

RESOLUTION #2026 -37

A RESOLUTION OF THE TOWN COUNCIL OF THE TOWN OF EATONVILLE, FLORIDA, AFFIRMING THE TOWN'S COMMITMENT TO GOVERNMENT TRANSPARENCY AND EXPRESSING SUPPORT FOR THE LEGAL ACTION TAKEN TO ENFORCE THE FLORIDA SUNSHINE LAW AND PROTECT THE HISTORIC HUNGERFORD PROPERTY, PROVIDING FOR CONFLICT; FOR SEVERABILITY; AND PROVIDING AN EFFECTIVE DATE.

WHEREAS, the Town of Eatonville is the oldest incorporated Black municipality in the United States, established with a rich legacy of self-determination, culture, and historic landmarks; and serves as a vital cultural symbol of heritage and self-determination; and [\[1, 2, 3\]](#)

WHEREAS, the site of the former historic Robert Hungerford Normal and Industrial School has served as a cornerstone of the Eatonville community with historical and educational significance to its community for generations of Eatonville residents; and [\[1, 2\]](#)

WHEREAS, ensuring government entities—including the School Board of Orange County—adhere to Florida's Sunshine Law (Section 286.011, Florida Statutes) is critical for protecting the public's right to transparent decision-making and public participation in matters concerning the disposal of public land; and [\[1, 2\]](#)

WHEREAS, the Association to Preserve the Eatonville Community, Inc. (P.E.C) represented by the Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC) filed a lawsuit alleges that the Orange County Public School Board over the planned sale of the Hungerford property violated the negotiations without contemporaneous and public input Florida Sunshine Law (Chapter 286, Florida Statutes) by making decisions regarding the sale of the Hungerford property to Dr. Phillips Charities through closed-door, secret of Florida's Government in the Sunshine Law by failing to provide required public notice and open meetings in direct violation of the Florida's Government in the Sunshine Law (Chapter 286, Florida Statutes); must be granted transparency and a meaningful voice in the decision-making process concerning the disposal of town land; and [\[1, 2\]](#)

WHEREAS, the Town of Eatonville asserts that the residents and representative of this historic municipality must be granted transparency and a meaningful voice in the decision-making process concerning the disposal of town land; and

WHEREAS, the Town Council of the Town of Eatonville finds it necessary to advocate for open government, community self-determination, and the strict enforcement of the state's public meetings and public record laws to have a legal and moral right to contemporaneous access to all phases of decision-making regarding the future of the Hungerford land; and [\[1\]](#)

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE TOWN COUNCIL OF THE TOWN OF EATONVILLE, FLORIDA:

Section 1. Legislative Intent and Findings. The foregoing recitals are hereby ratified and confirmed as being true and correct and are made a part hereof.

Section 2. Support for Government Transparency. The Town of Eatonville Town Council hereby expresses its full moral and political support for the lawsuit filed by P.E.C. and the SPLC, supporting the enforcement of the Florida Sunshine Law and calling for transparency regarding the disposal of the Hungerford property and reaffirms its dedication to the principles of open government and condemns any closed-door negotiations that subvert the open meeting requirements of the Florida Sunshine Law regarding the \$14 million sale of the Robert Hungerford property to Dr. Phillips Charities. [\[1\]](#)

Section 3. Endorsement of SPLC Lawsuit. The Town of Eatonville Town Council demands that the School Board halt any efforts that bypass public input and

publicly supports the legal actions initiated by the Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC) against the School Board of Orange County to invalidate any decisions made outside of public view and to ensure transparency, engage in good faith public discourse and fully respect the statutory and constitutional rights of the Eatonville community regarding the disposition of the Hungerford property regarding the Hungerford property. [\[1\]](#)

Section 4. Demand for Accountability. The Town calls upon the Orange County School Board to ensure full transparency in its future operations and to work collaboratively with the Town of Eatonville to return the Hungerford property to community control; and all governing and regulatory bodies dealing with Eatonville's historic footprint to strictly honor the public process, include local stakeholders in all phases of deliberation, and protect the educational and historical legacy of the community. [1]

SECTION 5. CONFLICTS: All Resolution or parts of Resolutions in Conflict with any other Resolution or any of the provision of this Resolution are hereby Repealed.

SECTION 6. SEVERABILITY: If any section or portion of a section of this Resolution is found to be invalid, unlawful, or unconditional it shall not be held to invalidate or impair the validity, force or effect or any other section or part of this Resolution.

SECTION 7. EFFECTIVE DATE This Resolution shall become effective immediately upon its passage and adoption.

PASSED AND ADOPTED this 16TH day of June 2026.

ATTEST:

RUTHI CRITTON, Mayor

VERONICA KING, Town Clerk