



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

Thursday, September 11, 2025, at 1:00 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.*

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**CALL TO ORDER:** Chair Rosa Pickett called the meeting to order at 1:00 p.m.

**ROLL CALL:** Quorum was established by roll call through Ms. Bellenger (Clerk's Office).

**PRESENT:** (4) Chair Rosa Pickett, Vice Chair LaDwyana Jordan, **Board Members:** Jane Turner, Laverne Bellamy Williams; **Alternate:** John Beacham (arrived after roll call) (**Absent:** Ann Dawkins-Curtis)

**STAFF:** (2) Brianna Ross, **Planning Coordinator;** Marissa Bellenger, **Records Coordinator**

**INVOCATION AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:** Chair Rosa Pickett led the invocation with a moment of silence in remembrance of 9/11, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

## **CITIZEN PARTICIPATION:**

N.Y. Nathiri (and Christopher Bendall) – Introduced J. Christopher Bendall, the new community archivist funded by a grant from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation. The foundation is the one of preeminent humanities organizations, received this grant for an archivist which is important. Bendall is a native Floridian and graduate of the University of Central Florida, worked in New York for various organizations. Bendall – excited and honored to share his education and abilities with P.E.C. and the community, is a resource for the organization (P.E.C.) and everyone in Eatonville. We have had contact with individuals within the community who have historical documents they would like to preserve, we would like to offer services to them through my employment with P.E.C., here to work with their records and preserve them for long-term care and use by members of the community, have taken a few months to learn more about P.E.C. and the community and hope for a continual opportunity. Board member Turner ask Bendall if he represents P.E.C. more so than the town of Eatonville even though information will be gathered from the town? Bendall – here to assist with P.E.C.'s records, can help in any way with the town and community members that have questions. Bendall confirms representing P.E.C. and not the town. Nathiri – The grant that supports his employment comes to P.E.C., as a community archivist he will be engaging with residents. In order to get this grant, we have to prove 30 years plus of records with P.E.C. to justify his employment. Vice Chair Jordan – inquired about availability to members of the town, they have a lot of records. Nathiri – Yes, his title is community archivist Board Member Turner – know about the organization that represents the town, but is not the town, any kind of archived information will belong to P.E.C. and it will be up to them whether or not they will share it (archived information) with us. Nathiri – This is more than P.E.C. and the town, this is not proprietary, want to make sure that the information is available to persons interested in it. Bendall – will be working with P.E.C. records, will become available to those wanting to learn more about the Zora Festival from 1998, for example, currently the records are in storage boxes and not easily accessible, but here to make them accessible (through digitization). Board Member Turner – Even though the festival takes place here in the town, it was my

understanding that the organization brought in people to make sure they understood the significance of the town, however the archiving will be more meaningful toward the history of P.E.C. Bendall – Yes, as far as my actions with the community, I am not looking to take possession of their items, want to help preserve them and make recommendations. Vice Chair Jordan – If you are looking to preserve records from a community member or family, is that information then going to be turned over to P.E.C.? Bendall – They are more than welcome to keep their records. If they would like to share them with other members of the community, we would help facilitate that, but do not want possession, unless they are looking for a repository to store them, may be able to accept them depending on our capacity. Nathiri – We have a working relationship with the Orange County Regional History Center, we (P.E.C.) do not have the physical capacity to keep the materials ourselves, they will be housing those materials until we build a new campus, Mr. Bendall is actively archiving. **(Board member John Beacham arrives)** Board Member Beacham – UCF did a history harvest at Hannibal Square and with Hungerford High School. UCF has a large archive as well, maybe communicate and partner with. Bendall – I have reached out to local colleges and universities and the Weeksville Heritage Museum stating that we might have records they are interested in, can see how we can collaborate? Chair Pickett – In terms of this board, was this to let us know what is going on or do you envision a partnership? Nathiri – Both. This is part of the introduction of Mr. Bendall. We worked with the town during Founders' Day. Board Member Beacham mentioned Dr. French who is the chair of the academics committee. There is no institution in East Orange County that we do not have a relationship with. Chair Pickett – I encourage you to keep us updated on the progress. Nathiri – I will ask Mr. Bendall to attend every meeting of the Historic Preservation with me. Next Spring, Florida will have a grant opportunity, have to start looking now. Chair Pickett – Thank you, it is important for us, especially the grant, there is a need for the community to know what the Historic Preservation Board is doing, and also making sure we are aware of community happenings.

#### **APPROVAL OF MINUTES: *(Board was given an opportunity to review the minutes before voting.)***

**Discussion/Comments:** Board Member Turner – One of the things that we discussed in the August meeting was a grant that was received by the town for the historic survey and other activities related to historic preservation. At the time, Mr. Pressley stated that he gave us excerpts regarding where the funds were dispersed. However, I asked in that meeting that he provide the whole grant so that we could take a look at it, we are not getting information on what is happening in the town. Chair Pickett – need to know if there is anything incorrect in the minutes. Board Member Turner – We did not have a copy. Chair Pickett – But he promised to send it after the meeting. Board Member Turner – No, he handed out a copy showing where the money had been dispersed, and he stated that the whole grant is a separate document. I requested documentation and Mr. Pressley stated he would get with the clerk for a copy. Chair Pickett – We will get an update, you can ask your question then, but are there any corrections for the minutes? Turner – Yes, he did not provide the copy of the grant. Chair Pickett – It is correct that he (Mr. Pressley) stated he would provide the copy. Are there any errors in the minutes as presented?

Chair Rosa Pickett **MOTIONS** to **APPROVE** meeting minutes for August 14, 2025; **moved** by Vice Chair Jordan; **second** by Board Member Williams; **AYE:** Chair Rosa Picketts, Vice Chair LaDwyana Jordan, Board Member Laverne Bellamy Williams, Board Member John Beacham. **NAY:** Board Member Turner. **MOTION PASSES (4/1).**

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

Discussions and Status Update For The HPB – Chair Pickett – Before we start with the status update, let us go back to Board Member Turner's question. Ms. Bellenger – We can address that during the staff comments, but Mr. Pressley will not be attending the meeting today. I can relay your comment to him and the clerk. Chair Pickett – Do you see what she is talking about? Ms. Bellenger – Yes, not that the minutes were incorrectly noted, but the action Mr. Pressley said he would do, he did not fulfill. Chair Pickett – that is the concern, and we request that he follow through before our next meeting. **Chair Pickett continues with the status update.** Ms. Ross – Provided updates on the historic survey with the Community Planning Collaboration (CPC) in

partnership with the National Trust of Historic Places, there are documents provided. There will be four phases of this study, we are currently in the first phase. The first phase will have community planning workshops and listening workshops that will be facilitated by the CPC. The first one will be on October 7th in-person and virtually on October 9th. These meetings will last an hour to an hour and a half. There will be a Q&A section. The purpose of these meetings is to gather public input and inform the residents about the project. It will also provide deliverables like flyers and large scale visual aids, specifically maps and photographs. That will be the original and main focus on the study (referred to the map in the presentation), it was stated that the Town Planner believes it is important to note that typically historical surveys do not need community input, so it is encouraged that the Historic Preservation Board and residents come to these meetings, there will also be town council meetings on October 9th at 6:30 and both the Historic Preservation Board and Planning and Zoning meeting on October 16<sup>th</sup>, providing more details, CPC will be there to provide more details on the survey, specifically the project's purpose, methods, and justification for the project area. They will also go into more detail about the master site files that will be completed during the survey. The first phase will include community engagement, public meetings, and meetings with necessary boards and the Town Council. They will gather archival materials and review the boundary areas and maps, and will also collaborate with the Florida Division of Historical Resources. Phase 2 is anticipated to begin in October and will focus on the original historic district to include on-site field work within the area east of I-4, will also begin creating the Florida master site files and update the previously recorded structures, they are anticipating about 172 new Florida master site files to include buildings up to 1980. Phase 3 will begin in November, and will draft up certain reports along with a draft of the National Register of Historic Places progress report. Phase four will begin January 2026 and will finalize the master site forms and reports, will provide public meetings to inform everyone on the results. This is a preliminary schedule, the timeline could change, will inform you of changes as the person of contact for the study, will be the junior project manager on this study because of background and experience. Board Member Beacham – If we wanted to enlarge the historical layout, when does that process take place and how is it done? Ms. Ross – That would be a question for CPC to answer in more detail. I could give them that information and make sure they address it in the next meeting. Board Member Jordan – I thought that we expressed an interest in making the entire community a historic district. Chair Pickett – But our concern initially was the survey was determining if this is truly an entire historic district, if all of what you are looking at is currently there, it is not meeting the goal that the Historic Preservation Board. We want to know the true historic district and combine it within an ordinance. Board Member Beacham – Asked the question, how do we expand that territory? Chair Pickett – We start off with a survey determining what that area is. Board Member Beacham – Although the Hungerford Property is not under jurisdiction, if it is inside the historical boundary, when they decide to develop the land, it would have to come to the Historic Preservation Board. N.Y. Nathiri – The corporate town limits of Eatonville is what needs to be surveyed. Board Member Turner – The grant states Mr. Fly is engaged in doing a survey for us. Chair Pickett – According to the August meeting minutes, Mr. Everett Fly is doing the consulting with existing ordinances and will identify policy gaps. Board Member Turner – Who is doing the survey? (Ennis Davis), is he part of the grant with Mr. Fly. (Board members confirm), no one has come before us from this organization to give us an outline of what their guidelines will be, we will eventually have to vote on this, if we do not have direct connection with these people that are conducting these things, they are doing it independently from us (the board). Chair Pickett – We had requested with Mr. McGee to be part of the process as it goes along, have concerns that need to be taken to Mr. Pressley. Vice Chair Jordan – Who do we need to speak to get the conductors of this survey to come to this board since Mr. Pressley is leaving? Ross – CPC will be in attendance at the next meeting. Vice Chair Jordan asks if community meetings will come first then CPC will inform the board. Ross – They (CPC) will be informing the board of the results from community meetings, if there are specific concerns before these meetings, I can relay that information to them. Vice Chair Jordan – Ask them if they could speak with us prior to the community meetings, we could have a special meeting, we have our own input as members of the board regarding the layout and what they are going to survey, this is where the collaboration begins. Chair Pickett – Who are you taking this request to? Ms. Ross – To CPC. Vice Chair Jordan – We need to talk to Tara (Salmieri).



And I have another question of concern. Who are the CPC? Ms. Ross – It is Ennis Davis and his partners. Vice Chair Jordan – we need to speak with him (Ennis Davis) and Ms. Tara, will she be available at that meeting? Ms. Ross – Depending on the meeting and whether her availability is needed, yes. Board Member Beacham – How do we participate in the master plan? Ms. Ross – I do not want to make a comment on the master planning, but I will pass on your concern to the Town Planner. Chair Pickett – Is Ennis contracted with the town? Ms. Ross – they received the money from the National Historic Trust. Chair Pickett – our discussion needs to be with Tara. Ms. Ross – I can let her know that you all would like to speak with her at the next meeting. Nathiri – You are an effective board in the way that you conduct business, if the contract has been negotiated by the National Trust–whoever has the money needs to know this board's concerns, we need to make certain that the work being done is going to be put to use, it seems that the board is not clear, there needs to be a special meeting, the people doing the work need to come before you all (the board), we cannot have all this stuff going on and the board is the afterthought. Chair Pickett – without violating any laws, we are willing to talk with whomever to clarify things. Ms. Ross – maybe Tuesday by close of business, I should have some answers to your concerns. Chair Pickett – we wanted to make sure that we are communicating with the community so they would know what was going on.

#### **BOARD MEMBER/STAFF COMMENTS:**

Board Member Turner: Do not believe that we have been administratively welcome as a part of the team, seems at times that we get overlooked, if we are just taking up space and not given the appropriate respect and information that we need, this is not for me; in the United States, all the funds are being snatched, DePugh is getting ready to closed because of Medicaid cuts, we have to get some organization and we've got to get some recognition; the mayor has not taken it upon herself to sign the letter welcoming me to the board, we have not had any input or interest from any of the council members, they have not shown up, been ignored about grants, not acceptable, if we are a part of this team, we need to be informed and recognized by the administration; Mr. Fly need to come before the board, finances comes into this town and lots of things happen because of this board and we cannot be ignored, the town of Eatonville has never taken a lead as a historic board. It has always been relegated and delegated to someone else.

Board Member Beachum: the purple zone is probably stated as the (board's) governance of that area (referring to Map of Surveying Area), the Hungerford property and other locations does not pertain to us (the board), without the proper ordinance to expand the outreach of us (the board's governance), even if it was a building project, like say the Hungerford property, it is not in historical zone at this time and would not have to go before us, unless we put the effort together to put the whole town in a historical zone; if there is bylaws (Ordinance) governing the board, then we should probably expand on that too; have not received the board notebook, Mr. McGee made the approvals because it did not have to go before us (the board), being out of the district (historic). Board Member Turner: communication is important, especially in this day and age, our history is under assault and can be wiped away, we have better take note of where we are and get ourselves together as a team to make sure that we are sustainable, Eatonville is one of the most important jewels that the country has; Board Member Beachum: inquired about today's concerns being communicated, minutes and the recording will be provided to the clerk, Chair Pickett will reach out to the clerk as well. Ms. Bellenger: asked for clarity what the requests, for the board to receive the full grant package, a presentation from administration, and to ensure that CBC and Tara meet with the board before the public. Board Member Turner: Mr. McGee mentioned about having the attorney come so that we could review the ordinance, they need to be updated Chair Pickett: the attorney did come, the state stated that the historic preservation board ordinance is a strong one, it was the consensus was not to do anything with it at this time; requested that Mr. Beachum receives his board packet (notebook), the assignment was to read it (ordinance), copies of ordinances from other small towns was provided for comparison. Board Member Turner: gave the administrative secretary (town clerk) information to be reproduced and returned back to me. Ms. Bellenger: received information a few weeks ago, will be in charge of the HPB now, will have your documents will scan them to make sure they are available digitally, will return the documents;

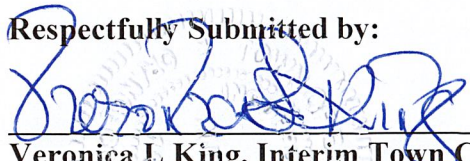
Ms. Bellenger (Clerk's Office): made announcement about the next master planning meeting scheduled for September 17th at 5:30 at Macedonia, the same location as the previous meeting, Chair Pickett reiterated that the board is encouraged to attend to see what is happening, had a presentation on the master plan a while ago; inquired to Ms. Ross as to if she is the staff contact (yes)

Brianna Ross (Planning Coordinator): inquired about the preferred communication from staff that would make the board feel more comfortable in terms of communication, for the grant, would you like information during the researching of grants or before submitting application of a grant; Board Member Turner: yes it is imperative, had discussed collaboration in identifying what we need to focus on as a board and as an administration. Board Member Beachum: also request communication on any demolitions that is happening, we (the board) would like to know. Chair Pickett: there may be buildings that we have a concern about or we need to get further information about not only buildings above ground, but what is going on underground. Brianna Ross: Ms. Golden's home that will be newly constructed will go through demo before it is rebuilt. Board Member Turner: mentioned about the old graveyard (west street), there has been a proposal that to build homes on the plot of land (Believed to be the CRA), request for more information on. Bendall: cemeteries as community archives is part of my specialty and part of my graduate research, happy to provide additional input at any point if help is desired, did extensive research on saving particularly black and African American communities, cemeteries, particularly in the south, they are unfortunately being erased, took a self-walking tour of Eatonville and noticed the sign that speaks to the original cemetery, visited the other one on Wymore, do feel a connection to that and would like to offer my services. Chair Pickett: spoke to lots of emails the board is receiving, encouraged everyone to look through/read them, emails are from Tyler Smith from the State, received something from Everett Fly, Board Member Turner did not receive anything from Fly (Everett), Ms. Bellenger confirmed that the email was a forward by the town clerk from an email from NY Nathiri, if you are not sure whether it (information) is of interest to us (the board) or not, send it to us,

**Handouts:** Enriching Eatonville's History Flyer, Board Packages, Proposal for Consulting Services: Town of Eatonville Historic Resources Survey, Master Planning Meeting Flyer

**ADJOURNMENT** Board Member Turner **Motions/Moves** for Adjournment of Meeting; **Second** by Board Member Beachum; **AYE: ALL, MOTION PASSES. Meeting Adjourned at approximately ~~1:07~~ 2:09 pm.**

**Respectfully Submitted by:**



**Veronica L King, Interim Town Clerk**