



# HISTORIC TOWN OF EATONVILLE, FLORIDA HISTORIC PRESERVATION BOARD MEETING MEETING MINUTES (AMENDED)

Thursday, May 8, 2025, at 1:00 PM

Town Hall (Council 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 Council Agenda Page.*

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**CALL TO ORDER:** Chair Rosa Pickett called the meeting to order at 1:07 p.m.

**ROLL CALL:** Roll call was conducted through Mrs. Veronica King. **No Quorum to conduct business.** Meeting will be for discussion only.

**PRESENT:** (2) Chair Rosa Pickett; Board Member: Laverne Bellamy Williams; (**Absent:** Ann Dawkins-Curtis; Vice Chair LaDwyana Jordan; Jane Turner; John Beachum)

**STAFF:** (3) Veronica King, **Town Clerk**; Tara Salmieri, **Town Certified Planner (By Zoom)**; Brittani Gragg, **Executive Assistant**

**INVOCATION AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:** Chair Rosa Pickett led the invocation followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

## PRESENTATION

The 2027 "Eatonville Rising" Project – (Presenter N. Y. Nathiri, Executive Director for P.E.C.) acknowledged that the Historic Preservation Board is typically a full and well attended board meeting that is conducting quite a bit of business; presented a team of people recognized as a full force of the intellect and creative energy that is propelling Eatonville into a new era. "Eatonville Rising" is an Orange County government project funded through the Arts and Cultural Affairs program, is a project funded, is an Orange County government project funded through the Arts and Cultural Affairs, uh, program, it is forward thinking looking at 2027. The requirements of the Block Blockbuster Project is at least a minimum of two to three years and the deliverable is a minimum of 50,000 people, Eatonville Rising is a celebration of milestones commemorating the 140 anniversary of the incorporation of the Town of Eatonville, and in September, the 90th anniversary of the printing of "Their Eyes Were Watching God" written by the global literary icon Zora Neale Hurston; Melissa Jest is present and a note she reference was made, when the district in Eatonville was identified and listed on the National Register in 1998, there was a Savannah district that was registered and yet only this year is the protection that is needed in terms of ordinance, the Historic Preservation Board of Eatonville is the protector, the stewards who take the heat because that is who you are, understanding that we can disagree with the government without being disagreeable, gave an example of the Art Deco District of Miami in how the council opposed on the record their opposition against seeking designation, now everyone is happy because of the tourist money, here in Eatonville being the oldest incorporated African American municipalities in the United States, there is a need to ensure it is not destroyed tearing down everything that makes the Eatonville community, if destroyed from the inside, you have nothing, the Historic Preservation board is the gatekeepers. Chair Pickett - this board is fully staffed and reinventing and finding ourselves, working with the state of Florida, Ms. Jest, and NY Nathiri, as far as the board responsibilities and how do we go about that; it is unusual for us not have the full board (today); looking at the ordinance and looking at grants to help to get the work

done; introductions began with Melissa Jest, senior Manager of Preservation projects for the African American Cultural Heritage Action Fund at the National Trust for Historic Preservation, the National Trust mission is to work with communities as they work to preserve and promote your history. bringing words from Brett Lakes, the executive director at the African American Cultural Heritage Action Fund and Senior VP, at the National Trust, excited to partner with PEC, with the Town of Eatonville, and to be a support to the historic preservation board; please call us and glad to hear that you are still in touch with Ms. Lucas, your director of the certified local government program for the state office, can guide on ways to strengthen your local ordinance in a way that preserves the built environment and also the natural landscapes that is significant to Eatonville's history, Eatonville is a certified local government, this will allow the board to be the gatekeepers and protectors of this district and town overall, to help keep up to date on the relationship with code enforcement and understand what properties are blighted in need of support, to prevent the demolition and loss of contributing structures, Chris Cody, the assistant and associate general counsel comes with a myriad of experience from the state level to the local level, is an attorney who can help the board, the town attorney, and others; can bring examples of codifying guidelines and turning them into regulations, the ordinance is the tool used to protect the built environment and gives guidance to those who want to come and be a part of Eatonville; introductions continued and consisted of the following: Everett Fly, Muhammad Nathiri, Julian Chambliss, Lonnie Graham, Sheryl Taylor, Jeffrey Cherisol, Winnifred Hurston, T K Walker, Clarissa West-White, Melva Akens, Bryan Giemza, Zienzi Dillon, Reginald Lewis, Paloma Ortega, Victor Watkins (photographer), Cynthia Haywood, a group photo was taken.

**CITIZEN PARTICIPATION:** There were no citizens to participate during citizen participation

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES:** *(No Action Taken due to unestablished quorum)*

**STAFFING UPDATES:** **(Moved before Board Discussions)**

Brittani Gragg (Executive Director) – serve as the executive administrative assistant, sat in previous a meeting as part of some initial conversations, sitting in today in place of Mr. Cobbin McGee, not replacing him, present to meeting in his absence, yield to the town leadership for any official updates as it pertains to personnel, purpose is to assist you all in any way, to continue the conversation because of the deadlines; Mr. Pressley can discuss updates on the personnel

Tara Salmieri, Town Certified Planner – working with the Town of Eatonville for about three and a half years, serve as the planning director and senior planner, anything dealing deals with policy change, comprehensive plans, and land development code, I will either review it, lead it, and here to serve as a consultant, that has been the role for the last three and a half years, have worked with Cobbin and others in that role, have not been involved with the historic preservation board, not sure what and if that will change, asked to be here to listen and be available.

**Further Comments/Discussions:** Chair Picket expressed concerns about items discussed at the last meeting with things to do through Mr. McGee, facing the grant deadline June 2<sup>nd</sup>, updates on the grant writing rested with Mr. McGee, Ms. Gragg will do her best to determine what information has already been collected. And requested for the board to share the open tasks so that she along with Ms. Salmieri can ensure that you meet your deadlines; can go back and listen to the last meeting to determine what is needed (meeting are recorded and minutes are transcribed), URL link has already been sent to Mr. Pressley, Brittani Gragg, and Tara Salmieri; the board wanted to focus on the surveying grant, there was conversation about a survey being done through FEMA and Mr. Cobbin was to compare the FEMA survey results with some information that was provided last meeting by Board member Jane Turner to determine if it was even necessary to move forward with the surveying grant, he was also to meet Mr. Pressley to update him on the historical preservation board and offered himself to start the grant writing process, he was the gatekeeper and administrative contract, NY Nathiri extended herself as a resources and indicated that there were possible funds to underwrite the cost of a grant writer, Mr. McGee and NY Nathiri were to get together, these were the assignments that Mr. Cobin was

working with as it relates to the grant; the information is being reviewed this week and Ms. Gragg will provide updates to the clerk for distribution to the board instead of waiting a month for another meeting; there was a question as to whether there might be more properties that qualify because of the 50 year piece; whatever information is needed, the clerk will make it ready and available to Brittani and Tara, all packets that have been given to the Historical Preservation Board is online and is available; the recommendations from staff after the review will determine if a special meeting will be needed.

**ADJOURNMENT** Chair Rosa Pickett adjourns meeting. **Meeting Adjourned at 2:35 P.M.**

**Respectfully Submitted by:**

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**Veronica L King, Interim Town Clerk**