

SIHA Community Questions

SIHA - Community Meeting with ALL Sapelo Organizations on Sapelo Island, GA

ALL COME TOGETHER Initiative

1. Two properties on Hall Road – Lot 18x (1.75) and 19x (3.81), totaling 4.5 acres

Why are these two lots the only lots offered?

Lots 18X and 19X were recommended by the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) for several reasons. Both lots are found in an upland area and are planned to be mulched in the coming weeks. Both lots are accessible from Hall Rd. and have an existing easement. These lots were also part of the initial discussion with residents. No additional lots were recommended during the Sapelo Island Heritage Authority (SIHA) meeting.

2. Are the two properties available leased through the State (DNR) or the SIHA?

At the July 17, 2024, meeting of the SIHA, the Authority voted unanimously to give the DNR the authority to enter into agreements for the use of lots 18X and 19X for the purpose of preserving the cultural heritage, educational spaces, and/or agriculture of Sapelo Island.

3. Is this initiative truly for the preservation of the cultural heritage or is it for anyone who owns land to be able to bid on properties?

Interested parties will complete an application through a competitive process through DNR. As outlined in the adopted recommendation, the use of the land must be for the purpose of preserving the cultural heritage, educational spaces, and/or agriculture of Sapelo Island. The application vetting process will be used to ensure that the lands are being utilized in a manner as prescribed by the SIHA.

4. What is the SIHA looking to gain and what are they looking to preserve?

A recommendation was made and adopted by the SIHA to allow specified SIHA land to be used for these purposes based on the information presented in the concept plan, feedback DNR has received at the last two Sapelo Island community meetings and recommendation

from DNR staff. The designated lots could be used for the purpose of preserving the cultural heritage, educational spaces, and/or agriculture of Sapelo Island.

5. Is a longer lease term available? –

a. There isn't enough time with 2-3 years and based upon leased land given previously to other land owners. Is 60 years plus, maybe even 99 years an option?

The SIHA voted to allow 2-3 year agreements for the use of the land. To change the length of the rental agreements, the SIHA would need to amend.

Any agreement over five years creates the presumption of an estate for years, which would need to be individually approved by the SIHA on a case-by-case basis.

b. What about the availability of other (SIHA) property that is on higher land? It's much higher than low property

Lots 18X and 19X were recommended by DNR staff because they are in an upland area and have an easement already in place from Hall Rd. Both lots are currently undergoing mulching and once completed, the lots can be more easily viewed and assessed. This recommendation of these lots were the only lots approved for use by the SIHA.

6. What's available for long term leasing options?

At this time, the only lease options approved by the SIHA were for 2-3 year agreements.

a. Multimedia Center - 15-20,000 square feet

b. Size, cost, need money for this project to start (must be within code and zoning regulations, which is what we're asking for as a group)

c. What funding is available to get started? - governor budget of \$3,000,000.00 (liability, structure, materials, upkeep, maintenance, etc.) - other heritage authority entities have been funded

7. Is there a line item budget for funded land?

Currently, there is no budget request for the land use agreements. Costs associated with the use of the land would be the responsibility of the successful applicant.

8. Can the original SICARS plan be revised according to the quantity of people available to assist and support?

a. Copy plan I and II for the cultural village from 2002 or 2007

The SICARS agreement has expired due to the lack of completion of a feasibility study.

9. Can a Conglomerate group be established, under one corporate group - one umbrella to be created where everyone can work together; even as separate entities, the opportunity to come together for the greater cause of the project will exist through a conglomerate of descendants and land owners.

Such a group could submit an application if their proposed use meets the authorized purposes for the use of the land as set forth by the SIHA.

10. Policy and Procedures - what does this look like? Who establishes the operations?

At the July 17, 2024, meeting, the SIHA voted unanimously to DNR the authority to enter into rental agreements for the SIHA land use. DNR will develop policies and procedures and establish an application process.

11. Is the leasing of Tiny Homes an option? If so, what are the policies and procedures to lease this property for housing purposes? Can it be required that it is only a viable option for descendants of cultural heritage within the hog hammock community?

Per the SIHA, the purpose of the land-use agreements must be to preserve the cultural heritage, educational spaces, and/or agriculture of Sapelo Island. It would be up to the applicant to demonstrate how a tiny house meets the authorized purposes of the rental agreement.

12. Can a Community Land Trust be created?

Such a group could submit an application if their proposed use meets the authorized purposes as outlined in the adopted recommendation by the SIHA.

13. Is there more SIHA land available for leasing in the future? (25 Acres that SICARS agreed to use; will that go back on the table to bring a cultural village to fruition? Can this also be available only for descendants of cultural heritage within the hog hammock community?)

Lots 18X and 19X are a pilot project for the rental agreement for SIHA land. Additional lots would need to be approved by the SIHA.

14. Do we pay property taxes on this property if the SIHA doesn't?

The renter would not be responsible for property taxes as the agreements are not estate for years, but just rental agreements.

15. As far as what we're looking for, what are the policies and procedures that you require?

DNR will develop policies and procedures for the land-use agreements based on the recommendation adopted by the SIHA.