



National Trust *for*  
Historic Preservation®

March 15, 2024

Hon. Angie Gardner  
Town of Eatonville  
307 E Kennedy Blvd  
Eatonville, FL 32751

Re: Master Planning Support from the National Trust for Historic Preservation's African American Cultural Heritage Action Fund

Dear Mayor Gardner,

The National Trust for Historic Preservation (“National Trust”) would like to support and assist the Town of Eatonville’s historic preservation efforts through its African American Cultural Heritage Action Fund because Eatonville’s history is nationally significant and worthy of preservation. The National Trust would be honored to help preserve its unique heritage and historic character – a legacy imbued in the history of Black Towns, literary arts, racial equality, and citizenship. With this letter, we aim to begin formalizing a supportive relationship between the National Trust and the Town of Eatonville, and we look forward to working with you to identify how our commitment can benefit and positively impact your planning efforts.

The National Trust’s engagement with Eatonville began on October 25th-26th, 2023, when staff from the National Trust’s African American Cultural Heritage Action Fund (“AACHAF”) and Law Division visited Eatonville at the invitation of the Association to Preserve the Eatonville Community (PEC). That visit, organized by N.Y. Nathiri of PEC, showcased the tremendous community spirit and rich cultural heritage of Eatonville. The National Trust is convinced that our engagement with Eatonville is both warranted and urgent, and our positive interactions with the Town of Eatonville’s staff both during our visit and subsequently have encouraged us to seek a more direct partnership with the Town of Eatonville.

During our conversations with the Town of Eatonville’s Chief Administrator, Demetris Pressley and staff, Brent Leggs, Executive Director of the AACHAF and Senior Vice President of the National Trust, shared the opportunity for the Town of Eatonville to receive a grant, through the *Descendent and Family Stewardship Initiative*, to support its master planning process in partnership with community stakeholders. This letter re-affirms that offer. As part of the direct partnership with the Town of Eatonville, the AACHAF proposes the following:

- The AACHAF will fund a preservation consultant to work in tandem with the Town’s selected planning contractor (Baker Barrios Architects,

Orlando, FL) to develop and implement an integrated scope that embeds historic preservation into the Eatonville Master Plan. The consultant will assist the firm with historical documentation and interpretation of findings to deeply inform the Master Plan. As part of this process, the consultant would be tasked with:

- Updating Eatonville's historic resources and landscape surveys and reviewing existing historic preservation plans, ordinances, and practices to devise policies that ensure the integrity of authentic historic and cultural resources are maintained using ordinances that support the preservation of cultural landscapes through sensitive development processes for the Town of Eatonville's contributing buildings and vacant lots.
- Producing a written methodology to identify descendant-and-family-owned or occupied properties with developing local strategies to assist descendant residents and family stewards in sustaining ownership and building capacity.
- Drafting an outline for amending the existing Eatonville Historic District National Register of Historic Places nomination (1998) to include an illustrated historic and cultural landscape report and to identify endangered historic sites for direct preservation action.
- The AACHAF will provide an initial \$25,000 in grant support to the Town of Eatonville to engage a consultant to reinforce the selected planning contractor's community engagement of Eatonville residents, the African American community, and descendant leadership in the master planning process. The selected consultant will be determined in consultation with the AACHAF.
- The AACHAF will make available \$125,000 in grant funding to support the comprehensive field survey of built and natural resources and landscapes under the master planning process to supplement any remaining scope parameters identified by the Town of Eatonville in consultation with the AACHAF, the selected planning contractor and technical preservation consultant.

The National Trust's AACHAF will also commit significant staff time to assist the Town of Eatonville. Our staff possesses expertise in historic preservation, community engagement, planning, and law. They will support the successful stewardship of the AACHAF's financial commitment to the Town of Eatonville and nurture the vital partnership between the National Trust and the Town of Eatonville. In this regard, we want to meet with representatives from the Town of Eatonville as soon as possible to discuss this grant opportunity and to arrange an introduction to your planning contractor, Baker Barrios firm, in Orlando, FL, to identify specific parameters for our pending assistance.

In addition, our organization is aware of the challenges that the Town of Eatonville currently faces with the Hungerford Tract. We want to assist in resolving that matter, independent of the abovementioned opportunity. We have expertise in resolving complex situations involving cultural resources and historic communities, and we believe that we can help ensure that the Hungerford Tract's potential to benefit the community of Eatonville is fully realized.

We appreciate your consideration of these offers. If you are agreeable to these terms, we will initiate our grant award process. We hope this letter is the first step in a long and fruitful relationship between the Town of Eatonville, the National Trust, and the AACHAF. We reiterate that it would be an honor to assist with the preservation of your community's unique and nationally significant heritage. As the next step, please email our colleague, Tiffany Tolbert, Senior Director of Preservation for the African American Cultural Heritage Action Fund, at [ttolbert@savingplaces.org](mailto:ttolbert@savingplaces.org).

Sincerely,



Brent Leggs  
Executive Director, African American Cultural Heritage Action Fund, and Senior Vice President, National Trust for Historic Preservation



Chris Cody  
Associate General Counsel

cc: Demetrius Pressley, Town of Eatonville Chief Administrator  
NY Nathiri, Association to Preserve the Eatonville Community  
Kirsten Andersen, Southern Poverty Law Center