



# HISTORIC TOWN OF EATONVILLE, FLORIDA

## COMMUNITY REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY

### MEETING MINUTES

Thursday, November 16, 2023, at 6:30 PM

Town Hall (Board 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 Board Agenda Page.*

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**CALL TO ORDER** – Chair Gardner called the meeting to order at 6:31 p.m.

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

**PRESENT:** (5) Chair Angie Gardner, Vice-Chair Rodney Daniels, Director Wanda Randolph, Director Marlin Daniels, Director Ruthie Critton (**Absent:** Director Theo Washington)

**STAFF:** (4) Veronica King, **Town Clerk**, Nicole Washington, **CRA**, Greg Jackson, **Attorney**, Officer Boone, **Police Department**.

#### INVOCATION AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

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

#### PUBLIC PARTICIPATION - (The Three-minute rule was strictly enforced)

Ryan Novak – (Item #1- 1887 Housing Initiative) – The moderate-income requirement seemed high at 140 percent of the Town of Eatonville area mean income for a single individual. Suggested revisiting at about maybe 120, 130; the 140 bringing a single individual's income up to \$95,000 seems high for the types of programs that are being offered, include an order of merit for multiple applicants.

#### BOARD DISCUSSIONS: (\*\*Item was moved to discussion)

1. Discussion of the 1887 Housing Initiative – This is the beginning discussions, information provided is information that exists with another municipality. We will need to make this initiative work for the town; the monies will be used from the TIFF funds. We would need to consider if we would want housing rehabilitation, in addition to purchasing and refurbishing and putting it back on the market. Did not see a need for assistance for special assessments and housing development that bring in the businesses to build. Disaster relief assistance should be a part. The program required home ownership and mortgage assistance. Can look at the maximum award for down payment assistance, and income mortgage limits. Provided is a list of approved lenders that the applicant can work with. The bank for the town as well as the CRA can look as well; we will be looking for them to qualify and pre-approve. This is the beginning workings of a program; Mid-December, looking to have a program geared specifically for Eatonville. In this document, there are great components. Benefits to the town: It fits into the CRA plan, and we can improve blighted homes and improve the value of surrounding homes; improving taxes, tax receipts, and tax revenue. The program will allow purchasing of a home that is feasible and available. (Critton) ask that this item is workshopped to discuss what we can and cannot do. The workshop can include partners who share the same goals and can alleviate financial burdens, in areas marketing, and study/research; consider broadening the program to

include former residents of Eatonville interested in moving back needing the homebuyer's education. There may be homes available now for purchase, building a program would help with a realistic budget. (Gardner) Suggest starting with one home as a trial because of the intricacies of such a program; utilizing an existing program that has been vetted by their legal with a legal document in existence, can use down payment assistance from the county before using CRA money. The idea is to buy the home quickly to take it off the market to prepare it for someone in the town to buy. (M. Daniels) considering restrictions, must be careful when it comes to housing, getting into HUD and getting into discriminatory practices, partnerships can help facilitate this (Legal) The understanding of the program is for buyers assistance, which fits within the aims of CRAs when started in 1969 and this CRA initiated in 1997, to alleviate or address slum and blight within an underserved community. To allow individuals to have home ownership to address slum and blight, this program would fit within the parameters of chapter one of part three, as well as the salary plan. Will do further research on restrictions limiting purchases to Eatonville residents, believe limitation is to location of property (within boundaries of the CRA which is the Town of Eatonville) and not identity of an individual. (Gardner) a point system can be considered not to exclude anyone but give more leverage. Monies from the affordable linkage fee can be used towards a program on the town side to go towards housing rehabilitation, the CRA work can also support. (M. Daniels) consider helping residents who have a home paid for but are unable to maintain the maintenance and insurance. (Critton) is this a CRA program or a program by the town, are there restrictions; type of program, housing rehabilitation, properties in the town of Eatonville, former residents who want to move back, can a program encompass all of these factors without crossing the lines and without the agency taking a major hit, how do we guarantee monies will be available every year to sustain the program. (Gardner) like other programs, it lasts if there is money, there may be money available but must show that there is an established program for two or three years. (Randolph) would like to wait until we get a CRA Director before moving forward on a program like this, do agree with tabling or having a workshop, but the proper staff is needed to manage the program. (Clerk) is the request for a CRA workshop or a stakeholder's meeting; both can be considered. (Critton) both can be done for feedback to build a program to fit the community needs with the parameters and authorities of the CRA; dialogue with stakeholders during the preliminary stages and to better tailor the program to the town's needs. Having a director is a priority but do not want to see the program delayed; having a director and starting a program are both a priority. Reality and urgency require the conversation to be had, to put on hold would be an injustice to ourselves and the community. How can we maintain this community without losing it in the hands of those better equipped to manage it; what resources can we pull together now to address this matter without dismissing the need for a director? (M. Daniels) need somebody to facilitate and manage the paperwork. Consider small businesses coming in to facilitate finding a business and creating a hub; an executive director is needed. (Gardner) there is someone interested in the director's position, without a director these steps are still needed because we (the board) approve the policy, as a chair having fifteen years of background represents someone who do understands, need to keep it moving without a director. (R. Daniels) Can CRA funds be used for infrastructure; yes, under restricted circumstances, if the infrastructure projects are not within the CIP of the town and not within a period of three years. There are ways that monies can be used for infrastructure projects. (Critton) would like to consider a point system to build program for entrepreneurs in the town, the commercial program can mirror the residential program, fixing up dilapidated building to assist someone in the community who may be a small business owner or looking for an existing business. (Gardner) look at three workshops in December, will poll with some dates.

## **BOARD DECISION:**

2. Approval of Resolution CRA-R-2023-24 Establishing Funding For The 1887 Housing Initiative – (Gardner) There is an urgency to take steps in setting aside money for a program, property may become available, would like to go ahead with establishing funding. (Preamble Read) **Director Randolph motion** to **table** Resolution CRA-R-2023-24 Establishing Funding For The 1887 Housing Initiative until there is a CRA

Director; **moved** by Vice Chair Daniels; **second** by Director Critton with discussion; **DISCUSSIONS:** Inquired about considering a name change; putting protocols in place, evaluating CRA dollars. In considering moving forward, the TIF funding will replenish around December and January. The average pre square foot is a question to ask when looking at kitchen, bathrooms, roof, electrical, and plumbing. There are discrepancies in the numbers in the budget, should discuss and verify before moving forward. What will be the criteria for buying a house; as a CRA we have the authority and capacity to purchase, possibly get with staff for a list of properties in the CRA possession, need to fix up the properties that are already in the CRA possession. **Chair Gardner call for the question**; **AYE: Director M. Daniels, Director Randolph, Vice Mayor Daniels; NAYE: Chair Gardner, Director Critton; MOTION PASSES (Item Tabled until there is a CRA Director) Comments:** There are concerns about the nature of the vote whether item is tabled until there is an executive director or rather item is tabled not contingent upon hiring an Executive Director. (Legal) Legal recommendation is that motions/vote be rescinded and the proper vote with proper understanding of each motion be given. **(ALL ACTIONS RESCINDED)**

**Director Randolph motion** to **table** Resolution CRA-R-2023-24 Establishing Funding For The 1887 Housing Initiative until CRA Executive Director is hired; **moved** by Vice Chair Daniels; **second** by Director Critton with discussion; **AYE: Director Randolph, Vice Mayor Daniels; NAYE: Chair Gardner, Director Critton, Director M. Daniels; MOTION FAILS (Item Not Tabled Until CRA Executive Director is hired.)**

**Director M. Daniels motion** to **table** Resolution CRA-R-2023-24 Establishing Funding For The 1887 Housing Initiative until we complete the workshop series and put all the necessary documentation in place; **moved** by Director Critton; **second** by Director Randolph; **AYE: Chair Gardner, Director Critton, Director M. Daniels; NAYE: Director Randolph, Vice Mayor Daniels; MOTION PASSES (Item Tabled until we complete the workshop series and put all the necessary documentation in place.)**

3. **Approval of Resolution CRA-R-2023-23 Establishing Funding For The Kennedy Main Street Beautification Upgrades** - (Gardner) This resolution is to upgrade the Mainstreet, pull out the old plants and put in new landscaping. This is one of the objectives of the CRA. The maintenance will go back to the town, CRA cannot do the maintenance. **Chair Gardner motion** to approval of Resolution CRA-R-2023-23 Establishing Funding For The Kennedy Main Street Beautification Upgrades; **moved** by Chair Gardner; **second** by Director Critton with discussion **DISCUSSIONS:** (Legal) there were some provisions written in the CRA Plan that this item may fit into. (M. Daniels) All about beautification but struggle with moving \$50,000 for beautification without finding another way of doing this, concerned with whether the CRA can do this, inquired about the funds not being considered during the budget cycle. The beautification should go back to the town side. (Gardner) CRA can not do the maintenance because it is a town function; the CRA can do the upgrades and beautification on Mainstreet. (Critton) Like the idea of sprucing up Kennedy Boulevard. Requesting clarity on if this is a town project under the CIP; if yes, the CRA cannot touch it. (Critton) The project will take place between both ends of the Mainstreet gateway including the sidewalks. (Randolph) To Mayor, how was the \$50,000 determined, was there a quote or bid; the estimated cost was determined by Mr. Pressley. The scope is landscaping, vegetation, and repairs in the irrigation. (M. Daniels) Instead of approval up to 50, 000, can we put out an RFP asking for a quote? (Washington) the preparation work for the beautification will be done in house by public works, a landscaper will be hired to install and plant, the irrigation systems have already been checked, the RFP process will push the project to summer 2024. (Gardner) in response to Director Critton, the name can be changed to Main Street upgrade. The amount for beautification can be reduced and the maintenance by the town will be after the installation. **Chair Gardner call for the question**; **AYE: Chair Gardner, Director Critton; NAYE: Director M. Daniels, Director Randolph, Vice Mayor Daniels; MOTION FAILS**

**BOARD REPORTS:**

**Attorney Greg Jackson** – No Report

**Director M. Daniels** – Would like to have more clarity on things; inquired about applicants and resumes; in response, there is one resume and the individual stated that she would circle back around when she is ready. Requesting for the resume (Nicole will send to the entire board). Requesting clarity from attorney on resolution CRA-R-2023-23 on the beautification to ensure compliance with the CRA plan; Requested updated on the Wilder property and the property next it (Dixon property); in response by legal, the lien release has been prepared and executed, will follow up with the comptroller’s office to fully execute the release of lien. The Dixon property is being handled by Attorney Shepard. Request for Attorney Jackson to follow up and send the updates to the board.

**Director Wanda Randolph** – Requesting a copy of the full executed release of lien on the Wilder property, requested copy of the application for job applicant, concerned about hiring qualified candidates for positions, having concerns with not receiving requested information (filing complaint by Monday if information is not received), inquired about the expenses paid by Ms. Wilder (Documentation has been provided and asking for compensation) for repairs resulting from unlicensed contractors who did not do a fair job on her facility (legal will do further research).

**Director Ruthi Critton** – (Question) In the last meeting was there a for an executive director? In response, it was raised to \$65,000, what you see is what was approved.

**Vice Chair R. Daniels** – Asking the attorney for clarity on the signing of the \$71,000 check to the executive director, need some type of reassurance that the process was done correctly, asking clarity from the general attorney or a statement indicting where we stand as a board on this matter, request confirmation on the computers and inventory prior to the executive director leaving, requesting confirmation on the allegations of computers wipe out, to include findings on possible violations or tampering. (Legal) A preliminary opinion was provided and the board voted to retain special counsel in order to move forward. In innocence, both the CRA and Town attorney agreed to step down. Attorney Jackson assisted with drafting RFP believed to have been out with no interest. (Critton) After not hearing from any firms RFP, it was decided to have the auditor take a specific look, the auditor came and presented not providing any clarity other than the check was cut. The more pressing question was, did the cutting of that check violate statute? The auditor stated she did not look at whether or not that contract lined up with statute. (M. Daniels) The board voted to terminate the contract, the board did not vote to cut a \$71,000 check to the executive director; (R. Daniels) will contact Attorney Jackson to see what steps can be taken, or to receive instructions on how to send this matter to the state attorney.

**Chair Angie Gardner** – No Report

**ADJOURNMENT** Chair Gardner Motions for Adjournment of Meeting (Moved by Director M. Daniels; Second by Director Randolph; **AYE: ALL, MOTION PASSES. Meeting Adjourned at 8:39 P.M.**

**Respectfully Submitted by:**

**APPROVED**

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**Veronica L King, Town Clerk**

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**Angie Gardner, Chair**