



HISTORIC TOWN OF EATONVILLE, FLORIDA REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING

MEETING MINUTES

Tuesday, April 01, 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 meetings 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 7:33 p.m. and a quorum was established by Mrs. King.

PRESENT: (5), Mayor Angie Gardner, Vice Mayor Theo Washington, Councilman Rodney Daniels, Councilwoman Wanda Randolph, Councilman Tarus Mack

STAFF: (4) Demetrius Pressley, **Chief Administrator Officer**, Veronica King, **Town Clerk**, Clifford Shepard, **Town Attorney**, Stanley Murray, **Police Chief**,

INVOCATION AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:

Invocation through a moment of silence led by Mayor Gardner followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA: Mayor Gardner Motions to **APPROVE** the meeting agenda; **Moved by** Councilwoman Randolph; **Second by** Vice Mayor Washington; **AYE: ALL, MOTION PASSES.**

CITIZEN PARTICIPATION – (1)

Kelvan Franklin – Provided historic information about mother's original address being Route 2. Box 77B dated 1949 (a handout was given to the council); provided updates on the Chamber for Commerce as an ambassador: on April 29th, 6:30–8:30pm there will be a free professional perspective networking event (Open to the public), professional head shots are available for \$10, vending and shopping will be available with an opportunity to support local small businesses, food will be available for purchase. Councilman Daniels expressed concerns about the event being on a Tuesday and not a Saturday or weekend.

APPROVAL CONSENT AGENDA: Public Statement: Does any member of the council or the public wish to pull an item from the consent for discussion? (None); Mayor Gardner Motions to APPROVE the Consent Agenda; approving Town Council Meeting Minutes for 3-18-25, and for approval of the Service Contract for Waste Pro for Solid Waste Collection for the Town of Eatonville; **Moved by** Councilman Mack; **Second by** Councilwoman Randolph; **AYE: ALL, MOTION PASSES.**

COUNCIL DECISIONS: None.

REPORTS:

CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER: Demetrius Pressley – (Updates) thank to the team for a great job getting the solid waste completed, good for the town, for sustainability and just understanding those processes, thanks to WastePro, Ms. Dolan from Tallahassee was in attendance to support; the April Pools event is Saturday (5th) from 12:00-4:00 p.m. hosted by the recreation department along with the Alma Swim Foundation, this is a way to open up the pool; the 1887 night market and a dive in movie night at the pool will also take place on Saturday, the movie showing is the Little Mermaid while the adults and kids get a chance to swim, Mr. Washington is doing a great job, the Eatonville Vikings (football) are starting back up, they are in

the Orlando circuit for five to eight year old, current employee Mr. Dominique Taylor in his spare time will help with the Eatonville Vikings along with the recreation department; the economic development team is ensuring that businesses are coming to the town, Angels Chicken Express is opening soon, will update council with the dates for the grand opening (business flyer was provided to council); have an economic development plan for the Town of Eatonville associated with majority of the grants, preparing to work along with the chambers and other non-profit organizations, hoping the program will start with 10 to 15 new businesses in or around Eatonville, advertising to make sure that the businesses such as GCI (Town's Program Manager) and Waste Pro have a business tax receipt with Eatonville; did get an update from the county about adding additional temporary sidewalks on the west side (Lake Destiny up to Keller Road), received an update on the West Kennedy project which is going to start January 2026, the procurement process has begun and the construction company and plan should be defined by the end of this year (2025), an analysis is being done on the timeframe between adding sidewalks in the first phase that will extend to Forest City Road (being looked at and will depend on timing; had the ranking today for the CDBGDR (the stormwater park along with the upgrades for the two resiliency hubs), thanks to the team for a good job, this is a potential and additional \$15 million dollars towards stormwater preservation and resilience for the town of Eatonville; did research for the invocation during meetings, other communities are doing the invocation by way of an ecumenical call to all, can work with the clerk to put an all call out for the invocation (if council would like to move forward), there could be Muslim and Agnostic groups that participate, the churches or the faith-based community in Eatonville can be used in rotation; the water sufficiency rate study program is underway; Duke Energy have completed over 59% of the homes within Eatonville, about 580 homes serviced through the energy savings program; Councilman Daniels inquired to Mr. Pressley about doing words of encouragement from Pastor Critton as an alternative to prayer (legal will address).

ATTORNEY: Clifford Shepard – According to the Supreme Court, it is fine to pray to Jesus, as long as there is an opportunity for others to come and pray on behalf of what they believe including satanists, referenced a headline in Lake County where an individual wanted to give a satanic invocation at a Lake County meeting, there was a lawsuit over it, cannot control the message in a government setting, you have to welcome all or welcome none, words of encouragement would be fine if the person is not vested with the cloak of religion (non-religious in nature); Maitland did an ecumenical call, which led to an organization threatening to sue if they were not allowed to come (they later lost interest and stop coming), Maitland decided to do a moment of silence. There is a legal way to have an invocation with religion involved, but there is no way to control the type of religion, this is what the law allows; (CRAs) the legislature has put a big target on CRAs, the current form of bills in front of the legislature that may pass is to end all CRAs in 2045, no new projects after October of 2025, (if it is not in the budget, money is not spent based on projects in the budget, there will be no more projects, other than paying off the bond debt, nothing can be done with the money except to send it back to the county), this will be a huge impact on the town/CRA, the entire town is a CRA, what can be done: call your legislative delegation and oppose the bill (it will ruin the town and a lot of others); why is there a target on CRAs - a specific city was using the CRA money on marketing events and special events which were not brick and mortar projects, by statue they are not permitted, the city insisted that it could be done causing the legislature to act potentially messing it up for everybody, the bill that is most onerous is House Bill 991 which states that all CRAs will end by 2045, no new projects, and no new funding of new projects after October 2025, the House really wants the bill, the Senate bill only states that all CRAs will come to an end by 2045, if the Senate has something to get through the house, and the house has something to get through the Senate, they can swap (called horse trading), encouraging people to call their legislative delegation, tell them what this would do and how much the CRA means if it goes away (loss of money); gave council the opportunity to ask questions about what is appropriate for walk-on items during meetings and workshops, a written opinion was previously provided to council by email.

MAYOR'S REPORT - Mayor Angie Gardner – it was a lovely memorial gathering in honor of the former mayor Ada Sims, condolences and prayers to the bereaved families; was pleased by the turnout of the CRA

event, should the grant get approved for the housing repairs the town's people will benefit from it; had a positive press conference to announce the water sewer grant, highly professional and organized; thanks to the staff, Ms. Gragg, Mrs. King, and Mr. Pressley; the rendering of the resource facility in Catalina is forthcoming, Ms. Mundy is working with the architect to get that together, will bring before the public for feedback; Ms. Munday prepared and executed a wonderful professional presentation for the CDBG grant, the quality of the presentation is one that should result in the town being number one on the list; will continue to meet and state the town's position with the school board members, appreciate meeting with them to introduce ourselves for a more personal connection; great seeing the horses at the Stogies at Sunset event, had a great time; the Duke Energy Savings Program is helping our citizens (the little things make a difference); very pleased with the direction of the town, thanks to Mr. Presley for his leadership, thanks to the staff members, nothing can happen without total commitment, thanks to Chief for keeping the town safe; for updates on the water program and grant (Eatonville Water Program visit www.eatonvillewaterprogram.com).

TOWN COUNCIL REPORT -

Councilman Tarus Mack – Thanked everybody that came out to engage in the town's business, thanks to the staff, thanks to WastePro for coming in when they came in, thanks to Mr. President, the event (Stogies at Sunset) the town had with the CRA and with Vice Mayor Washington was a great event with no drama, confusion, nor arguments; Chief Murray and your staff are doing an impeccable job making sure the community is safe at all times, there are high talks about the police activity; looking forward to the April Pool's day, acknowledged the beautiful pool done by All Seasons Pools, for helping out the community, acknowledged the bike ride hosted by Axis Realty to take place Saturday morning (April 5th, 8:00am); the night market starts at 5:00pm; condolences to anybody that have lost someone, Charlotte Blue and the blue family and also Angie Curry; inquired to legal as to if there are any new lawsuits (no new lawsuit), the one lawsuit has been dismissed with prejudice based on the settlement; recognized the seriousness of keeping CRAs, it is going to take a collaboration of everyone sticking together and making sure that there is a push of the legislatives in Tallahassee so that they hear our voices; cannot sit back and allow things to continue to happen; Mr. Kelvan does a fantastic job for the Chamber of Commerce keeping the council/community updated on information; reference to what Councilman Daniels stated about the event date, maybe come up with a date that could suit everybody like a weekend where everybody can be involved versus on the Tuesday.

Councilwoman Wanda Randolph – In the honor of (former) Mayor Ada Sims, it was an honor to be at her funeral on Saturday, Mrs. Gloria Ware spoke highly of Mrs. Sims, appreciate the staff for everything done to commemorate Mrs. Sims (the half masked flag and the memorial display in the lobby), gathered for the vigil, on Thursday night, do think it should have been publicized with the media, other people should have been aware of it (not just Eatonville), a message was sent to the media and the media does whatever they want to do, would like to see written procedures in the future in handling officials who have passed away; there was a situation with West Street Apartment (last Wednesday), appreciate Mr. Pressley having the water restored, the water was shut off on the entire apartment complex, there were several situations concerning the master meter, inquired about an explanation as to what is being done, there are a few more commercial meters that have to be installed, once installed with the new rates, the new system, there will be an updated pricing metrics for commercial, this particular situation (apartment complex) had not paid their bill in four months (in excess of \$10,000), trying to use the metrics of the shut off to impact only the owner, found out that the previous owner installed a shut off system for the units to control those who did not pay their rent (not legal), this is being addressed, when the meter was shut off, the owner impacted over 10 to 15 of the units based on those who reported, have to put in a new process to recoup those funds and figure out another way to address and correct, when businesses are behind or low, the normal practice is to not cut them off, the owner had been refusing to respond, they responded when the master meter was shut off, they made a payment, the utility and public works are working on a method to correct it for future purpose; the water is constantly leaking, who is paying for that (staff will look into this matter); the Dukes and Boots Rodeo event (Stogies at Sunset) was nice, everything

was orderly and everyone seemed to have a good time, were there any problems with horse dropping (yes, cleaned up was done on Monday); for the attorney, can you explain how the property tax issue will affect local government, in response getting rid of the property tax will ruin us, would have to replace the property tax with the sales tax (rising possibly to 12, 15, 20%), hopeful that somebody at the legislative level will have the smarts to say no; on West Kennedy where people are walking, alligators have been spotted, police has to be informed, the alligators can be found and located, call 911 and the police will respond, can close off the area so nobody can walk in the area, that is the goal.

Councilman Rodney Daniels – (alligator sitings) suggest putting up a sign to inform the people not to walk in the areas, especially at night; inquired about an ordinance that addresses putting trash out (during and outside of the designated times), would this be a code enforcement matter; on the corner of Washington is it permissible to have a roll off and tarp, it is an eyesore, makes the front street look bad; inquired to the attorney on the dismissal of the lawsuit, (in response) with prejudice means it cannot come back, the dismissal was the result of the settlement that the council approved with UP Development; when the flags are half masked make sure all flags are half masked (at post office); expressed disappointment about businesses being able to go three and four months without payment when as resident who forgets to pay the bill the water meter is turned off, it should be the same for businesses, discussed rather there should be a late fee or a reconnect fee; acknowledged Councilwoman Randolph for coordinating the memorial and vigil for Ms. Sims, likes how she thinks and how she operates as a business person, recommended her to chair Founder's Day and Juneteenth; condolences to Charlotte Blue, Angie Curry, and Ada Sims; would like to be one of those people that walk out in the crosswalk to identify individuals who are not stopping, is it state law? (Chief Murray) They are supposed to stop when we step in, signs are needed on the west side, looking into an initiative for all crosswalks, the lines need to be redrawn because there is no indicator until you get close (not fully visible), there are small traffic barriers in the middle (made reference the lights in the streets of Melbourne FL), there are lights (Catalina Park), need funding (inquired about DOT underwriting costs).

Vice Mayor Theo Washington – condolences to all the families that lost loved one, the first female mayor (Ada Sims), was taught by her at Maitland Junior High School; welcome back the Eatonville Vikings (was a coach), previously gave some coaching shirts towards uniforms, glad to see there are two teams, do have two nephews to put into the program; thanked the Bike Cycle Club for the upcoming bike ride, will be participating; the water meters down at the apartments are a hot mess, I do not believe the water department was on duty when the guy reconfigured that apartment complex, the bill is high because of all the water that is filtering through the system on the meter, this needs to be fixed; it was a lovely event over the weekend (Stogies at Sunset), thanks to everyone that participated from staff to citizens, it is the talk of Eatonville, people love coming to Eatonville, including the night market, people from all over participated and liked the night market (Fort Valley, Georgia, Daytona, Leesburg), Eatonville is known and on the map for doing good things in in the community (the parade, Zora Fest, Founder's Day), we welcomed the people with no incidents, the people enjoyed themselves.

ADJOURNMENT Mayor Gardner Motions for Adjournment of Meeting; **Moved** by Councilwoman Randolph; **Second** by Councilman Mack; **AYE: ALL, MOTION PASSES. Meeting Adjourned at 8:28pm.**

Respectfully Submitted by:

APPROVED

Veronica L King, Town Clerk

Angie Gardner, Mayor