediction. We do this thing  
3 like Gullah people. This is our culture. And so we're  
4 going to ask Reverend Green -- ask Pastor Green, would  
5 you please give us the closing prayer?

6 (Benediction.)

7 (The proceeding concluded at 7:10 P.M.)

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1 CERTIFICATE  
2 STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA:  
COUNTY OF DORCHESTER:

3  
4 I, MARY ANN RIDENOUR, Registered Professional  
5 Reporter and Notary Public, State of South Carolina at  
6 Large, certify that I was authorized to and did  
7 stenographically report the foregoing public hearing;  
8 and that the transcript is a true record of the  
9 testimony given by the witness, and was sworn as such.

10 WITNESS MY HAND AND OFFICIAL SEAL this 6th day  
11 of August, 2009, in the Town of Summerville, County of  
12 Dorchester, State of South Carolina.

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Mary Ann Ridenour, RPR and  
Notary Public

My commission expires:  
April 12, 2011

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