



HISTORIC TOWN OF EATONVILLE, FLORIDA

REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING

MEETING MINUTES

Tuesday, January 07, 2025, at 7:30 PM

Town Hall – 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 Council Agenda Page.*

CALL TO ORDER AND VERIFICATION OF QUORUM:

Mayor Gardner called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m. and a quorum was established by Mrs. King

PRESENT: (4), Mayor Angie Gardner, Vice Mayor Theo Washington, Councilman Rodney Daniels, Councilwoman Wanda Randolph (**Absent:** Councilman Tarus Mack)

STAFF: (5) Demetrius Pressley, **Chief Administrator Officer**, Nichole Washington, (**Standing in for Town Clerk**), Clifford Shepard, **Town Attorney**, Katrina Gibson, **Finance Director**, Chief Stanley Murray, **EPD** (**Absent:** Veronica King, Town Clerk)

INVOCATION AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:

Rev. Critton led the Invocation followed by the Pledge of Allegiance

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA:

Mayor Gardner Motions to **APPROVE** the meeting agenda; **Moved by** Vice Mayor Washington; **Second by** Councilman Daniels; **AYE: ALL, MOTION PASSES.**

PRESENTATIONS AND RECOGNITION – (1)

Presentations of the Officer of the 3rd and 4th Quarter for Corporal Robert Jones and Corporal Michelle Rozefort - Started this initiative to reward police officers; will come back to do a workshop to discuss a survey of Central Florida's salaries for all of the municipalities and the counties, want to look at ways to help keep quality people; Corporal Robert Jones attended a training program to qualify with firearms, he sufficiently passed and initiated what he learned with the police department, he is being recognized for his exceptional job performance in the third quarter of 2024 with outstanding dedication for excellent public services, awarded officer of quarter, love his heart, his initiative to bring me new ideas (Pictures were taken with Town Council); preparing for the upcoming Zora Neale and MLK activities, in light of the New Orleans and Las Vegas incidents, the police department is meeting regularly to ensure safety; the fourth quarter officer of the year is Corporal Michelle Rozefort, she was the night field training officer for four new hires conducting training and reports for six months, she is recognized for her exceptional job performance in the third quarter of 2024 with outstanding dedication for excellent public services, awarded officer of quarter (Pictures were taken with Town Council); special thanks to council for their support, acknowledge Council Randolph for sitting down and bringing ideas and learning how the police department operates, appreciate the safety of what the officers are providing and there is much needed to keep them consistent, looking at some new hirings, hard to incur the officers' safety with one or two officers or two or three officers working at night or during the day if one must

go to the jail leaving one officer by themselves. That is a liability on the town and need to prepare to accommodate accordingly, there are requirements to be adhered to by the Florida Department of Law Enforcement.

CITIZEN PARTICIPATION – (8)

Joyce Irby – here at great inconvenience, angry, and sad as a disgruntled citizen, to have Mr. Johnson who made a mistake at swindling me, siphoning \$71,000 from the town, setting up an agreement where he had no supervision, and voting to have him back in charge of swindling the town, where the computers that are missing; he is still being inappropriate.

Julian E. Johnson Sr. – (142 Lincoln Blvd.) a concerned citizen and a taxpayer who is feeling discriminated against, the town is asking for the night market (the corporation) to pay a fee for bringing a service and people into the town, to charge 1887 First a fee will cause a hike to vendors, vendors are paying enough already; with the required fees, services from the town will be needed including open restrooms, it is a slap to pay a fee for a parking lot that taxes are paid on as a citizen; believe this is an attack on son who graduated from Bethune Cookman University, one who came back to this community to make things better, bringing a night market to this community is commendable, if you love your town, you should be at the night market.

Julian Johnson Jr. – present to express concerns about the \$250 proposed rental fee on the main street parking Lot, if a fee is proposed, it is a direct discrimination, running an event 12 times a year could be \$3,000 a year, not getting access to restrooms, there is miscommunication, asked for street closure on December 9th with no response until January 3rd (the day before the market) saying it got approved. This has been a continuous issue in the incubator program that had no accountability. It raises questions about this government, to go through this process without consulting with the people who have been directly affected, people have budgets to work from, it shows that events in Eatonville are complimented for council only, but independent organizations are getting directly impacted by imposing a fee, the event process is outdated and there is no system in place, to pass a fee that directly discriminates against an organization can lead to potential lawsuits, it is an opportunity for possible grants by bringing people every month, this is blocking Black history just like Governor DeSantis, people can read history as they come here from all around the country to this night market, to Stogie's at Sunset, why not open the restrooms; the town can profit more and have access to public facility grants because of foot traffic, requested a public workshop but ignored, if a fee is charged, it is asked that restrooms be available, it will open an opportunity for people to learn Black history, this direct attack is attacking others coming to do events, the public restrooms are an issue; requesting for the council to table this item and start looking for other ways to sit down and do real business.

Nia Williams-Brown – Passed minutes to Julian Johnson Jr.

Josie Lemon Allen – a mother resident in Orlando who has organized Kwanzaa in Orlando for over 15 years. bringing communities together to learn about black history, every year we have a night of Kwanzaa where the children to run the Kwanzaa with their artwork, performances, and presentations, also a vendor at the 1887 Market wanting to bring the history of Eatonville and Kwanzaa together to host a night in Eatonville, without access to the restrooms, I could not accommodate the elderly in the community, so had to find another space. In respect to the 1887 Market and Kwanzaa for that matter do bring in vendors, the 1887 Market have brought in more Black owned businesses in one single space in Orlando in the span of 15 years. The Town of Eatonville have to take into account accommodation not just for our elders but children, we can do better than the Port-a-Potties, it is like a psychological dehumanizing by exerting power over the most basic function that a person has in relieving themselves, want the Town of Eatonville to be great and want this event to continue and be successful.

Kelvan Franklin – (133 Thompson Avenue) Ambassador for the Eatonville Chamber of Commerce providing updates to the community about upcoming events; January 8th. Is the Chamber Coffee Break, 8-9:30, thereafter at 10:00 is The Nook; January 18th is the 48th Annual Martin Luther King Day Parade, Chamber members are welcome to park at the Chamber and watch the parade; January 25th is the Women Changemaker Panel Discussion from 10-11:30 (volunteer panelists are needed); January 25th MLK Day of Service is 11:30 a.m. (Meet at the Town Hall and register with the Town of Eatonville at townofeatonville.org; the Chamber is here to assist the community and business owners with their needs, can assist with community service hours for adults and students, notary services, have various volunteer opportunities, if interested please contact the chamber at 407-927-5563.

Shak Jones – Work with the Stogies at Sunset event and want to talk about the proposed fee imposed on events and the cost and the burden it can put on vendors or event goers that want to enhance the brand of Eatonville and bring people and help with tourism in the near future; would like to have a conversation, it would be great to be able to use the public restroom facilities (maybe having an agreement), for the Stogies At Sunset event, the minimum cost for port-a-potties is \$400, to pay the \$250 and being able to use that facility could offset costs, possibly expanding the real estate to get more vendors to may also offset the cost with vending fees. The bathroom is a big issue. There are only three events and much more potential for others, maybe we can help set that standard, would love to better understand where it (the fee) came from and how it would be beneficial to all.

Rinc Burgmon - Gave thanks to the Town of Eatonville, attended several council meetings over the years and the energy and vibe here is so relaxed, calm and welcoming, thanks for the events allowed in Eatonville., there are people from all over the U. S. who come and attend these events, to be able to come to the market, the Zora Neale Hurston, other events including events for children and adults of all ages here in Eatonville is going to continue to help put Eatonville on the market. Once upon a time, there was a place by the name of the Rainbow, met a white guy in another country who knew about Eatonville because of the Rainbow, thanks again and continue to do good work, with time and unity, it will get better.

APPROVAL CONSENT AGENDA: Mayor Gardner Motions to APPROVE the Consent Agenda approving Council Meeting Minutes for October 15, November 5, November 19; **Moved by** Vice Mayor Washington; **Second by** Councilman Daniels; **AYE: ALL, MOTION PASSES.**

COUNCIL DECISIONS:

Approval of the Special Events Rental Fee For Main Street Parking Space; **Council Comments:** Vice Mayor Washington would like to table and allow for further research and get more information, look at other cities what they charge, waiving all fees for the people being brought to the community, support the fee but community-based events should be free. Councilman Daniels would like to move forward with the recommended vote to table item, Councilwoman Randolph – Application is standard but have not had a procedure or process regarding the application process, the town has to be protected, have to determine what the town will be responsible for, is it right for the town not to get a fee, to subsidize or should the fees be on the town to support the event, all promoters charges a fee to their vendors and all promoters are being assessed a fee from the entity where they have a contract to do business, Port-a-lets is not new, they are used during the MFK events and used at the Zora Neale Hurston Festival, a lot of parks have their own facilities and do not have to worry about this because everybody goes to the facility that is on property, what is expected to pay, should the town absorb costs, promotions on TV and radio would enhance more people to come and will build more potential income to the business, maybe the town can do something to show support rather than providing a space of location, All promoters are responsible to get their own sponsors, asked about the average cost for the town to put on such an event (comparable to Christmas on the Boulevard it can be about \$7,000-\$10,000), Juneteenth raised about \$13,000 (the town gave support through a contribution established in a memorandum of understanding, the town cannot take on 100 percent cost, recommend including all events, town events, private events, whatever events on the town's list as far as media to generate more people to come to Eatonville,

the market is very good but may not be earning the amount to support the event or promoter, Legal provided ways that Apopka support events (advertisements on website, paper), unaware of a municipality that does not charge a fee for special events, usually enhanced law enforcement, parking, and security, the Maitland market is ran by Maitland not a private entity, Maitland does not charge itself, for private vendors like 1887 First, a fee is not untypical, Pressley, the market was initially a collaboration with the CRA and later expressed that there would be a different route, it was starting unbeknownst to following the process of getting a special event in Eatonville, worked with the vendor with the application, the planning department along with permitting were asked to figure out the best route, it was decided to implement a six months pilot program, this event uses the town's electricity, policing, and public works is involved, other communities do assess a fee larger than the proposed fee anywhere from \$500 to almost \$1500, the \$250 proposed fee was determined based on the impact to the public works director which is reasonable in comparison to other municipalities, is a small , Zora pays the town thousands and thousands of dollars, the CRA cannot sponsor marketing of events with CRA dollars, only the town can, if the county agrees, through an interlocal agreement it would allow money from the CRA to be used (only exception in the statue). **Vice Mayor Gardner Motions to TABLE the Special Events Rental Fee For Main Street Parking Space; Dies For A Lack Of Second; Mayor Gardner Motions to APPROVE the Special Events Rental Fee For Main Street Parking Space; Moved by Councilman Daniels; Second by Councilwoman Randolph; AYE: Mayor Gardner, Councilwoman Randolph, Councilman Daniels; NAYE: Vice Mayor Washington; MOTION PASSES.** **Comments:** The parking lot was not being used, not on a scale that it is now being used, this shows the support, to be business minded which is where we are now, considering the condition of the parking lot, where does that money come from to fix it, the money paid to the police goes to the police, this is business, the last meeting (workshop) there was a discussion, some were here and did not say a word; concerning parks, if somebody reserve the park, then they are responsible for it, there is a recreational fee, if it is not reserved, then it is open to the public, to reserve requires the same process with the Recreation Department, fill out an application, and reserve the park.

REPORTS:

CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER: Demetrius Pressley – Thanks for the support of Christmas on the Boulevard; a year review of events under recreations has been provided; thanks to public works for efforts to ensure areas are clean, prepared, and maintained; Howard University swim team is coming tomorrow, there will be small presentation for them in support of the sport, education, and learning the sport; MLK is coming up and information has been provided to Council; have received the agreements for the \$34 million in regards to the agreement for the clean water and drinking water SRF funding acquisitions, close to getting, three year process, next meeting a resolution will be presented for approval of signing of the agreements (deadline is February 18th); met all the parameters with the Zora items, unless the council directs differently, the event goes forth, if the funds are not there, a hold will be placed on the event; requested to speak at the University Chapel for MLK on the day of the next meeting, will attend the meeting either online or in person depending on what time I can get back; on target with the audit and hoping to have a strategic planning session in March or April to talk through things that are going on and what is needed to be prepared for the budgetary cycle, it will also be a listening session for the council to discuss major items forecasted for the budget to include timeframes, council can give staff clear direction on how to move forward.

ATTORNEY: Clifford Shepard – Administration is in the process of speaking with various members of the current school board, the new person who replaced Karen Castor Dentel on the school board along with others new to the board are learning about Hungerford and its history among other things, until an action, I remain optimistic that the right decision will be made, it is important that the use of right language is used discussing this issue, using the term land bought back since it was never the town as a government's land to start with, the Southern Poverty Law Center lawsuit was dismissed, sent a copy of the order of dismissal to Mr. Pressley and to the mayor, request a conversation with Ms. Anderson the lawyer from SPLC, to discuss whether they are done with this or whether there is an intended appeal, could impact what happens in the future with the land,

do not engage with the rumors, they are never helpful, staying on a focused path with hopes will lead to a decision in the town's favor by the Orange County Public School Board, the right people are supporting our efforts and we hope that the elected officials will see it our way.

TOWN COUNCIL REPORT/DISCUSSION ITEMS -

Vice Mayor Theo Washington – condolences to all the families who lost lived ones; Happy New Year.

Councilman Rodney Daniels – Happy New Year; the only negative feedback about the market and Stogies At Sunset was the location at town hall is sacred; there is other property that is vacant, suggest having the events at the Denton Johnson Center's property, expressed concern about events selling liquor and cigars on town hall's sacred grounds where business is conducted, agree to charge a fee because the town makes nothing, understand about the restrooms, when giving back, the town should be helping (a free event where no one is profiting but helping each other); referring back to the information provided by legal on CRA funds not being used for marketing, special events, was there money given to the last Stogies At Sunset event, is it fair to other vendors to get funding and having the Stogies At Sunset take place (Vice Mayor Washington – the information provided by legal and was followed), maybe this needs to be looked into; to the clerk, when minutes to speak are given to someone, they are given two minutes instead of three minutes; feel the pain of Ms. Irby; condolences to the families of Mr. Levitt and James Andrews.

Councilwoman Wanda Randolph – For the MLK parade, will there be any permits that will be issued to those who would like to do vending on their private property (no, the standard is same that they cannot vend an event that they are not a part of, the code states that any special events that the town is having, no one is allowed to sell in their yard and on the streets, code enforcement is supposed to enforce; is a street sweeper going over the streets especially on the west side (yes, the week before MLK); support what was said about the officers pay, it is something that we need to take a look at and consider (Vice Mayor Washington: we are over the limit for the number of officers for a town our size), Chief - the number are not what they once were, have to also compensate for manpower when people go on vacation, are sick, on maternity, and may be FMLA, do not have the overage that other places have.

MAYOR'S REPORT - Mayor Angie Gardner – Thanks to the staff, the children, and everyone that helped to make Christmas boulevard a successful; Condolences to all families who suffered from the recent tragedies locally, statewide, federally, the family of President Carter; looking forward to the upcoming parade; do not foresee the bathrooms being opened for usage during large events, having a plumbing issues, because there are not many locations in the town to have events, it is fine to use the parking lot; as a council, when we have an issue or a challenge, let us address the issue, not the person because it causes conflict; to Chief, have you considered a volunteer police force; looking into some things down the road, will still incur a cost for uniforms, and training; also with the next two nights being very cold, any citizens that observe people camped, sitting, or laying anywhere, please call the non-emergency number (407-623-1300 or 407-623-1330) so the police department can offer a ride down to the coalition, rescue mission, or wherever we can get them out of the weather.

ADJOURNMENT Mayor Gardner Motions for Adjournment of Meeting; **Moved** by Councilman Daniels; **Second** by Vice Mayor Washington; **AYE: ALL, MOTION PASSES. Meeting Adjourned at 8:58pm.**

Respectfully Submitted by:

APPROVED

Veronica L King, Town Clerk

Angie Gardner, Mayor