



# HISTORIC TOWN OF EATONVILLE, FLORIDA

## COMMUNITY REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY

### MEETING MINUTES

Tuesday, July 18, 2024, at 6:30 PM

Town Hall (Board Chamber) - 307 E Kennedy Blvd. 32751

**SPECIAL NOTICE:** These meeting minutes are presented in an abbreviated format intended as a public record discussion of stated meeting according to the Florida's Government-in-the-Sunshine law. Meetings are opened to the public, noticed within reasonable advance notice, and transcribed into minutes for public record. *\*\*Audio Recording are available through the Town's website on the Board Agenda Page.*

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**CALL TO ORDER** – Chair Randolph called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

**\*\*Recording Stopped**

**ROLL CALL** – Quorum was established through roll call by the Town Clerk

**PRESENT:** (6) Chair Wanda Randolph, Director Tarus Mack, Director Rodney Daniels, Director Theo Washington, Director Angie Gardner, Director Ruthi Critton (Absent: Vice-Chair Donovan Williams)

**STAFF:** (2) Veronica King, **Town Clerk**, Greg Jackson, **Attorney**

#### **INVOCATION AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

Chair Randolph led the invocation through a Moment of Silence followed by the Pledge of Allegiance

**APPROVAL OF AGENDA (Added) - Chair Randolph motion to APPROVE Meeting Agenda; moved by Director Daniels; second by Director Critton; **AYE: ALL, MOTION PASSES.****

#### **CITIZEN PARTICIPATION – (2)**

Julian Johnson – Yielded his time to Nia Williams-Brown

Nia Williams-Brown – (Farmer's Night Manager) We are delighted to share the success of our recent kickoff event held in the town hall parking lot, showcased forty Black businesses in an environment reminiscent of a family reunion. The overwhelming community response has inspired us to further empower Eatonville to own its historical legacy and foster economic growth. To support this vision, we have previously offered our resources to assist the Town of Eatonville Community Redevelopment Agency (TOECRA) as contractors in the areas of community engagement and with Eatonville's procurement processes. The goal is to attract culturally competent employees who understand and can contribute to the unique community needs. We are eager to collaborate with TOECRA to specifically market to Eatonville residents and aid in the process of creating licensed business owners who can join our market and flourish. We envision the community being at the forefront of the brick-and-mortar developments, accompanying the spread of economic growth in the area. The market will be held on the first Saturday of every month at the Town Hall from 5 to 9 p. m. We cordially invite you and your families to join us in celebrating Black economic ownership in an environment designed for the community to thrive. We respectfully request your support and funding for this initiative, which we believe will significantly contribute to the economic and cultural vitality of Eatonville.

**CONSENT AGENDA: Chair Randolph motion to APPROVE Consent Agenda Approving CRA Board Meeting Minutes for 6-20-24 and 7-2-24 with necessary corrections at the next meeting (if needed); moved by Director Daniels; second by Director Mack; **AYE: ALL, MOTION PASSES.** **Notes:** The Minutes for the CRA Meeting for 6-20-24 and 7-2-24 were provided to the board at the meeting with three options: can read them, approve for future amendments, or to table the minutes and bring it back to the next meeting.**

## **BOARD DISCUSSIONS:**

Discussion of the TOECRA Bylaws – A copy of the current bylaws along with the amended proposed bylaws were given to the board. Legal discussed the changes made in the amended draft related to the vice chair (Article 3, Paragraph 3.3), the bylaws were previously changed July 2023, do not believe there is a reason to change them within a 12-month period, was asked to clarify some language. There were some concerns about the majority versus supermajority vote and meetings being called by the executive director and the chair taking the power away from the board, inclusive of a democratic process. Board Daniels requests changes to section 3.6 (Treasurer), the CRA finances should also be held in the town, the town's financial person should be the Chief Financial Officer over financials within the town, this would provide the necessary checks and balances needed for both the CRA finance director and town's financial directors when overseeing the financials; would like to have a side-by-side comparison. Director Gardner suggested the supermajority vote when there is no cause, to stop the pattern of just terminating or provoking the resignation of executive directives, putting in place a process that is serious about keeping qualified persons in positions. Director Washington would like to see the CRA manage the CRA Finances not the town and that the executive director manage the agenda and someone else do the minutes, the CRA should the business of the CRA. The clerk emphasized that if someone else is appointed to put together the agenda, the packet and the minutes, for record keeping purposes as the custodian of the town, the information will be needed for managing all records. Board members are asked to send in recommendations for inclusion in the revised draft. Vice Chair Williams stated his desire to see changes to Article 3, Section 3.3. Changes to the next draft will be bolded and underlined. Director Daniels requests a copy of the draft of Bylaws from the June 16, 2024, meeting provided by the Executive Director. Chair Randolph referenced and suggested adding language to section 3.4 (Executive Director) establishing parameters when there is a vacancy with the executive director; also to clarify language for section 3.3, (Legal) the drafted language gives a clear procedure in process as to what qualifies as absence, disqualification, reservation, suspension, death, or disability that would then allow the vice chair to sit in the executive director's chair until such time the appointment period comes back at the end of the calendar year, per the bylaws. Director Mack agrees with the supermajority vote because of the transition of moving the director anytime there is a new cycle of elections. Director Washington would like to add language that speaks to not waiting to December to appoint someone in the absence of chairman or vice chairman due to death or any other reason, making appointment at the next meeting. (Legal) the bylaws tell you who becomes chair; the draft amendment addresses the Vice Chair stating that the town council shall appoint a vice chair from among the existing board members at a regular or special meeting to be held within 30 days of being notified by the token board of the vacancy of the vice chair. Director Daniels inquired about everyone submitting their changes to the executive director and requested a copy of the draft bylaws from the former executive director. The board would like to workshop the bylaws at the next meeting (August 15, 2024) at 5:30 p.m. Legal suggest changes be made using the current bylaws, the changes can be redlined to see what the changes are.

## **BOARD DECISIONS:**

Approval of Resolution CRA-R-2024-28 Adopting Budget Amendment for “The Circuit” Performing Arts & Entertainment Event Center Grant Program Funding. (Administration) (Preamble Read) **Chair Randolph motion** to **APPROVE** Resolution CRA-R-2024-28 Adopting Budget Amendment for “The Circuit” Performing Arts & Entertainment Event Center Grant Program Funding; **moved** by Director Mack; **second** by Director Gardner; **AYE: ALL, MOTION PASSES. Discussions/Comments:** Funding has been awarded, in the process of pre-issuing a check for \$250,000, a million dollars. There will be four increments of \$250,000. This item is to create a budget line item for the funds to be received.

Approval of Resolution CRA-R-2024-29 Authorizing the Chair to Act as Executive Director for the Purpose of Maintaining the Day-to-Day Duties or Until an Executive Director is Hired by the TOECRA Board. (Preamble Read) **Chair Randolph motion** to **APPROVE** Approval of Resolution CRA-R-2024-29 Authorizing the Chair to Act as Executive Director for the Purpose of Maintaining the Day-to-Day Duties or Until an Executive

Director is Hired by the TOECRA Board; **moved** by Director Mack; **second** by Chair Randolph; **AYE**; Chair Wanda Randolph, Director Rodney Daniels, Director Angie Gardner, Director Ruthi Critton **NAYE**; Director Mack, Director Washington; **MOTION PASSES**. **Discussions/Comments:** July 5, 2024, was the day of the Executive Director, twelve applications received; Director Mack wants to start the interviewing process and hire someone immediately. Director Daniels believes that Chair Randolph is capable of acting as the executive director until someone is hired. The position is posted for 30 days and is not closed (Posting Date: July 9). Director Washington has an issue with an elected official doing the day-to-day; concerned about section four being included in the resolution allowing the power to hire over the board. (Legal) resolution reads that the executive director, with the approval of the board can hire and set compensation for necessary employees of the TOECRA, suggesting that the language mirrors the language that is in the bylaws. Legal will provide language on employment hiring laws and practices. Director Mack inquired about the information gathered from the clerk (shared the closing date for the position). Legal stated to close the time period to accept applications before a period that has been posted would be problematic, does not mean that you cannot interview or speak to potential applicants. Director Washington stated that the CRA has been without an executive director for years and never had this issue. Director Critton expressed the importance of due diligence when interviewing applicants for the position and inquired about the process should someone not be hired after the thirty days as indicated (the resolution states until someone is hired). Board members are asked to fill out the score sheets, score your people, turn scores into Human who will in return determine the top five. Director Gardner suggested interviewing the top-rated applicants in the first group of applications.

## **BOARD REPORTS:**

**Clerk (Veronica King)** – Have available the drafted bylaws from June 20, 2024 (provided to the board); gave a reminder about the photo opportunity in the lobby for Christmas in July.

**Attorney (Greg Jackson)** – No Report

**Director Angie Gardner** – Thank you everyone for coming

**Director Theo Washington** – Acknowledged the success of the farmer’s night market, would like for the CRA to provide funding support in the future to help bring people to the community.

**Director Ruthi Critton** – Recognized the success of the farmer’s night market, would like for the CRA to provide funding support; it inspired some cultural and economic development.

**Director Tarus Mack** – Believes that the CRA is in a crisis, possibly expiring in three years if the board does not get it together; making a notion that an executive director is not needed make any sense; expressed a concern about an email received stating that a director (present or past) is making assumptions without facts, mentioning of name unless you got facts is called defamation of character; invite the citizen to participate in citizen participation; desire for the town to grow and go to another level of prosperity. Suggest using the \$500,000 grant to put a police community center on the Dixon property. Challenged the board to come up with five things they would like to see happen in the town; Director Mack would like to see economic growth and that the youth get what they need. Mentioned a program that would benefit the town by offering an amphitheater and a recreation center for the youth (like Cranes Roost). Come to these meetings, be attentive, be engaged in what is going on in the community. Eatonville is at large out of the 11 in this country, a Black community established August 15, 1887, founded by 27 men that had a vision. The town has resources, money that is not spent because of disagreement, by not suggesting hiring an executive director, the CRA and town have been given an injustice, especially the taxpayers that paid us. The job is to work for the people ensuring every resource possible is afforded in moving the town forward. The board needs to do a better job legislating, making decisions because the people chose us.

**Director Rodney Daniels** – Did not see the purpose of the resolution, because in the absence of the executive director the chair assumes those roles, when hiring, the request comes to the board. There must be more people involved with the process of hiring, it takes a process to find the right person to be in these positions, do your homework. Economic growth is the process by which a nation or community wealth increases over time. The night market will get the support but must show where the money is going, will it help with the piping, will help

pay for an officer? We pay out but will come back to the town, want to see tangible results not just word of mouth, do not want organizations taking advantage of the town because they see a need, want to see how the town will benefit from these events, are they paying for police, permits, electricity, or are they given a portion of the proceeds? (Director Washington) Piping is infrastructure, there is money for infrastructure (millions in infrastructure), the CRA is supposed to bring people to your community, there were fruits and vegetables at 1887 Night Market.

**Vice Chair Wanda Randolph** – All elected board members have to go to TD Bank to do new bank cards (as a bank check signer), there is one new board member (Tarus Mack) – in Winter Park (corner of Webster and 17-92); the Fiscal Coordinator (Laurie Nossair) was hired from a private agency at \$42/hour, made changes to reduce the cost by half by hiring her as an employee. she has been hired since May and is very qualified to do the work. She was a deputy municipal clerk for the city of Orlando and knows about government, she knows about grants and about the appropriations of funds and managing the accounts, thanks to staff for all the support; Acknowledged the success of the night market, it may not have an economic impact at this particular time, but there needs to be a return on our investment, it is an awesome event, appreciate the organizers; David Barany was invited to podium to give an update on Club Eaton (photos have been displayed, an emergency partial demolition had to be done due the asbestos study that revealed the asbestos panels which required the overhang to be removed, the work was strictly monitored by Ms. Rose, permits were pulled, with the proper communication (including emails). Demolition is a dirty thing to do and would have loved to invite everyone to do a walkthrough. The demolition had to happen to move forward, it was impossible to enter through the door because everything was collapsable, the original walls were kept, and the reconstruction process can begin. More could have been done to get information out to the citizens; The building there is the way it used to be and now you can see the diamond shaped original windows dated from 1947. Question: should it be restored to the absolute original shape, form, or as close as it is possible? Should it be built back to the six-edition version, which was really like a bar which is the easiest thing to do. Paid \$70,000 (own money) for a third-party consultation firm, a professional grant writer, and for a specialized grant attorney, gave an invitation the CRA showing maximum good faith, turning it into a joint venture, showing true intentions in working with the town, without the town this could never happening. The total completion costs are approximately two and a half million dollars. Restored a 1910 building, (the boarding house), sold it and money, the money is going towards this building (Club Eaton), also sold the laundromat to a real pharmacy, it is coming but pending permits. All proceeds go back to the non-profit and to this project (passion project), the building is over 50 years old but not listed on the historic registry; want to provide an updated version of what it used to be with a lot of cultural flair, live music event embracing African American history as a staple. (Agenda) The clerk clarified that agenda items come to the clerk's office and get put on the agenda.

**ADJOURNMENT** Chair Angie Gardner Motions for Adjournment of Meeting (**Moved** by Director Mack; **Second** by Director Critton; **AYE: ALL, MOTION PASSES. Meeting Adjourned at 8:35 P.M.**

**Respectfully Submitted by:**

**APPROVED**

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**Veronica L King, Town Clerk**

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**Wanda Randolph, Chair**