



HISTORIC TOWN OF EATONVILLE, FLORIDA

COMMUNITY REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY

MEETING MINUTES (RESCHEDULED DATE)

Tuesday, May 20, 2025, at 5:30 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.*

*****This meeting is the rescheduled meeting due to a lack of quorum at the previous scheduled Regular CRA meeting on May 15, 2025.***

CALL TO ORDER – Chair Angie Gardner called the meeting to order at 5:32 p.m.

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

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

STAFF: (4), Michael Johnson, **CRA Executive Director**, Veronica King, **Town Clerk**; Greg Jackson, **Attorney**; Lt. Fletcher Boone, **EPD**

INVOCATION AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

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

PRESENTATIONS

April 2025 Financial Statement Presentation – Presented by Michael Johnson who provided the bank statements for April 2025 providing information on checks written, payments, transactions, and the bank account balance.

Community Land Trust Presentation – Presented through PowerPoint by Attorney Greg Jackson; with the agency purchasing land and wanting to determine the best way to address an issue of affordable housing within the Town of Eatonville, the question has come up as to if a community land trust would be a viable option for affordable housing within the area, the presentation provided information on a Community Land Trust and to dispel some myths related to Community Land Trust. Community Land Trusts were inspired by the Civil Rights Movement, where African Americans were struggling for land ownership. The first formal community Land Trust was developed in the United States in Georgia 1969 (for black farmers in the Georgia area), this was the same year that the establishment of chapter 163, part three for Community Redevelopment Agencies, Community Land Trusts addressed inequities of individuals not having the ability to own or to purchase land, benefits were seen allowing minorities, specifically African Americans and underserved communities to become landowners, to own property, and to build wealth, there are over 200 Community Land Trusts that exist in the United States and supported by HUD, municipalities, as well as community development organizations, Community Land Trusts are set up by non-profits and the land is purchased or taken by a non-profit organization in which there is a separation of ownership of the land from the ownership of the structure on the land, this is an opportunity for individuals to own property and begin to develop, at a rate that they would not have if they did not have the opportunity to own a piece of property by way of a home, it ensures long term housing affordability because it caps what a home can be sold for in particular area, as the land value continue to rise more individuals will be priced out of being able to buy affordable housing in this community

unless there is an opportunity to own the structure and lease the land in order to continue to own and grow the equity in the structure and not the land, the Land Trust receives the land and holds it forever through a ninety-nine lease that renews automatically, how it works is either a resident or businessowner owns the structure and leases the land, looking at a mixed use development you can have a business and a residential own the structure on the land, resale prices are restricted to maintain affordability, key objectives for community land trust, uh, neighborhood stability, provides an opportunity for permanent housing affordability, prevent displacement, and a good opportunity for community stewardship by continuing to serve the people through maintaining affordable housing in an area, benefits are affordable housing for generations, builds modest homeowner equity, it empowers and strengthens the community, limits speculations by preventing people from coming into an area, sitting on a piece of property then selling it later at an extreme price that will price people out of where they want to live, a community land trust is used through affordable housing, rental housing, community space (venue type), and for mix use development, the downside of a Community Land Trusts includes limiting the wealth building for homeowners, has a complex legal and financial structure (both Attorney Shepard and Attorney Jackson has worked Community Land Trust which removes some of the complexities), Community Land Trusts has a reliance on grants and subsidies (to purchase and maintain the land), there a potential for community resistance due to a lack of understanding, a misconception about a Community Land Trust is that it is analogous to sharecropping (no sharing of ownership, equity, or wealth building), on the contrary, a Community Land Trust shifts power to the communities giving individuals in the community the opportunity to become a homeowner, a Community Land Trust is an anti-exploitative model of community empowerment, as an attorney, will be more than happy to work with this agency to build a Community Land Trust with the current skilled knowledge and experience. **Board/Staff Comments:** Ms. Thomas (resident) spoke about Community Land Trust at a previous meeting and this information was provided for informational purposes; Mayor Gardner would like to see and like to consider any land purchases through the CRA as well as the town be put into a Community Land Trust that works for our town; this is a continued CRA conversation for almost two years when there were talks about building a neighborhood stabilization program, had talks with Mrs. Oriol (Help CDC) and with Ms. Reynolds from Hannibal Square who did a presentation for the board.

CRA Plan Update Presentation – Mr. Johnson stated that the 2015 plan was never approved by the board, the council, or the Orange County, took that document (2015 plan) and worked through each section with all the department directors including Mr. Pressley resulting into this new document, the purpose is to get the plan updated, the proposed changes to CRAs by the house Senate and House did not happen allowing time for an extension so that the town's CRA can get up to 20 more years, take it to the council and county for approval, the 1997 plan is outdated, the 2015 provided a template, during the public hearing process, a resolution will be present along with all things required to move forward to the next (to town council); **Board Comments:** Director Randolph inquired about the CRA plan relationship with the Master Plan; the CRA plan addresses redevelopment in the whole town and must be consistent with the comprehensive plan (the only statutory requirement), the master planning is the town's processes; Chair Gardner would like to ensure that the Community Land Trust is a part of the update CRA Plan (to be added to the Project List, Appendix B), all projects were reviewed by staff and Mr. Pressley; Executive Director asked that all board members review the document and give all your comments, answers can be provided in advance before the public hearing, most of the verbiage the 2015 drafted plan changed due to recommendations from Tara, the planner, and the department directors guided their changes that affect their department, added the ten basic principles of community policing into the document with the help of the police chief, opens opportunities for the CRA to do more community policing initiatives; would like to workshop, although there is a scheduled public hearing on the 29th (May), it does not require a decision, the statutory requirement is to have a public hearing so that the public can hear and provide feedback, there is sufficient time to review, ask questions, without scheduling a workshop, Director Mack request if the public hearing date can be changed (son is graduating and will not be able to attend), Executive Director recommends two hearings before the vote; board decided to move forward with the 29th public hearing, and schedule a second public hearing ten days afterwards, clerk will make the audio recording of the public hearing (on the 29th) to Director Mack along with a zoom link;

CITIZEN PARTICIPATION – (3)

Angela Thomas – What are employees of the CRA hours, called and nobody was in the office, came by the next day and one person was in the office, would like to know if the CRA staff clock in or out, follow the same policy procedures as the town to keep up with their time; asked if the CRA can assist with lifeguards for the pool and to update the appearance building, there was no air conditioning; the four young boys who got in trouble for breaking into the pool wanted to swim because it was hot, is it possible for the CRA to pay for a lifeguards so children can utilize the pool when it is hot, or if it is not an insurance liability, do we have any adults that know how to swim that would like to volunteer and help; it is said that the town is for the children and want them to be able to use the pool, but there is no lifeguards for them to use the pool, what is the purpose?

Joyce Irby – Mr. Pressley gave a presentation of what matters most in the town, the citizens were on top, it does not work that way, asking Director Mack, Vice Chair Washington, and Director to pay close attention in the coming weeks, there is a lot of talking that is happening, some of the smartest people is often over here on this side and ignored (in the audience); acknowledge and thanked Attorney Jackson for his presentation on the Land Trust, a Land Trust means nothing with people you cannot trust.

Angela Johnson – When looking at the plan, give attention to the projects and programs that homeowners and residents can benefit from like the façade and the PPP, did not see these programs in the proposed plan update; in the current budget are the programs that were approved and budgeted still available to residents, the agency has been spending off of the budget line items without doing budget amendments, but are those programs still available; to the attorney, with the Community Land Trust considering the property tax revenue, and the Land Trust owns the land, is it then exempt from taxation where there is no tax benefit to the town (legal response, the land potentially would not be taxable, but not the structure), because the value is in the land it could be a negative impact the projected tax revenue base for the town as well as the CRA in moving, asked that the board take that into consideration when making the decision about Community Land Trust; on the financials, will send a request to the Executive Director because the financials presented is just a bank statement, would be beneficial to provide the board with a year to date, budget to actual by line item, do not have to keep asking for it if it is already in the packages. (Vice Chair Washington) a vacant lot make less money than a lot with construction on it, you will make money in taxes as a benefit the community if construction is on the lot, the fees from water and sewer helps out too, (Director Mack) inquired about the difference with having a Community Land Trust and without having it, sounded like it would be good for the community, what are the stipulations that would backfire on the agency if we did not have a Community Land Trust, how does it make sense in doing Community Land Trust in terms of saving money or collectively, (legal) gave an example of a piece of property right across the street which was held by government for approximately 50 years, there was nothing to garner from it, the land had developers that wanted to come in and purchase it, which would have placed it back on the tax roll, you have to find the right developer who has the heart of the community, with the Community Land Trusts, the land remains with individuals in the community, there are some tax revenue from structures that are placed on the land, if there are buildings wrapped around the Community Land Trusts it will provide external tax sources, (Vice Chair Washington) the Claytons do not give their property away (Wymore Road, Fields BMW) they do nine-nine year leases and the property always stay their family.

CONSENT AGENDA: Chair Gardner **MOTIONS** to **APPROVE** Consent Agenda approving Resolution CRA-R-2025-17 March 2025 Financials, Resolution CRA-R-2025-22 April 2025 Financials, the Board of Directors Meeting Minutes for April 17, 2025 (Regular Meeting), April 29, 2025 (Special Meeting), and May 6, 2025, (Special Meeting); **MOVED** by Director Critton, **SECOND** by Director Mack; **AYE: ALL; MOTION PASSES.**

BOARD DISCUSSIONS: None

BOARD DECISIONS:

Approval of Resolution CRA–R– 2025-23 Approving and Authorizing CPH scope of work and cost for Level II Environmental Testing for 370 E. Kennedy Blvd. (Preamble Read); Chair Gardner **MOTIONS** to **APPROVE** Resolution CRA–R– 2025-23 Approving and Authorizing CPH scope of work and cost for Level II Environmental Testing for 370 E. Kennedy Blvd; **MOVED** by Director Critton, **SECOND** by Director Williams; **AYE: ALL; MOTION PASSES.** **Question/Comments:** inquiry was made about the fiscal inefficiency data as to whether there was no impact on the cost or is this a part of the grant (it is a part of the grant and will be reimbursed.)

STAFF REPORTS:

Michael Johnson, Executive Directive: – No Report

Greg Jackson, Attorney: – No Report

BOARD REPORTS:

Director Donovan Williams: – There are pros and cons in having a Land Trust, the value is in the land, the structure can come and go, have to determine what will be best for the community, every community is different.

Director Ruthi Critton: – Have heard good and bad things about a Land Trust, anything brought to Eatonville, whether it works for another municipality or not should be customized to Eatonville, we can settle any concerns, doubts, or hesitations that we may have when making decisions, it takes coming to the table and having needed of discussion; glad to be hear among the Directors getting things taken care of.

Director Tarus Mack: – With the Community Land Trust, need to step out on faith, if it works for the community, it works with hopes that it benefits us it is decided to in that direction; about the lifeguard situation, the pool was restructured to have the kids and people within the community to enjoy, for it to be shut down for lack of lifeguards defeats the purpose of having the pool, I will volunteer to be a lifeguard so the kids can enjoy themselves, although this is a town issue, inquired as to if there is something that this board and agency can do in order to fulfil the need as an entity within the town (the Executive Director spoke with Mr. Washington about assisting and formalizing grants to address the pool issue pertaining to lifeguards, for the facilities, from the standpoint of the CRA, it will require approval from the county, can not touch municipal buildings without the county's authorization to do so), (Legal) there may be an opportunity to have a community policing grant that can be awarded to the police department for lifeguards for a community policing program for youth, to keep youth off the streets, may be able to under the CRA to divert funds to the police department to provide lifeguards; have respect for Mr. Johnson who is taking the initiative to work quick and efficiently when it comes to sitting on empty lots, the CRA has purchased plenty of property in Eatonville and nothing has happened, he is coming up with ideas that will benefit the community, want to be able to move forward with things that are sustainable and successful for the community, if the 20 year extension is not granted, the CRA will have until October to build something beneficial, hoping to change that narrative through Mr. Johnson pushing forward with getting things done in the community and for the tax payers.

Director Wanda Randolph: – Confirmed for Ms. Johnson (Angela), that the programs are listed in the 2024/2025 budget, the programs listed consist of the Paint Pave Plant Program, the Demolition Assistance, the Business Facade, and the Home Loan Program; agree that the board should get a full financial report (the Executive Director provide to the board tomorrow); need to focus and spend funding on blighted area, have observed from day to day areas that need to be addressed; concerned about the Help CDC seminar, lot of people participated but have not received report on the outcome, informed that the program would not do painting, request follow up on the painting and how many residents were approved and not approved, those not approved can be considered for a CRA program (the Executive Director provide information to the board), inquired about the number of CRA employees (there a four part-time employees not including the Executive Director and they have a work schedule), thank the Executive Director for providing information about the stage that

was approved last month, the Executive Director is looking at other vendors and options; the town keeps up with the CRA payroll and time sheets; concerning the April 29th repeal meeting, appreciate those directors who attended, the board may agree or disagree on something and have reasons as to reason why certain things are done, thought it was distasteful for board members not to show up to a public meeting where the public is present, think it is disrespectful, the board is supposed to be there for the people; the asbestos report was overstated, based upon a letter received from the senior environmental specialist from Orange County states that the popcorn ceiling was less than 1%, below the thresh levels and was good in that the popcorn ceiling is highly fiber, the issue was the 600 square feet vinyl flooring with massive tape contained some asbestos that was not non-fiber material (as long as it is not disturbed), there are residents who may have asbestos in their home especially homes built in the fifties through the seventies, unsure of the rush to tear that structure down but there has been lots of input from lots residents, it is said that we want to preserve history and we are Eatonville but do not demonstrate who we are when we do things like that, wanted to share perspective, feelings and the feedback from different people about that particular building, think so, do think we could have moved forward with the two homes and then later work on the other dwelling, was not a good look for the community; have concerns about emails being sent by Mr. Barany, requested for a status on the Barany issue and all the allegations made even about the Executive Directive, and about other things that are going on (Mr. Barany met with Mr. Pressley and the Executive Director and was informed that he had to put up his \$250,000 in escrow according to the escrow agreement prepared by the CRA attorney, Mr. Barany stated that he was not giving it, his association with grant ended when he would not carry out his portion of the requirement.), we will follow the state process, comply with the grant, and the rules of the grant, (Director Washington) inquired as to if something was stated in the email about the \$250,000 (no), the grant is to build a performing arts entertainment venue, Mr. Barany has done nothing to ensure the agency it would be performing arts entertainment venue, Mr. Barany is out marketing to sell the property and the grant (it is more complicated than the stated emails), (Director Randolph) where are we on the April the 17th recommendation that the CRA board hear the request from Mr. Barany to purchase the property (Mr. Barney came to the Executive Director in the company of the Vice chair asking to be put on the agenda, a chance to speak to the board was given, what Mr. Barany said had nothing to do with his request, the chair made effort to redirect Mr. Barany to focus on his agenda items but he refused), the performing arts center is going through the structural engineering process, the architect had to get an engineer to come in to do certain drawings into the foundation which is required by the state, until the report provided the Executive Director has no idea what direction the state is going in, the state has stated clearly that they are not interested in using their million dollars for only the construction periods (this is a cost Mr. Barany has to pay), if Mr. Barany does not pay, the board will have to make a decision, the Executive Director is not prepared to ask the board what to consider until all the information is received from the state.

Vice Chair Washington: - Will talk about the pool on the town side; on missing a meeting, received a call that there is a meeting for discussion with no passing of laws (vote), felt it was a waste of energy to come to, do not know how there was a meeting without a quorum, as part of the law, if you do not have a quorum, you cannot make decisions, usually do not have a meeting when there is no quorum, (Director Randolph) what is the difference between having a discussion at a council meeting/workshop, a discussion is a discussion.

Chair Gardner: – If I sit behind a closed door and say something, it is the same thing that will be said in this meeting, if there is a concern with me, I did not run then and do not run now, there is no conversation I have had today that is not different than a conversation I had before, why do the backlash continues; for the community land trust, a non-profit could be done for the town created by the board which would be out in the open, if the land trust dissolves, the land will go to the town just as it would with any land owned by the CRA, I have a family in this town, if wrong is done to you, I will be doing it to me, does not make sense, that has never been who I am or ever have been, if there is an issue, come out and say it, being truthful with one another is how we will grow, not fearful of the truth.

Additional Comments: (Director Critton) the things that need to be said, there is a time and place, to think as adults primarily that we would understand, embrace, and would respect, the narrative that we pitch to the world

as a town, you would think that the way we act in public settings would be becoming of the nation's oldest black incorporated municipality, a good name is rather to be chosen than riches and rubies, I stand on Ruthi, everyone is entitled to a vote with personalized reasoning or understanding (it is a democracy), with no explanation to the board and according to Florida statute chapter 163, the current CRA bylaws, any former bylaws, the current and former plans, if anything my absence should be reported to the executive director of this board and to the clerk, every time I have been absent, late, or on the way, it has been communicated, have communicated effectively to make sure that my presence was felt in some capacity, even if I knew that I could not vote by proxy but wanted to be a part of the discussion trying to make myself available, packets are submitted to the directors a week out and public participation is important at every meeting, not just at special meetings, called meetings when there is an appeal, or when meetings do not go our way, did listen in on that special meeting and heard what the community said talking about what was historically and sentimentally important to them, been Ms. Nathiri “Let’s Talk Eatonville Historic Preservation Conversations on the second Saturdays of every month (Since January) to talk about the things that are allegedly historic in this town, some of the voices heard have not been seen at the meeting when voting on issues, there is no way that that a member of the older generation can expect a member of a younger generation to maintain any form of legacy, heritage, and history if it is not passed on, if you do not tell it, we will not know it, to come out after the fact is not only unfair but a disservice to the community and its future of the community, if these things are important, I encourage you and Joe Clark would encourage us to come on now, it takes sometimes one vote, if these things are so important in this community, make it known, let us talk about the history and the heritage that exists and want to be protected in this town, have never ran from a conversation, it is unfair and untrue to assume that I was acting disrespectfully in any capacity, there are other civic engagement opportunities that are available in this community to take advantage of ahead of time before the ninth and eleventh hour, please remember that will always come to the table but do not owe anything but a vote.

Handouts given in the meeting: CRA Brochure

ADJOURNMENT Chair Gardner **MOTIONS** to **ADJOURN MEETING; MOVED** by Director Critton, **SECOND** by Director Randolph; **AYE: ALL; MOTION PASSES. Meeting (Adjourns at 6:51 P.M.).**

Respectfully Submitted by:

APPROVED

Veronica L King, Town Clerk

Angie Gardner, Chair