



HISTORIC TOWN OF EATONVILLE, FLORIDA

REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING

MEETING MINUTES

Tuesday, February 4, 2025, at 7:30 PM

Town Hall – 307 E. Kennedy Blvd.

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 Council Agenda Page.*

CALL TO ORDER AND VERIFICATION OF QUORUM:

Mayor Gardner called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m. and a quorum was established by Mrs. King.

PRESENT: (5), Mayor Angie Gardner, Vice Mayor Theo Washington, Councilman Rodney Daniels, Councilwoman Wanda Randolph, Councilman Tarus Mack

STAFF: (5) Demetrius Pressley, **Chief Administrator Officer**, Veronica King, **Town Clerk**, Clifford Shepard, **Town Attorney**, Katrina Gibson, **Finance Director**, Lt. Hernandez, **EPD**

INVOCATION AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:

Invocation led by Rev. Critton followed by the Pledge of Allegiance. **Note:** Because of recent changes and recent events in regard to separation of church and state, tonight will be the last night to open up with invocation. Moving forward the invocation will be led as a moment of silence or positive order..

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA:

Mayor Gardner Motions to **APPROVE** the meeting agenda with amendments added a proclamation to be read and moving item #5 (Approval of HostDime Project Agreement Amendment #2) to council decisions; **Moved** by Councilwoman Randolph; **Second** by Councilman Daniels; **AYE: ALL, MOTION PASSES.**

PRESENTATIONS AND RECOGNITION – (Added to the Agenda)

Proclamation-Mayor Gardner read a proclamation to 3D Tires for 40 Years of Excellence In Service. January 21, 2025, marked 40 years of service within the Town of Eatonville community.

CITIZEN PARTICIPATION – (5)

NY Nathiri – (Gave the 2025 Zora Festival event bags to the council members), gave feedback on the 2025 Zora Festival. Thanked the town council and staff for the successful Zora Neale Hurston Festival; thanks to Valerie Mundy and former Orlando Commissioner Ings for offering a training session for the World Conference of Mayors, Mayor Jerry Demings (Orange County) delivered a proclamation and to the town for hosting a lunch for the training; acknowledged to the faith community (St. Lawrence African Methodist Episcopal Church and the Macedonia Missionary Baptist Church), and the former mayor Eddie Cole for on-site assistance; the virtual evaluation retreat will be held on March 1, 2025.

Edward Cole – (545 Eaton Street) Spoke on item #5 (HostDime) Thanks to council for talking through the HostDime project during workshop, looking forward to the opening of the building and what it will offer to the town, thanks to Manny Vivar for sticking around.

Cathy Mills – (318 Greens End Street) Spoke on traffic in Catalina and parking on the streets, cannot even get in and out of the community without fighting, there are cars on both side of the street making it difficult to pass

through, the police sometimes are parked in the roadblock, inquired about getting orange county to come do something about it, need help and something needs to be done.

Joyce Irby – The settlers who founded and incorporated this town on August 15 probably did not get along and had conflicts, but they worked together to the end to make it work. As a municipality, Eatonville settles and expects for less from many of the people who work here, asked that the council use their highest and best selves in making decisions for the people, decisions are quite often not made for the people, acknowledged Mrs. King, Ms. Munday, and Mrs. Katrina for how the town functions, the police department is underfunded and the town is losing officers because they make less money than new hires in the office. There are descendants of the people who founded this town and deserve not to have generations of sacrifice squandered by personal issues.

Angela Thomas – inquired at to if the federal grants put on hold by the President called will affect monies that the town will receive; can some of the funding can be used to acquire and fix up the building beside the swimming pool that is for sale, also consider doing things around the lake where there is a deck (

APPROVAL CONSENT AGENDA: Mayor Gardner Motions to APPROVE the Consent Agenda

(Agenda Items 1-4, 6, 7); approving Council Meeting Minutes for January 21, 2024, approving reassignment of a resolution index number (reassigned 2025-001 to the Special Events Special usage Fee), approving resolution 2025-2 urging the Florida State legislature to enact legislation to provide a public records exemption for municipal clerks and employees who perform municipal elections work or have any part in code enforcement functions of a town/city, approving the amended Engineering Program Manager Agreement between Town and GCI, Inc. for the FDEP SRF Grant Funding, approving the Municipal Inter-Local Voluntary Cooperation Mutual Aid Agreement, and approving of Resolution 2025-3 for Approval of the CDBG Disaster Relief Grant Opportunity; **Moved by** Vice Mayor Washington; **Second by** Councilman Mack; **AYE: ALL, MOTION PASSES.** Comment: Item #5 (Approval of HostDime Project Agreement Amendment #2) to council decisions

COUNCIL DECISIONS:

Approval of The HostDime Project Agreement With Amendment #2; there was a request to change the completion date from May 15, 2025, to July 31, 2025, also to eliminate the \$200,000 penalty. Councilman Daniels recommends coming up with a payment amount per week or day instead of a full amount of \$200,000. (Legal) The town can take the whole project because it has been in default for past any deadline ever established; the town has the authority to get the \$200,000 back to get the extension is a negotiated item.

Mayor Gardner Motions to APPROVE of The HostDime Project Agreement With Amendment #2 with amendments; extending the completion deadline to July 31, 2025, with no \$200,000 pay back penalty; **Moved by Councilwoman Randolph**; **Second by Councilman Daniels**; **Discussions:** (Councilman Mack) in favor and appreciate Manny (HostDime) coming to the Town of Eatonville to build for the betterment of the town; (Manny) applying a penalty beyond the July 31st is reasonable if the delay is not caused by HostDime; (Councilman Daniels) a \$1,000 penalty was recommended, (Mayor Gardner) leave the \$200,000 penalty is recommended, the project was to be completed in 2019 before the pandemic, if there were problems it should have been communicated, the initial contract stipulations were not followed, installments were provided by the town for the permitting, the town has worked with HostDime, the town has lost revenue for five years because the project is not done; the stop order given by the town was no fault of Manny, it was the results of the town's lift station and water pressure and took several months to resolve, another delay was the switch over from Maitland fire to Orange County fire stipulations and standards, (Councilwoman Randolph) a date for the status report need to be determined and agree with the \$250 per day, (Mr. Pressley) there has been an additional \$180,000 costs to HostDime caused by the town;

Mayor Gardner restates motion with amendments and calls for question; AYE: Vice Mayor Washington; **Councilman Mack; Councilman Daniels, Councilwoman Randolph NAYE: Mayor Gardner; MOTION PASSES.** Amendments in the motion are to extend the completion deadline to July 31, 2025, with no \$200,000

pay back penalty, a HostDime representative is to provide an update on the status of completion (30) thirty days prior to July 31, 2025, and a penalty of \$250 per day beyond July 31, 2025 will be applied if project is not completed (if the delay is not the cause of the town).

***Angela Thomas was allowed to speak as public participation – the form was missed during the public participation (for comments refer to Public Participation).*

REPORTS:

CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER: Demetrius Pressley – Referenced the approved consent item that are significant: the program manager with the GCI for SRF Funding to include the mayor initiating the economic initiative program to work with getting local contractors involved, the mutual aid agreement for the police department, the CDBG funding for submittal for the \$291 million; provided clarity that current federal grants are still moving forward and will be working with new staffing that is coming; have a meeting on February 20th with the new representatives to find out the status; the checklist was completed for the FEMA dollars submitted for reimbursement in the amount of \$91,000 (to be used at the Denton Johnson, Post Office, Town Hall, and a few small sites; working on the audit, requesting date for the strategic planning session in late March or early April (council prefers a Tuesday night at 6-7:30p.m.); working with I.T. for the upcoming upgrades from Gmail to Microsoft to take place in March; the integration of the Edmunds electronic system is completed and in the implementation stages that will include permits, code enforcement, rentals, and electronic payments and approvals; had good Stakeholder's meeting; on February 11 at 6-7:30 p.m. the Duke Energy Home Savings not cost program will be introduced to the community (located at the Denton Johnson Center); had a successful second master plan meeting with the community, looking to have drafts of the master plan in April (input can be given at visioneatonville.com); the 2025 Zora Festival met all financial obligations, there are logistical and operational matters to be discussed for next year, there are costs not being considered, the numbers for the event may require looking at other options for the town for that.

ATTORNEY: Clifford Shepard – Have not receive anything from the new school board, someone should reach out for an update (Mr. Pressley) there have been meetings with the board members who were waiting until after the 30 day period for any appeals to come after the dismissal, there are two more upcoming meetings, meetings are going well.

TOWN COUNCIL REPORT/DISCUSSION ITEMS -

Councilwoman Wanda Randolph – Will get with Mr. Pressley on the Zora Festival; inquired about the logo (Pressley) on December 5th an email with a memo prepared by legal and sent, pending direction from council on how to proceed forward, Mr. Pressley will resend email; Parking on grass in Catalina Park is a problem and needs to be addressed; address the form of notice email that was sent to Mayor Gardner from Mr. Pressley inclusive of human resources and Attorney Shepard about incidents, I make no apologies for my role in government. I was elected to ensure that operations, policies, and procedures, and budgets, contracts, and the town laws are implemented and followed to the law, will never change the manner of response to the constituents, the goal is to make sure that my constituents receive exceptional customer service from their government, is not interfering within administrative functions or operations by standing by and being concerned and checking on a resident as a council person, incident #1 (a plumbing problem) was not an interference with administrative duties because you (Mr. Pressley) were notified, there were no instructions to the off duty employee in any way, it is the right as a council member to be concerned about constituents and to report to the appropriate department, incident #2 (related to the police department) no information has been provided to determine my cause for disruption or interference with the police department, requested information on December 5, 2024 regarding former employee Eric McIntyre (been over 45 days) and have not received a

response nor notification of appropriate department regarding the employee work status and actions over a year, to ask a question on this subject is not a disruption or interference with public confidence in our government, the Town of Eatonville's charter gives responsibility of the Mayor, the Town Council, and Administrative Staff in Article 1, Section 105, Article 2, Section 2.01, Article 2.01, Section 2.03, no information has been provided determining a violation of these articles. The Charter of the town grants legislative powers to the Town Council to make policy decisions and enact laws to the town, such as zoning, local laws, decisions, etc. The Florida Statute further enforces the principle of separation of powers and ethical conduct of public officials. The statutes referenced in the email communication does not have anything to do with me (Councilwoman Randolph). If there is a need to file a complaint, please do so, until some competent court says otherwise, expect further questioning and demanding answers to individuals and problems, also Sections 112.3136, Section 166.041, and Section 112.311, no detailed information has not been provided to determine a violation of the statutes and charter, nothing in the town charter states that a duly elected council member is restricted from asking questions or demanding accountability from town administrative officials, this should not be confused with administrative functions, such as giving instructions or supervising employees, be informed that the position of the CAO should be contingent upon moving this town forward, the CAO answers to the mayor but as an elected official the CAO position will be held accountable for administrative actions, elected officials are to ensure the governmental policies and services are adhered to efficiently and professionally, there is a conflict of disparity of not moving forward in prioritizing projects in a timely manner: approximately two years for a logo, untimely flyer, the homelessness ordinance was delayed, notification about the downtown meeting with school board was given one hour before the meeting, code enforcement issues, sidewalks being blocked, oil spill on Bethune, unsafe conditions with basketball courts being on the streets, creating unnecessary methods for officials to receive public record requests in a timely manner, not providing financial reports as requested, poor interpersonal relationships, attendance, violations of policies and procedures, budget violations, not providing notices in a timely manner to elected officials by the administration, all of this which is a reflection the CAO's leadership, it appears that efforts are being done intentionally to keep the council from knowing what is going on, there are more matters the Cao should focus attention on rather than trying to reprimand an elected official for doing their job, do not see issues being resolved, but rather creating a set of problems infused with choices of personal desire and not for the people of the Town of Eatonville, being insecure and subject to holding grudges, if Eatonville is not a good fit for you (Mr. Pressley) where elected officials can question or challenge administrative action, perhaps seek employment elsewhere; will continue to represent this town as reflective of the oath that was taken as an elected official. (Copy of email memo and Councilwoman Randolph response was provided to the clerk for record keeping).

Councilman Tarus Mack – Thank everyone for coming and being engaged, encouraged to come out on the 1st and 3rd Tuesday at 6:30 p.m. for workshop and 7:30 p.m. for the council meeting; the CRA board meeting is every third Thursday, need to be in better communication with the Zora event making sure that the council members know exactly what is going on, Happy Black History month; look forward to the different things that Host Dime will bring and optimistic that it will be completed in a timely manner; acknowledge persons who have lost loved ones; need to move forward with the dog leash ordinance; hoping that there are no effects on the town getting the grant fundings and moving forward with doing the necessary things to build this community; the parking lot area to the left side of Walgreens and Four Rivers need to be addressed; still have concerns about having sidewalks on the west side of Eatonville, West Kennedy Blvd. towards Forest City road is dangerous, need to do something temporarily before someone get hurt; acknowledged Waste Pro and the work that is being done; congratulations to 3D Tires for 40 years of service to Eatonville and surrounding communities; as leaders we have to have a vision, have to put in the work or this town will be at a standstill going nowhere, the construction of inscribed is not for the betterment of this community because it is not affordable, the average income in the Town of Eatonville is \$26,000 for a husband and wife and building an apartment that starts off with \$1,900 a month for one bedroom is not good (was not an advocate for this construction), will champion single family homes by bringing habitat to humanity here for people.

Councilman Rodney Daniels – Asked to get with Ms. Mills to have her contact Ms. Johnson to figure out what the community of Catalina Park is doing about the parking, Ms. Johnson is the president of that community organization and can get with the police for help; to Chief Murray, request by email the names of individuals who have taken the golf cart course; recommended for the time of invocation to be renamed words of affirmation and continue to have pastors to facilitate; not happy with legal and would like to sit down (with Mr. Pressley) to further discuss; keep the Jones family in prayer, lost his 17 year old daughter, service will be held at Macedonia Missionary Baptist Church at 1:00 p.m. on the 15th, will get information to the clerk for a resolution.

Vice Mayor Theo Washington – Experience a ride through Eatonville with a bicycle club in Eatonville, the ride is held on the first Saturday of the month, it was a fun opportunity, you know. So, that's something if you want to ride on the first Saturday, you can get out first thing in the morning and get a little energy wake up.

MAYOR'S REPORT - Mayor Angie Gardner – Went to the Pool Summit in Atlantic City, it was a nice experience, interesting how the pool business is changing its perspective in regard to swimming; thanks to the World Conference of Mayors and the Historic Black Towns and Settlement for coming to Eatonville again to do their yearly conference; thanks Mr. Pressley and the staff for the extra things you do and put up with, you are doing a fine job and appreciated; if nothing is in writing in a contract, it is a wish, if someone can give over a million dollars in gifts, they can pay \$200,000 to the town; thank you Attorney Shepard for your passion, rather have passionate legal than sly remarks from council members, we have a lot to learn, when legal is on the side of council and the townspeople, you sleep better.

ADJOURNMENT Mayor Gardner Motions for Adjournment of Meeting; **Moved** by Councilman Mack; **Second** by Vice Mayor Washington; **AYE: ALL, MOTION PASSES. Meeting Adjourned at 8:54pm.**

Respectfully Submitted by:

APPROVED

Veronica L King, Town Clerk

Angie Gardner, Mayor