



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

Thursday, June 4, 2026, at 6:00 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 Pickett called the meeting to order at 6:01 p.m.

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

**PRESENT:** (5) Chair Rosa Pickett, Vice Chair Ann Dawkins-Curtis, **Board Members:** Laverne Bellamy Williams, Tiffany Simmons, John Beacham (**arrived after roll call**)

**STAFF:** (4) Marissa Bellenger, **Records Coordinator**

**OTHER ATTENDEES:** (2) N.Y. Nathiri, **Association to Preserve the Eatonville Community;** Tim Parsons, **Architect**

**INVOCATION AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:** Board Member Laverne Bellamy Williams led the invocation followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

## **CITIZEN PARTICIPATION:**

Harletta Finley – On June 19<sup>th</sup>, eSTEAMed Learning and Macedonia will be hosting the Lift Every Voice showcase. It is a ticketed event and the proceeds will be going to the Thomas House project. Please contact Dr. Candace Finley for more information. The event is from 6 to 8:30p.m. It will highlight the oldest churches in Eatonville, Sanford, Winter Park, and Orlando.

## **PRESENTATIONS:**

Presentation on the Historic Preservation Movement in Eatonville, 1987-1998 – N.Y. Nathiri, Association to Preserve the Eatonville Community, began with an introduction. Ms. Nathiri – I would like to tell you all the modern story of the Eatonville preservation movement. It started with Orange County's decision to expand East Kennedy to five lanes. An official stated some communities needed to sacrifice for progress. At the time, no one knew of Zora Neale Hurston or the significance of the town. This is a story about the community coming together. Ms. Nathiri began her PowerPoint presentation by explaining the three foundational pillars of the American Historic Preservation Movement, the role of the Municipal Historic Preservation Board, and how the Eatonville Historic Preservation Board is part of an elite group of advisors. Nathiri highlighted key persons from the Town of Eatonville, Maitland, other Orange County locales, and the Florida Division of Historical Resources. Key persons from Eatonville include: Everett Fly, Frank Otey, Alvin Jackson, and Eddis Dexter. Nathiri stated that only 2% of historic places on the national registry include African American sites. Other key persons from Eatonville are Ernestine McWhite, Ella Dinkins, and Mayor Abraham Gordon. Nathiri also identified key persons in Maitland, Orange County, and the FL Historical Resources Division. Nathiri continued by encouraging Board members to participate in trainings to continue to educate themselves. She used the journey of Alvin Jackson as an example and how residents (such as herself) traveled to National Trust for Historic Preservation conferences across the country between 1992 and 1998 to raise awareness on Eatonville. The Association to Preserve the Eatonville Community held their first mass meeting on December 7, 1987. Town Council postponed their regular meeting to attend. Nathiri displayed to the

Board a political bumper sticker that opposed the widening of Kennedy Boulevard and research conducted by Everett Fly. In the summer of 1997, residents took a bus to Tallahassee because Eatonville was nominated for national significance. After that, things were done on our (the Town) behalf including sponsorship/funding for “A Walking Tour of Eatonville, Florida” brochures. Nathiri concluded by stating that Eatonville is known nationally because we had to struggle to get the recognition. There are only two people alive who know this history—myself [Nathiri] and Eddis Dexter. Board Member Beacham – How do you imagine Eatonville and P.E.C.? Nathiri – The sky is the limit. Education is the key. The marketplace is in our favor (cultural heritage tourism). Someone will make money in Eatonville, whether it is us or someone outside. Chair Pickett – What are your expectations of the Historic Preservation Board? Nathiri – Ask the CAO for pro bono expertise. You should also look at your calendar and attend trainings. The CAO should give you written protocol, if not, hire a pro bono expert. You should not be afraid of historic preservation in Eatonville.

Presentation on the Moseley House – Chair Pickett – I am president of the Zeta Educational Thespian Association and we oversee the Moseley House. I am providing an update on the rehabilitation of the house. Pickett shared the history of the house and its ties to Zora Neale Hurston. She also shared the grants received over the years and history of its restoration. The new repairs this summer include a new roof, ramp for disabled persons, floors, Plexiglas replacement (windows), dining room ceiling, and bathroom fixtures. The plans have been approved by the state and completion of the project is anticipated to be in late August or early September.

#### **APPROVAL OF MINUTES:**

Chair Pickett **MOTIONS** to **APPROVE** meeting minutes for May 7, 2026; **moved** by Vice Chair Dawkins-Curtis; **second** by Board Member Beacham; **AYE: ALL, MOTION PASSES, 5/0.**

#### **BOARD DISCUSSIONS/DECISIONS:**

Discussion with Tim Parsons on the Hungerford Archaeological Survey (via Zoom) – Tim Parsons introduced himself, his current position, and former experience as the Director of the Division of Historical Resources. Mr. Parsons began his presentation with a brief history of the Hungerford School. He continued by stating the purpose of the 2003 archaeological survey and methods used such as technological tools and oral histories. Mr. Parsons then went over the results of the survey. Site 80R5884 (Hungerford School 1) yielded 236 artifacts and was recommended for eligibility on the National Register of Historic Places. Site 80R5886 (Hungerford School 2) yielded 38 artifacts and was also recommended for eligibility. The site has been redeveloped since the 2003 survey. Mr. Parsons recommended avoiding impacting the sites identified and suggested additional archaeological fieldwork. Board Member Beacham – What does this survey mean to the average citizen? Mr. Parsons – Although not included in the boundary, it is still historically significant. There is likely remaining archaeology. It is part of the legacy of the Town. Board Member Beacham – Does it impact land value or property rights? Mr. Parsons – It depends. Historic registration does not protect a site from development. However, a municipality can impose restrictions or guidelines for historic properties.

#### **STAFF COMMENTS:**

Marissa Bellenger, Records Coordinator (Clerk Office) – None.

Valerie Mundy, Public Works Director – Ms. Mundy discussed FEMA support provided to the Town. FEMA shared funding opportunities related to the American 250<sup>th</sup> year celebration. One grant, “Save America’s Treasures” could apply to preservation of Thomas or Moseley House. Ms. Bellenger pulled up the Historifi Eatonville website for the Board to look at. N.Y. Nathiri (called on by Chair Pickett) explained the Historifi virtual reality tour. Board Member Simmons – I took the tour and it was mostly main street. It was a mix of history and modern technology.

Ms. Nathiri – It draws people to the Town. Chair Pickett asked if Ms. Mundy had any recommendations. Ms. Mundy stated that she would just like to assist the Board. Ms. Nathiri recommended applying for the collections grants and working with P.E.C. and community residents. Chair Pickett inquired about a grant for the Thomas House. Ms. Mundy stated that there is a process with private properties. Ms. Bellenger stated that she will have to speak with the Town Planner.

**Chair Pickett MOTIONS to Recommend Moving Forward with Exploring Grant Opportunities; moved by Board Member Beacham, second by Vice Chair Dawkins-Curtis. AYE: ALL, MOTION PASSES 5/0.**

**BOARD COMMENTS:**

**Board Member Beacham MOTIONS to RECOMMEND a Historic Boundary Expansion for the Entire Town. Comments: N.Y. Nathiri** – The boundary should be based on the research by Everett Fly and include the corporate town limits. **Board Member Beacham AMENDS his MOTION to RECOMMEND Exploring the Possibility of a Historic Boundary Expansion with the Corporate Town Limits; moved by Board Member Beacham, second by Board Member Williams. AYE: ALL, MOTION PASSES 5/0.**

**Board Member John Beacham** – Thank you Mayor Critton and Council members for coming out tonight.

**Chair Rosa Pickett** – Thank you all for being here.

**Board Member Tiffany Simmons** – For the record, I am related to the Thomas House, just in case there is a conflict of interest with the grant.

**ADJOURNMENT** Chair Pickett **adjourned the meeting at 7:49pm.**

**Respectfully Submitted by: Marissa Bellenger**

**ATTEST**

Signed by:

*Veronica King*

72FBDE7143BF4AC...

**Veronica King, Town Clerk**