

# NO GOLF, NO GATES ON ST. HELENA: YOUR VOICE MATTERS!

## WHAT'S GOING ON WITH THE GATED GOLF RESORT PROPOSED AT PINE ISLAND AND ST. HELENVILLE?

A developer backed by wealthy investors purchased the 500-acre Pine Island and St. Helenaville property in March 2023 for \$18 million dollars with plans for an *exclusive gated golf resort* on this historic and culturally rich property along Village Creek, despite the community-driven zoning rules that *prohibit* this type of destructive development.

## WHAT IS THE CULTURAL PROTECTION OVERLAY (CPO) ZONING ON ST. HELENA ISLAND?

Adopted in 1999, the CPO was *created by and for the people* of St. Helena and surrounding sea islands *to protect Gullah/Geechee land and culture* by committing to a different vision than witnessed on Hilton Head Island by prohibiting golf, resorts, and gated communities. Commitment to this vision remains today as a citizen committee is making recommendations to *strengthen* these protections.

## WHERE ARE WE IN THE PROCESS?

The Pine Island developer seeks to get around the CPO by requesting the property be rezoned out of the overlay, in other words creating an exception from the CPO rules for a golf resort development.

**Now is the time to get engaged!** The rezoning request goes to Natural Resources Committee on **Tuesday Sept 2nd at 4pm & Beaufort County Council Monday Sept 22<sup>nd</sup> at 6pm.**

## I WANT TO SUBMIT A COMMENT – HOW DO I DO IT? WHAT SHOULD I SAY?

**TELL YOUR STORY.** Use our templates, blank cards, and contact sheets to write to Beaufort County Council. Why do you care about protecting St. Helena Island from incompatible development? Share your thoughts on why we need to uphold the Cultural Protection Overlay and sustain the Gullah/Geechee culture. Personal stories are always the most impactful but here are some suggestions to help get you started:

- **Gullah/Geechee Cultural Heritage:** St. Helena Island is nationally significant and the heart of living Gullah/Geechee culture and land ownership. *Generations of Gullah/Geechee families have sustained their livelihoods on these rural lands through working farms and hunting and fishing grounds.* Gated golf resort development directly threatens this heritage, which is why it is prohibited by the CPO. Historic Gullah/Geechee communities on Hilton Head Island and other sea islands up and down the coast are today gated neighborhoods and golf resorts marketed as plantations. The CPO has protected St. Helena Island from this same fate. Tell Beaufort County to reject this attempt to roll back the community-driven protections and open the door to destruction of living culture.
- **Land Loss & Displacement:** Your family and home will be impacted by incompatible development. Ask Beaufort County Council members to consider how this high-end gated golf resort will impact your property taxes and change the rural character and working sea island landscapes and waterways of St. Helena Island. Be specific, talk about how long your family has thrived on the island and what the land means to you.
- **Quality of Life at Stake:** Your way of living on our rural sea island ecosystem will be destroyed if a special exception is allowed for luxury golf resort development. There is no infrastructure to support such development on the rural island and roads and it will send property taxes soaring. If you enjoy a quiet, rural lifestyle on St. Helena share your concerns about losing that way of life. If you are a farmer or fishermen, share your concerns about how this destructive proposal will devastate our waterways and farmlands, restrict access, and impact your livelihood and self-sufficient way of life.
- **Environmental Impacts:** If water quality and wildlife are things you care about, tell Beaufort County Council to reject the plans for a gated golf resort at the mouth of the St. Helena Sound on a densely forested landscape. The maritime forest, saltmarsh, and tidal creeks should be protected because they provide critical habitat for wildlife and serve as important buffers for the people from runoff, storm events, and a changing climate. The development will deplete critical water supplies for farm irrigation and drinking wells, which are already under pressure from rising sea levels and saltwater intrusion.
- **No Economic Empowerment:** An exclusive golf resort catering to the ultra-wealthy only offers low-wage, service-industry jobs with no economic mobility and a sustainable livelihood. Let officials know how this development offends the self-sufficiency of native islanders.
- **Ripple Effect:** Tell officials that creating a special exception to the CPO for one developer could usher in a tidal wave of incompatible development to St. Helena and the surrounding sea islands