



HISTORIC TOWN OF EATONVILLE, FLORIDA

COMMUNITY REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY

SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES

Tuesday, April 29, 2025, at 6:00 PM

Town Hall (Council Chambers) – 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 Board Agenda Page.*

CALL TO ORDER – Director Randolph called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

ROLL CALL – No Quorum (No Board Action Permitted)

PRESENT: (3) Director Wanda Randolph, Director Tarus Mack (Arrived after roll call) , Director Rodney Daniels, Director Ruthi Critton (Arrived on zoom at 7:15pm) , (**Absent:** Vice Chair Theo Washington, Chair Angie Gardner, Director Donovan Williams)

STAFF: (4), Veronica King, **Town Clerk;** Greg Jackson, **Attorney;** Broderick Lampkins & Fletcher Boone, **EPD** (**Absent:** Michael Johnson, **CRA Executive Director**)

INVOCATION AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

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

CITIZEN PARTICIPATION – (5)

Earlene Watkins – History is important, up to us to choose what Eatonville chooses to remember. I would like to take this opportunity to reflect on the past by starting with property located at 119 South West Street, which was owned by the late Howard Miller Senior, who was the first black man to own a pharmacy, which was located in the city of Orlando, his family were longtime residents of Eatonville, let us preserve his home. His business goes back to 1964 which was historical and the house that he owned in Eatonville was historical, it is important that we began to reflect on the memories of Eatonville, have lost the school, which was history; had the following at one time: our own grocery store called Reed's Grocery Store (started a program that provided remedial and tutorial services for the kid in Eatonville, the rainbow was a historical landmark for the town of Eatonville, Club Eaton was the historical landmark for the town of Eatonville, when relocating from Jacksonville to Eatonville, stayed at the Smith Motel in Eatonville (It was nice, it was clean), there was a restaurant adjacent to it, would go to the chamber, do our work, eat, and come back to have dinner, had the Tiger Gas Station, Sam's Nursery who sold plant, had Mr. Mack, Robert Mack's auto repair, and convenience store, the first library was ran by Ann Keith, and was housed in what used to be our fire department, Ms. Ward. had the best hamburgers; what do we want remembered in Eatonville, this is something that we need to start taking into consideration and stop trying to dispose of and get rid of all the memories that we have in this town.

Angela Thomas – Addressed the tearing down of the house, where are the permits, do you need permits cleared from Duke Energy to say that the power's off, do you need anything from the gas company, do you need a permit from the Town of Eatonville; want to address the purchase of the stage, called the company that is selling the stage, it an empty shell, whatever is going to be put on the stage is an additional cost, it is considered to be hydraulic thing, who is going to be in charge of the hydraulics, where will it be stored; do not settle for a piece of paper, do your research.

Marlin Daniels – Spoke on the purchase of the stage, told that it would take five years to pay for it, \$15,000 divided into \$132,000 is 8.8 years, \$15,000 divided into \$175,000, is about 11.6 years, where did the five years come from, not taken into consideration the required insurance, how will it be moved (need heavy duty vehicle), someone have to be qualified to pull the stage; Eatonville is falling to it on demise (not from outside entities), did not do a cost analysis on the house, why not leave the house, spent \$345,000, put \$40,000 into renovations, can recoup the money from one seller and then put two townhomes or two houses on the backside (there will be profit); we are failing, failing the people of this community, failing taxpayers, and failing ourselves, if we continue doing what is being done, this town will fail at the hands of certain individuals, can continue or can get it right, willing to get it right, will start an investigation and put information out; misusing taxpayer dollars for your own personal gain.

Jean Alexander – against the tearing down of 119 on West Street, grew up in Eatonville and remember Reed's Grocery Store and Dalena's grocery store, remember coming home to Mr. Mack service station, seen so much going down and has been lost In Eatonville, they refurbished two antique homes and code enforcement does not seem to be working in Eatonville, the Miller's property, no one is doing anything over there for court enforcement, dumping of concrete blocks is being done on the back of the property, was one of the nicest home in Eatonville, now it looks like nothing, seeing old cars almost from day one of when it was purchased; the original purchase of the house (119 South West Street) was \$200,000, the town paid approximately \$350,000, seems like somebody is not being thoughtful when buying homes, why pay another \$150,000; concerned that the town do not have much, being historical, and not fighting, the town could help St. Lawrence with some of that money instead of throwing it away. Let people buy and stay in the homes that are decent enough, there are homes in Eatonville that need to be purchased and torn down, the ones that looked like nothing, why buy and tear down one of the nicest homes in Eatonville, against that; if Eatonville is historical, what is there to see, the town needs to get itself together and try and preserve things.

Charles Bargaineer – Expressed concerns of demolishing the home (119 South West Street), as a former code enforcement chairman, there were properties set to be demolished but was not because they were in the historic district, was efforts done to see if the area was under the historical preservation, the whole town was designated as historical, other concern and inquiry is the allowance of the demolition because of the asbestos, when you go and research in Orange County, the only structure with asbestos that Orange County would allow to be demolished would be commercial, did the town really look at the historical preservation aspect of the property, and the abatement due to the asbestos; it is a beautiful home in need of remodeling, do not understand why the property will be torn down when there is enough property in the back, two structures can be added to the back, to tear down that particular house would be a grave injustice to the previous owner and also to the Town of Eatonville.

BOARD DISCUSSIONS: *(Agenda Changes by consensus: Item #2 was discussed first followed by item #1)*

1. **(Previously item #2)** Discussion of Resolution CRA-R-2025-23 Repealing CRA-R- 2025-21 Prohibiting the purchase ShowMaster Mobile Sound Shell Community Stage MSM 3000 Series14'D x 32'L w/ accessories.

Discussions: (Director Randolph) Facts to justify reasons not to purchase the stage: 1) no budget amendments was in the package as to where the money would come from and did not know the amount of money in the capital funds 2) century Industries indicated that additional purchases would be required for extra accessories such as a wheelchair ramp, et cetera, 3) do not recall the town having 15 events 4) to rent the stage out for 10 non-town events at the rate of a thousand dollars runs about \$12,000 a year, it would take a long time to even pay to get your money back from the purchase, 5) the equipment depreciates the moment it is drive off the lot as time goes on 6) would need equivalent to a box truck, a 3.5 ton truck to haul the stage, 7) maintenance, storage, and care is a concern 8) requires an annual maintenance 9) there is no training provided outside of what the company will do, there is more cost to be added to hire a contractor or employee 10) requires 25% down (between 35,000-40,000 to secure the purchase, and between one year and year and a half waiting period to get the stage delivered; it not a win for the town, it is the resident's money, concerned

about the expenditures, the proper use, wasteful spending, and it appears that the town is moving more towards being an entertainment town rather than a historic town; the CRA can spend its money much more useful to the residents by getting potholes fixed, getting windows fixed, home door replacement, weatherization, helping businesses to grow, getting facades on the building so we can have a nice look at building. **(Director Daniels)** inquired as to why the Executive Directive was not present to address the concerns; did not agree that the purchase of the stage fit the purpose of slum and blight and what the CRA is supposed to do, according to the attorney, the 1997 CRA plan is ambiguous allowing it to be translated for justification as to if something fits or does not fit the plan, in a pickle when it comes down to how the board justify things, the funds should not be used for the stage, but used for improving the sewer system, helping someone with their home, helping get the roads repaired, the majority of this board think it is ok to spend \$170,000 on a stage, need someone to step in to hold the board accountable; (legal) pertaining to accounting principles and accounting guidelines there are standards and guidelines that dictate how to reconcile where funds come from, this board in approving its bylaws in certain areas did give the executive director some broad authority in the management of the budget, does not mean that the authority is unchecked by the board, this board should oversee how items are moved inside of a budget; **(Director Mack)** problematic that the executive director is not present, do not make the decision as to if you are going to attend or not attend meetings, if not sick or due to other detrimental situations, the executive director should be at the meeting (disappointed); if the executive director is not leading in a way to help this community, there is no way to continue to sit in the seat as Executive Director; against the demolition of that property (119 South West Street), a family was forced out of their home, know the history of this property, four people voted to have this property demolished and are not present today, to continue in this way will lead to a bad space in which there is a possibility that there will not be a CRA, it is important to have a Community Redevelopment Agency, acknowledged that there is a difference between redevelopment and developing and there are many blighted areas in the town that need attention; acknowledged the lack of work being done by code enforcement in which there is an interlocal agreement in place, think there should be additional amendments to the bylaws recently passed, things are being done similar to the past that will cause affects and put this agency in a more detrimental spot than it has ever been, you put your trust in people to do the right thing but as a leader if you are not doing what is needed as a leader in this community there are consequences for that, the executive director worked for this board and is not here to explain why he thinks it is so important to tear down this building; voted to not have something put in the budget for a sale and purchase and yet it was still put in the budget for the sell and purchase; concerning the purchasing of the stage, there are no more than five events throughout the year. (MLK, Founders Day, Juneteenth, Christmas on Boulevard, and Zora), it costs a thousand dollars to rent a stage for the whole day at \$2,000 annually but recommend spending \$175,000 (to purchase a stage), at an estimated amount that is much higher than what was told (misleading information), against this purchase, have rented a stage for years and have not had any issues or problems; recommend renovating the property and build on the two lots on the back, it is a beautiful structure; people that sit in the capacity of not being an elected official or board member tend to think that they can do what they want to do, that is not how it works, inquired to the attorney as to if it is the best practice that an executive director who runs the agency to miss any meetings for CRA (no), if not for a good reason, it is not good for no staff of the agency to not be present, it is the best practice to be present, without knowing the situation of the executive director or anyone else, it is assumes that it is for a good cause, **(Director Mack)** if a special or an emergency meeting is called for whatever reason the executive director need to be present, should be present if the reason is not life threatening or anything of that nature, the same four individuals that voted to have this property demolished are not present tonight including the executive director, do not want to see the property torn down, need to consider the environmental issues, are there permits, if not properly permitted in order to demolish can lead to a serious situation (considering the gas line), before tearing this building down (although approved), are we in a position to tear it down due to permits that have not been resolved, are there permits, in response there is something from Duke Energy, a permit application for the demolition certification, an agreement to disconnect the home. (Director Randolph) referenced resolution CRA-R-2025-22 to repeal CRA-R-2025-18, cannot vote because

there is no quorum, the issue can move forward; **(Clerk)** received a communication from Director Critton indicating that she has been delayed and planning to attend, she inquire about connecting to Zoom (zoom information has been provided), will not be able to vote by zoom, she made effort to reach out; **(Legal)** the demolition is in place as of April 17, 2025, there have been some things noted here in tonight's meeting, while it has been approved, it should not go forward because of the permit issue, do not see a demolition permit, Orange County does require there to be a demolition permit, there has been asbestos found in that building (there is a report), the building cannot be demolished without proper notification of the asbestos abatement, there are certain steps that have to be taken before moving forward with the demolition of the property. **(Director Randolph)** the board met on Thursday, April 17, 2025, requested to Mr. Johnson to arrange for a visit to look at the residence (April 18, 2025, Friday morning), do not buy property without looking at it (showed the public pictures of the house along with other homes that are dilapidated needing attention), Tuesday, April 22, 2025, is when the equipment (bulldozer) for demolition was observed (five days after the meeting), Mr. Johnson had his mind made up that that house was going to come down, the asbestos team showed upon April 24, 2025 (same day that the request for a special meeting to repeal was made), the asbestos report came back on Sunday (April 27, 2025), according to the report from Duke Energy and as of March 26, 2025, the meter and all electric service owned by Duke Energy have been removed, a picture was taken indicating that a wire is still connected to the power box, not sure if it is a Duke energy wire or a cable wire, received a report on yesterday April 28, 2025, asked Mr. Johnson to come to the meeting to explain to the residents about the report, the representative from the company should come to explain the report, neither Mr. Johnson or a representative is present, the report indicates that a walkthrough of the residence was conducted to identify suspect materials prior to sampling, twenty-one samples were collected, asbestos was found on the floor in the tile work and the vinyl flooring, less than 1% on the popcorn ceiling of the house, the intent is to build two affordable homes on the back of the property, tear down the house and build two affordable homes also on the front (52x100 per lot), wanting to repeal this because lots of information was not provided, when you hire people to do a job, they should be able to give you a thorough report with all information, have not seen an inspection report, there were no cost analysis to do the sampling of the asbestos, have assumed about \$360,000 into this project and there are probably unknown additional costs, wanted to give other board members the opportunity to explain their perspective and how they feel about this matter. **(Director Daniels)**, this has been the plan from the beginning, before the property was purchased the plans were already drawn up on splitting this property, need a win-win on both sides, keep the Miller house and put the two affordable homes or townhouses on the back, only need one vote, to tear down this house is unfair for our history, the plans were already in place and someone is going to benefit from this, asking the community to talk to the board members. **(Director Mack)** inquired to legal as to if he has spoken to anyone about not being able to move forward due to the asbestos and environmental issues, legal just saw the report tonight and will get with someone, requested for an email to be sent from legal to the board, it is alarming to see the equipment on the property and for lots residents to reach with concerns. **(Director Daniels)** inquired about the historic preservation board and permits (the house is considered to be not historic, but is in the historic district, feel that it should be reviewed by the historic preservation board because it is in the historic district); **(Director Randolph)** the property cost was \$342,278, the demolition cost \$20,000, the title work cost \$150 at a total investment of \$362,428,000 not including the added cost for the testing of the asbestos, the break down for four lots will be an investment of approximately \$92,000 which will probably go up because of other added costs, do not have a total scope and real cost for the property, may have overpaid for the property; have nothing to show for being a historic town other than a story; **(Director Mack)** inquired about the response from the board about the meeting, in response, everyone responded indicating whether or not they would be present. **(Director Critton)** acknowledged the valid concerns but have a difference of opinion, want to see the agency max out its potential, voted in favor of the demolition of the property, still in favor especially after receiving the asbestos report today and after considering the finances and the investment that was put into the property, looking mostly at the facts and trying to remove the emotional and tangible elements of the conversation from the decision, do hear and respect the concerns. **(Director Randolph)** was a bad decision

to purchase the property with asbestos and possibly having to tear the house anyway, very incompetent for anyone to put the board through this, the board does not deserve this.

2. **(Previously #1)** Discussion of Resolution CRA-R-2025-22 Repealing CRA–R– 2025-18 Prohibiting the Demolition of property located at 119 S. West Street. (**See and review above information, the discussion of both agenda items transcribed above).

ADJOURNMENT Director Randolph **Adjourns Meeting at 7:19 P.M.**

Respectfully Submitted by:

APPROVED

Veronica L King, Town Clerk

Angie Gardner, Chair