



HISTORIC TOWN OF EATONVILLE, FLORIDA HISTORIC PRESERVATION BOARD MEETING MEETING MINUTES

Thursday, October 16, 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.*

CALL TO ORDER: Chair Rosa Picketts called the meeting to order at 1:01 p.m.

ROLL CALL: Quorum was established by roll call through Ms. Bellenger.

PRESENT: (6) Chair Rosa Picketts, Vice Chair LaDwyana Jordan, **Board Members:** Jane Turner, Laverne Bellamy Williams, Ann Dawkins-Curtis; **Alternate:** John Beacham (arrived after roll call)

STAFF: (4) Brianna Ross, **Planning Coordinator;** Marissa Bellenger, **Records Coordinator/Clerk's Office;** Tara Salmieri, **Town Planner;** Veronica King, **Town Clerk**

INVOCATION AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE: Board member Ann Dawkins-Curtis led the invocation followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

CITIZEN PARTICIPATION:

Dr. Candace Finley – Founding Executive Director of eSTEAMed Learning; announces being the fiscal sponsor of the Thomas House, have done work trying to seal the roof, however, wanted to make introductions and would love to work together on the Thomas House and other historic places in Eatonville. We do have a line of events to be planned for the inside the house. The next one will be in January—we will have a rapid fundraiser. On February 21st, we will have a bike tour event around the town of Eatonville to raise funds for the Thomas House. We also have a plethora of events, initiatives, and programs that are not only trying to restore the house, but also build the next generation of archivists and preservationists, all over the U.S. I look forward to working with you all.

N.Y. Nathiri (P.E.C.) – In October of 2023, the executive director and senior vice president of the National Trust for Historic Preservation and the representatives from the Southern Poverty Law Center conducted a two-day site visit in Eatonville. And at that time, the executive director said it was not just a single property in Eatonville that was famous, but the entire town of Eatonville was the asset. The preservation board is fundamental in protecting and preserving the town. I would just like to encourage you in your efforts. I also want to close by giving you an anecdote about the “wild” historic preservation people. What happens sometimes when there is actually historically a difference between elected officials and historic preservationists? Back in the early 1970s, the Miami Art Deco District. It is responsible for generating hundreds of millions of dollars. When that group of historic preservationists went to Tallahassee to ask that the area be put on the National Register for Historic Places, the elected government in Miami Beach sent a formal notice. Everything is not always in sweetness and light, but in the end, historic preservation is to the advantage. **Questions/Comments:** Jane Turner – Was it eventually designated as a historic district? N.Y. Nathiri – Yes, but the fact that the government would feel so compelled to send and notice, that is

instrumental. Sometimes government and historic preservation do not always go together initially, but in the end, let it be.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: *(Board was given an opportunity to review the minutes before voting.)*

Chair Picketts **MOTIONS** to **APPROVE** meeting minutes for September 11, 2025, with a correction to the adjournment time; **moved** by Vice Chair Jordan; **second** by Board Member Dawkins-Curtis; **AYE: ALL, MOTION PASSES, 5/0. Comments:** (John Beacham arrived) **Notes:** The adjournment time on the meeting minutes were corrected to reflect the time of 2:09.

BOARD DISCUSSIONS/DECISIONS:

Presentation by Community Planning Collaborative (Kick off Survey project) – Chair Picketts – Before we begin board discussions, I want to note that the meeting today was changed so that we could have the presentation you all are about to hear. Tara Salmieri – Today we have with us, Mr. Ennis Davis, who will discuss CPC's (Community Planning Collaborative) project and the historic survey. Ennis Davis – Thank you for having us today. I am the founder of Community Planning Collaborative. We have been hired by the National Trust to conduct a survey update. I will be giving a general overview of how the project came to be, what we are trying to accomplish over the next several months into the new year, and share a few case studies. CPC has about 40 years of experience in preservation, planning, and architectural work. My background is architecture, real estate development, preservation, and urban planning. I am also the acting president for the Florida Trust for Historic Preservation. Today we have part of the team, which includes Jennifer Wolfe, who is a past president of the Florida Trust, and she is helping us conduct fieldwork and will be preparing the master file forms for the preservation office. The purpose of CPC is to focus on historically exploited communities around this intersection of historic preservation, planning, public policy, and economic development. Just a little family background, my mother is a Vereen. Mayor Nathaniel Vereen is my dad's great cousin. My great-grandfather lived here about 100 years ago. E.L. Bean, who operated Rainbow and Club Eaton, was my dad's next door neighbor growing up. Moving on, what is a historical survey? The Historic Resources Survey is a beginning process of identifying and gathering data around the community's historic resources. There are a number of entities that can do surveys. For example, local communities such as the Town of Eatonville, Historic Preservation Boards, and there are projects that have to comply with Section 106 on the federal level. An example would be Interstate 4. When I worked for FDOT District 5, everything was being expanded and that project had to go through Section 106. That was a project-driven approach to doing a survey along properties it potentially impacted. Why is a survey important? I would say it is a proactive planning tool. It is step number one to do anything within the community. It can be used to create collaboration between multiple agencies. Surveys are a way to get things in the National Register or designated as official historic sites that unlock the door to additional revenue sources and financial resources to rehabilitate, restore, and put back into place that respects cultural heritage. We just mentioned the Miami Art Deco district and since it was designated, the area has come back alive from an economic development perspective by protecting the art and deco history that is there. A big reason this project is taking place is because it enables an update to the National Register of Historic Places, Historic Districts, or local district listings. The last survey that was done in Eatonville took place in the 1990s. The historic designation, National Register to Historic Places/Historic District, was approved in 1998. It is almost out of date at this point. We are 30 years down the line, and one of the benchmarks for doing this type of work is anything over the age of 50 years or so could be potentially eligible for listing to the National Register of Historic Places. Essentially, what has not been documented at the state level, for example, is going to be anything post-World War II, Civil Rights Movement, and the 1970s. The big thing we have talked about trying to do here is to make sure to survey up to 1980, instead of 1975. Because cities do not tend to do surveys annually, we want to try to get out ahead of that, and so you will have, from 1980, what could be potentially eligible for historic preservation. Board Member Beacham – Who did the survey back then? Ennis Davis – There was a consultant hired by the state. I do not know the name of the person.

Salmieri – Is that information that we can find out? Ennis Davis – Yes, it is on the survey which is available online. **(Davis continues his presentation)** There are four sites that are contributing structures to the existing National Registered Historic District, because they were over the age of 50 years old at the time the survey was done. We really want to focus on capturing development and influential things related to Eatonville post-World War II. When you look at that mid-century architecture and the development patterns of the population building in Eatonville, there is a civil rights story here that has not fully been documented. Eatonville was a form of Black resistance where people around Central Florida moved here in the 1950s and 60s during the Civil Rights Movement. Board Member Beacham – Would Club Eaton and the motel be considered mid-century modern? Ennis Davis – Club Eaton is probably late 1940s, but now with the renovation there may be some integrity issues in terms of individual listing, because much of it has been demolished. The hotel across the street is certainly mid-century modern and is likely eligible. **(Davis continues)** We really recommend surveying the entire town, but we are somewhat limited to the resources that were immediately available. The National Trust had some funding that was granted to the town. They had a deadline to be used in discussion around what you could do with funding from a historic preservation perspective. In the case of this survey, we want to make sure that we are documenting oldest to newest which means working from east to west, based on the development pattern. We have historic plats and documentation that you all produced in the past, as well as other consultants that lay out the landscape in terms of development. We are going to have a series of recommendations that comes out of this initial work and one of the first that we have received is Campus View, on the west side of I-4 which was plated in 1950. There are also other developments that were done in the 50s and 60s as well. One recommendation is going to be to survey the rest of the town, and we will maybe give you some options on how you can do that if you choose to. One option, for example, could be the next round of state small matching grants that pop up next year, you could apply to. From a cost assessment, based on the number of properties, it is around 240 to 250 sites, which is probably going to range somewhere around \$37,000 to \$40,000 which is \$150 per site. We are trying to include the cemetery even though it is officially in the City of Maitland, it is a historic resource. We want to make sure that it is recorded. There will be four phases of work. Phase one is data collection. I spent some time this morning at the Orange County Regional History Center archives going through what they had. Jenny (Wolfe) also looked at some things today at Town Hall. We are going to continue to work with you and everyone to pull as much information we can in the next few months. We are also going to meet with the Planning and Zoning Board later this evening. We talked to the Town Council last week and then we had a community workshop as well. The workshop included 8 or 9 questions we asked residents. For example: what buildings and sites stand out to you; if there are important people that stand out to you, just give us names; if something has been demolished that is important, or landscape, let us know. And these questions supplement the data collection research that we are doing, which allows us to drill in and develop a historical narrative. We did community workshops, one recorded online and in-person. We have it available online as well. We just want to collect as much of the information as possible. What has been missing in all the records so far is the 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s. Phase 2, field review and the drafting of the master site file forms, will be running at the same time as Phase 1. We have done some field work this week. Over the next few months, towards the end of December, we should have some drafts of the master site file forms and update the old survey. If anything has been torn down, we will update that information as well. Phase 3 will be continuing to analyze fieldwork and data that comes from the forums. We will draft a survey report for your review and direction. As part of that report, the information that we gather, we will be providing you a list of various preservation-oriented, next step recommendations. During the final phase (Phase 4), we will take all of the draft information and feedback from you all, to finalize the survey. We will finalize the forms and work with the State's Historic Preservation Office. We will give you the final report and follow up with another round of presentations to you, the Planning and Zoning Board, and the Town Council. Phase 2 will be from October to December. Phase 3 will begin in January and then we will finalize in May 2026 (Phase 4). The deadline with the National Trust is July 2026. We prefer to finish before that just in case something comes up where we need more time. Board Member Beacham – The Hungerford property is not in the

historical zone. Would you be making recommendations yourself? Or once you get the final survey together, then we will have to pass an ordinance with the Town Council. Ennis Davis – We will not be making a recommendation on what an ordinance should be. It could be a recommendation that you look at to better protect your cultural heritage sites. This survey just gives you information. It does not mean that you cannot address certain areas that may not be within the survey. We are still going to document Hungerford's history and significance architecturally. There are different ways that you could approach it but because there is no building there, I cannot see the state designating it as a contributing structure. Jenny Wolfe (CPC) – It could be historical archaeology. Salmieri – The Historic Preservation Board's intent is to not just do the survey, but when we expand the historic boundary, we would want the Hungerford site included in that boundary. Ennis Davis – The next step should be to survey the other side of town, so you have the entire town surveyed. And then, the recommendation that comes out of that will likely be a national registered district boundary which would probably be the entire town. But, you want to figure out what those contributing structures are. You would then apply to the National Register to modify your current district boundaries. Salmieri – The current boundary is very restrictive and there is nothing to state that the town, when this survey is complete, could absolutely move forward with securing and expanding the boundary for everything that is being done, and then expanding it again. You would not necessarily have to wait until the West side was done if that were the desire of the town, correct? We have a lot of pressures that are coming in the development of the East, so the quicker that we can get this half done, the better. Ennis Davis – There are two ways you can go about that. Technically, since you have not used all the funds, you could use some of that to survey the West side and be done. When we get into April of 2026, the state window opens for the small matching grant, you can apply. So, you could get \$50,000 to survey the West side or designate the entire town. Salmieri – It is competitive, so it is not guaranteed, correct? Ennis Davis – Yes. If you did it that way, it would speed you up a year, because if you waited to use the state funds to designate one side, those funds would not be available until July 2027. If you already have an opportunity in hand, just do it now, and by the time it gets done and the state funds roll in, you have already done the groundwork to do everything. Salmieri – The only way to expand the boundary is to have an updated survey? Jenny Wolfe (CPC) – I just wanted to bring one thing to your attention, and I do not know yet what the local ordinances are, but certainly a local designation can run in tandem with the National Register or be independent of that. That gives you, the local government, more authority than a National Register designation does, if there is development pressure and you want to build something into your local codes and building ordinances. Salmieri – So, we can expand the local at any time? Davis confirms. Board Member Turner – I just came back from a historic preservation training and I found out how much I do not know. One of the things I was made aware of was our ordinances. I do not know whether they have been reviewed or not to be consistent with what we are trying to do now as we move forward. One of my concerns is that we go back and make updates as needed. Ennis Davis – I do think as we go through this process, we will certainly see where things do not align, and that can also be a part of our recommendations. Board Member Turner – Because we do not work independent from the Mayor and Council, which stood out to me the most during the training. Also, historic preservation is not put in a box. We need to combine our boards and our resources as one to move forward. In Eatonville, it seems like you make one presentation after another, but we are not cohesive and that is what the Historic Preservation Board is looking for. Ennis Davis – The goal of the survey is to make different entities within the government collaborate more. From the economic development side, a similar area in Jacksonville went through this process and the city worked together, the neighborhood organization worked together, and the historic commission. They were able to take a small corner store and get a historic preservation grant to rehabilitate it and then add to it. It started with a survey and then went to a designation which led to a grant. Board Member Beacham – What kind of rights (protections) do the grounds have? Jenny Wolfe (CPC) – I recently worked in St. Augustine and the city has an archaeological preservation ordinance. A couple other communities in Florida have archaeological preservation ordinances, but it is pretty rare. It is also difficult to adopt in modern times. A lot of times, if a local government has such an ordinance, they established it back in the 1980s. It is possible to do some research, and I know when I was looking at the past National Register

nomination and survey, there were recommendations to do archaeological investigations of the Hungerford property, and I know there are 3 other sites in the community that were researched for archaeological potential. That does not necessarily protect the land. However, you could add on a layer of mitigation requirement so that you are not prohibiting development, but if you are doing ground-disturbing activities, there could be some documentation done. There is also Traditional Cultural Property (TPC) which focuses on not just the buildings, but the culture as well. There are a number of options, it just depends on the will of the people. Salmieri – Can you clarify what you mean by “will of the people” because we have decision makers and elected officials. Jenny Wolfe (CPC) – I mean that it is the will of the local community to work with their local officials to pass laws to do this kind of work. Salmieri – It would be the Town Council’s decision to move forward, correct? Wolfe confirms. Salmieri – It also takes the initiative of your elected officials to codify any of the standards. **(Chair Picketts allows a comment from the audience)** N.Y. Nathiri states that she is gratified that the board is being presented this information from CPC. Nathiri spoke about cultural landscape significance and how the town currently has a preserve at the corner of Lake Destiny Road. The area is old Florida fauna and has a Zora Neale Hurston historical connection. The corporate town limits of Eatonville have been the same since the 1890 census. The National Register is a wonderful thing, but it is a local ordinance that protects. The more we hear from people outside, the more confidence we can have in what is being said. It is the will of the people and their elected representatives. This all goes back to the question “what does it mean to be a historically Black town?” The way we were trained in the 1990s about historic preservation is that it is the foundation of everything that happens. We were also told that we had a strong historic preservation ordinance. Board Member Turner – There was a geophysical investigation on 510 Eaton Street, and it was supposed to have been the original gravesite where Joe Clark. It has come up in town meetings where they have discussed possibly turning it into a commercial property, but a lot of people came and spoke against it, and so it was taken off the agenda. I am asking because an archaeological site investigation is not the same thing as an archaeological dig. Perhaps the ordinance could cover archaeological as well. If we want to expand the boundary, we would have to create a new ordinance, correct? Ennis Davis – I have not reviewed the ordinances but I would assume anything since 1998 has to be updated and that includes master planning, land use, and things of that nature. Board Member Turner – I do not know if they have been doing those things in conjunction with historic preservation. Ennis Davis states that he does not know either, but the survey will be the beginning step in collaboration. Board Member Turner – One of things they wanted to do with the cemetery is put a marker down. Davis shares an example from work he did with the City of Jacksonville and a historic cemetery. Board Member Turner states that in terms of Eatonville, we should document and confirm that there is a historical gravesite. Chair Picketts – Do you envision separate meetings when you have the results? Davis responds that it is up to the Board to decide. Board Member Turner states that she supports cohesiveness between the boards and working together. Board Member John Beacham asks how the Board can prevent the demolition of Club Eaton and the placement of a historical marker. Ennis Davis responds that in regard to Club Eaton, the town should be looking at economic development options such as businesses leasing the building. Club Eaton represents not just Eatonville but Black history in Florida. What you do not want to happen is reading the history like an obituary. Davis states that the main street looks like an opportunity for economic development and revitalization. Board Member Beacham brings up the motel across the street from Club Eaton as another example. Board Member Turner – The word demolition comes up a lot in Eatonville when things could likely be restored. Vice Chair Jordan asks if there is a way for demolitions to come to the Historic Preservation Board. If there is no ordinance regarding this issue, then we need to create one. Board Member Beacham – I believe the process has been, because it is not in the historical zone, demolitions go before the Planning and Zoning Board. Vice Chair Jordan – How can we make sure demolitions come before the Historic Preservation Board moving forward? The Board should have a more active voice as to what is happening in this community. Ennis Davis asks Board Members if structures within the boundary or outside the boundary come to the Board. Chair Picketts states that is why they are doing the survey, so that the boundary can be expanded and development plans would have to come to the Historic Preservation Board.

Ennis Davis – I do believe Senate Bill 180 is going to impact you, but if you already have that within the current historic district boundaries, then the first two things you would do would be complete the survey, use the resources from the National Trust to survey the other side so that you have the whole town and apply for a National Register, then over the course of that, the boundary changes to be the entire town. Vice Chair Jordan – Are we able to pause demolitions? Brianna Ross – In the next meeting I will go into detail into the CLG training because they did provide best practices, strategies, and community engagement initiatives. Vice Chair Jordan asks if there are any current demolitions scheduled? Ms. Ross states that there are demolitions scheduled for outside the historic district. Board Member Turner asks for clarity on the purpose of an ordinance in regard to historic preservation. Ennis Davis – Senate Bill 180 is going to impact ordinances, but there are several cities who have filed lawsuits against the state. We are hopeful that it will go away and change this next legislative session. But, that bill is going to hurt you in terms of making policy stricter. There is a way around this because you could just modify the boundary to the National Register District, and it will fall within your jurisdiction already, and you would change the policy because the boundary is more cumbersome of the community. Vice Chair Jordan asks with whom they would make those modifications with? Davis states that it would be the state. Board Member Beacham states that they have to get together and present to council through a workshop. Jenny Wolfe – I am looking at your ordinance and you have a local register ordinance established. It would not be a change to add properties to the local register, because there is a public objection process. According to the ordinance, “the local register is hereby created as a means of identifying and classifying various sites, buildings, structures, objects, and districts as historic and/or architecturally significant. The local register will be kept by the planning director.” Davis states that he will research the local ordinance. Vice Chair Jordan requests that the Board have some assistance in having their concerns be heard within the Town Council in terms of halting demolitions. Chair Picketts encourages Board Members to look at the ordinance and their Historic Preservation Board materials so that they know what is already in place. Ms. Ross – At the CLG training they provided additional resources from the National Alliance of Preservation Commissions which goes into specifics about the role of commissioners, council members, and local officers. I will be including this in my presentation to you all next month. Chair Picketts states that she received an email about an upcoming webinar on October 30th hosted by the National Alliance of Preservation Commissions. Vice Chair Jordan – Could you let the Town Council know the importance of this Board? Board Members respond that they believe Council is becoming aware. Chair Picketts asks Mr. Davis if their presentation tonight with Planning and Zoning will be the same presentation. Davis confirms.

BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS:

Board Member Turner – I had an opportunity to attend the training in Bartow (CLG), along with Ms. Ross and Councilwoman Randolph. I found the conference to be very enlightening. I left thinking about how much we do not know and how much needs to be implemented within the town. We had so much information with a 2 day time frame so I know Ms. Ross’ presentation will be comprehensive. When we came back, we were thinking of what can be preserved or qualify for historic designation. We should all have an opportunity like that to be trained.

Board Member Beacham – Today, we heard a story of our ancestors. I am honored to be part of this. We have an opportunity to shape our future. We cannot let anyone else tell our story. Although we do not have all the answers, we are going to keep pushing and pushing. Our questions deserve to be answered.

Chair Picketts – The webinar training on October 30th is “Integrating Preservation into Municipal and Planning Processes,” and will begin at 1pm.

STAFF COMMENTS:

Brianna Ross (Planning Coordinator) – Board Member Turner and I went to the historic preservation training in Bartow and it was really beautiful. We did a walking tour and learned about how prevalent racism was back in the day. We did not get to see a lot of the Black community as it was separated from where we were. However, there were a lot of different ways they acknowledged the history. I plan to have an answer to the questions you all asked today after I speak with the Town Planner. Chair Picketts requests that Ms. Ross gets the answers before the next meeting to send them to Board Members.

Marissa Bellenger (Records Coordinator) – The Clerk would like to remind you all to sign up for TextMyGov. She has also provided you a copy of a flyer with information regarding the Historic Resource Survey. (Ms. Bellenger then hands out amended meeting minutes for September 11, 2025, with the correct adjournment time).

Veronica King (Town Clerk) – Marissa will be in charge of the Historical Preservation Board, so you will be seeing her during monthly meetings and I will be listening from my office. I wanted to provide some clarity in reference to the historical preservation ordinance. The ordinance has to go before Council twice. When there is an ordinance, because you are creating a law, it has to go before the Council for two public hearings. The public will have the opportunity to offer their feedback and share what they would like to see done. The only way citizens vote on an ordinance is if it is a referendum which has to go on the ballot for voting. **Comments/questions:** Board Member Beacham – As members of the Historical Preservation Board, can we present an ordinance, and if we do, how do we write that up? Mrs. King – We will have to get legal involved but in our charter, we do have an opportunity where a member from the public can bring an ordinance for consideration, but it will be the Council who votes on it. Chair Pickett – I would like us to draft something first then we could send it over to legal for review. Mrs. King – Before we have a public hearing, it has to be vetted by legal. Vice Chair Jordan – In regard to the time of these meetings, is it set in stone (the Code)? Mrs. King – Based on the code, it is. You could all decide to change the code, but there is a process by which you do that. Chair Picketts asks if they should consider changing the time? Vice Chair Jordan – I would love to consider that because it would give the public a better opportunity to be in attendance. Mrs. King – We can assist in helping you change it if it is the will of the Board. Vice Chair Jordan requests that discussion on time and code be included in the next meeting's agenda. Mrs. King clarifies that Ms. Ross is the point of contact staff member and Ms. Tara is the Town Planner. The Board also has the support of the Town Attorney.

HANDOUTS: TextMyGov Flyer; Historic Resource Survey Flyer

ADJOURNMENT Vice Chair Jordan Motions for Adjournment of Meeting; **Moved** by Vice Chair Jordan; **Second** by Board Member Turner; **AYE: ALL, MOTION PASSES. Meeting Adjourned at 2:29pm.**

Respectfully Submitted by:

Veronica L King, Interim Town Clerk