



HISTORIC TOWN OF EATONVILLE, FLORIDA REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING

MEETING MINUTES

Tuesday, February 17, 2026, 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 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 AND VERIFICATION OF QUORUM:

Mayor Gardner called the meeting to order at 7:34 p.m. and a quorum was established by Ms. Bellenger.

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

STAFF: (8) Marlin Daniels, **Chief Administrator Officer;** Marissa Bellenger, **Records Coordinator;** Cliff Shephard, **Town Attorney;** Valerie Mundy, **Public Works Director;** Tara Salmieri, **Town Planner;** Katrina Gibson, **Finance Director;** Mofoluso Murnane, **Consultant;** Chief Stanley Murray, **EPD**

INVOCATION AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:

Mayor Gardner introduces a moment of silence in remembrance of civil rights activist and politician, Reverend Jesse Jackson. The invocation was 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.

CITIZEN PARTICIPATION – (5)

Michelle Fort – Ms. Fort discussed an issue with the Community Redevelopment Agency's procurement policy. When concerning the HUD grants, the project was already specified, but they now want to do something else. She states that projects with DEI language can be halted by President Trump and the Town should not be relying on grants. She suggests that the Council table Resolution 2026-9. In regard to the Tourism Master Plan, Ms. Fort refers to the City of Winter Park and Mount Dora, who do not have a Tourism Master Plan but rather a Comprehensive Plan. Ms. Fort was in attendance at the CRA Board meetings when the tourism plan was presented, and the Board did not approve. The Town has an opportunity to thrive, and by stating that the Town needs a policy does not make sense because the TDT website does not recommend a policy.

Joyce Irby – Ms. Irby began by asking if the town is Eatonville or "Cheatonville." Ms. Irby stated that the Council is walking a fine line by treating the CRA Executive Director's recommendations as the word of God while he uses unvetted information. Ms. Irby examples Club Eaton, HostDime, and the skimming of grants. She asks that Council members not be puppets and instead do what is right for the people.

Ryan Novak – Mr. Novak commented on the HUD grant and the absence of an agreement between the Town and the CRA. He asked if there is a purchase price or plan for 308 E. Kennedy Blvd, which one of the HUD grants is designated for.

Candace Finley – Dr. Finley announced that eSTEAMed Learning will be hosting an event on Saturday called “Routes to Roots,” a historic bike and walking tour. Eatonville residents will receive free admission. eSTEAMed Learning will also be offering a Spring Break camp March 16-20th called the “eSTEAMed Culture Experience.” The camp is free but space is limited.

Angela Johnson – Ms. Johnson made comments on the CRA HUD sub-recipient grant. She asked the Council how they consider something without all the documents. Ms. Johnson also references unclear language in the document. She asked the Council if they had submitted a request to change the grant project? She stated that the Council would be transferring the money from the Town to the CRA without an interlocal agreement. Ms. Johnson also asked for the status of the line of credit from Seacoast Bank. Ms. Johnson recommended that Resolution 2026-9 be denied.

PUBLIC HEARING:

Approval of **First Reading** of Ordinance 2026-1 Amending Subpart B, “Land Development Code,” Chapter 64, “Zoning,” Article III “Zoning District Regulations,” Chapter 65 “Use Regulations,” Section 65-1 to Permit Duplexes in R-2 Single Family Residential Zoning Districts (**Councilman Mack**) – Ms. Bellenger reads the Preamble. **Mayor Gardner opens the item for public discussion.** Michelle Fort – Was there new evidence presented to bring back the ordinance? By moving this forward, the Town will be losing money because the impact fees are still being worked on. The ordinance needs to be tabled until they are complete. Ms. Fort stated that the Council needs to focus on business. Ryan Novak – Mr. Novak stated that he is speaking against the ordinance. He asked the Council who stands to gain from the ordinance. How do duplexes solve home ownership? Mr. Novak stated that duplexes are rentals and do not solve home ownership issues. In addition, no new information has been provided. The Planning and Zoning Board’s only statement was that they recommend the ordinance. Residents and the Council should be asking themselves: who profits? The lot size benefits very few people. Mr. Novak stated that the Town cannot build both a tourist identity and residential commercial development. He ends by stating ordinances should serve everyone, not just a few people. Joyce Irby stated that she is bothered that one person can come up with a concern, and Council will respond by breaking down. Ms. Irby referenced the “Cheatonville” article from the early 2000s. She ends her comment by stating that there is an undue influence that has nothing to do with the Town. **Mayor Gardner closes public comments.** Mayor Gardner (to the Town Planner) – Is there any new information? Salmieri – No.

Mayor Gardner calls for a motion; moved by Councilman Mack, **second** by Councilwoman Randolph. **Questions/comments:** Mayor Gardner states the ordinance will not be for the betterment of the community. She references comments made by residents during the public hearing. Councilwoman Randolph asks where administration is on the impact fees? Mr. Daniels – We are still working on it. He stated that he cannot provide a timeline. Councilwoman Randolph – It has been over a year, what is taking so long? Mr. Daniels explained that one is finished, but they are still waiting on wastewater and stormwater impact fees. Attorney Shepard clarified that impact fees will not impact new development or expansion. It will impact new development with water infrastructure. He comments on a moratorium blocked by a state bill. He also stated that it will take 90 days to implement impact fees and urges the importance of beginning work on it now.

Mayor Gardner restates the question; AYE: Councilman Mack, Councilwoman Jordan. **NAY:** Councilwoman Randolph, Vice Mayor Washington, Mayor Gardner. **MOTION FAILS, 2/3.** **Questions/comments:** Mr. Daniels requests next steps from Attorney Shepard. Councilman Mack – It is not unlawful and I can bring it up as many times as I want. Attorney Shepard confirms that Councilman Mack is

correct and the Council does not have a procedural rule. If it is brought back again or added to the agenda again, it would be listed as first reading. If there were changes to be suggested between the first and second hearing, for example, the Council liked the ordinance but wanted to change something, it can be done as long as it does not change the intent of the ordinance. Even if you make changes between the first and second reading, it does still require two readings. Councilwoman Randolph – If this comes back, what would be the time frame to get impact fees in place? Attorney Shepard – We were told that the Florida Rural Water Association had done a rate study. We were also told that the rate study would then be rolled into the impact fee study, which I do not know the status of except that it is not complete. I learned that this evening. If we were here on first reading, which is the only thing it could be, to adopt an impact fee, it would have to come back for a second reading. Mayor Gardner asks about the one year wait for the impact fees. Mr. Daniels stated that he will follow up with the Florida Rural Water Association tomorrow. Mrs. Gibson – The fees are halfway finished. The association was missing a couple of things from us that they needed. Mayor Gardner asks about the procedure for failed legislation. Attorney Shepard – Somebody would have to draft rules and it could be on just this one thing or it could be a series. Councilwoman Randolph – Would it be fair to allow the builder to not continue construction? Attorney Shepard stated that he cannot answer about fairness and explained why. Councilwoman Randolph – Can I relinquish my vote since I believe it is not fair? Attorney Shepard – You can make a motion to reconsider the vote. He explains that duplexes are not permitted by the Town's code. He explained that the ordinance is about new duplex development. Mr. Daniels stated a recent example of a builder asking to construct a duplex and they were told that it is not permitted by the code because it is non-conforming. Attorney Shepard – This is not a situation where someone is being held up trying to get a permit. The reason they cannot get a permit is because it is not legal. It only becomes legal if you move this ordinance on. Councilman Mack addresses a concern brought up by a resident that the ordinance will only benefit one person. Ms. Salmieri offers some clarity and explanation. There was a complete analysis done on duplexes. She stated that when she first brought this to the Council, there were 29 duplexes in the Town. The ordinance deals with new developments. The Council can revise the Town's permitted use table to include duplexes "not later than 1999," and include the 29. She stated that there are three options Council can choose from: (1) change the non-conforming, (2) allow duplexes in residential zoning, or (3) revise the permitted use table. Councilman Mack addresses comments regarding home ownership. Councilwoman Randolph stated that the ordinance is very complicated and hard to understand (navigate). **Councilwoman Randolph MOTIONS to RECONSIDER** the vote. Discussion continues with a question from Mayor Gardner directed to Ms. Salmieri regarding refinancing or repairing duplexes. Ms. Salmieri – If it is non-conforming, it potentially has an issue for refinancing. Mayor Gardner – If something happens to current duplexes, they would be able to rebuild or renovate. Mayor Gardner also states that she does not like that duplexes can be allowed anywhere in residential zoning. Ms. Salmieri – That is not in the ordinance, so you would have to amend a motion to add that. Mayor Gardner stated that she is okay with the modification and not allowing new duplex builds. Attorney Shepard – Ms. Salmieri can redraft the ordinance with that goal. He explained how new construction should have impact fees. Councilwoman Jordan asked about the vote the Council just made. Attorney Shepard – If the consensus is you want a new ordinance along with what we just discussed then you could have a motion to reconsider, but if it gets passed, there is nothing for her to do, and we are done. Mayor Gardner (to Councilwoman Randolph) – Are you wanting to rescind your motion on an ordinance that is going to allow complete rebuild and new builds? Or were you interested in the modifications and allowing those that already exist? Councilwoman Randolph asks what they just voted on? Attorney Shepard – If you wanted to allow new constructions, that is what is on the table.

Mayor Gardner restates the question; moved by Councilwoman Randolph, **second** by Councilman Mack.

Questions/comments: Mr. Daniels – If you all are rescinding, you are going back to the original ordinance presented tonight. **Mayor Gardner resumes the motion. AYE:** Councilwoman Randolph, Councilman Mack, Councilwoman Jordan. **NAY:** Vice Mayor Washington, Mayor Gardner. **MOTION PASSES, 3/2.**

Mayor Gardner calls for motion to APPROVE Ordinance 2026-1; moved by Councilman Mack. **MOTION FAILS FOR LACK OF SECOND.**

APPROVAL OF CONSENT AGENDA:

Mayor Gardner MOTIONS to APPROVE the Consent Agenda; moved by Vice Mayor Washington, **second** by Councilman Mack. **AYE: ALL, MOTION PASSES.**

COUNCIL DECISIONS:

Approval of Resolution 2026-9 Naming the Town of Eatonville CRA as the Sub-Recipient for both HUD Grants (Councilman Mack) – Councilman Mack – This is something that I brought up and I had some time to think about it and have considered what the citizens have recommended. I would like to remove this item. **Mayor Gardner calls for motion; [COUNCIL DID NOT MOVE/SECOND] AYE: None, NAY: Councilman Mack, Councilwoman Randolph, Councilwoman Jordan, Vice Mayor Washington, Mayor Gardner. MOTION FAILS, 0/5. (Time: 2:20:04) Comments: Recommending a revote due to no move and second.**

Approval of Resolution 2026-1 Adopting a Tourism Master Plan (Vice Mayor Washington) – Mayor Gardner calls for motion; moved by Councilman Mack, **second** by Councilwoman Randolph. **Questions/comments: Councilman Mack –** I know we had a discussion about this resolution during the workshop. I know the significance of the master plan in terms of TDT funding. I know we said we would do a study and I would like to consider what the CAO recommended. I believe we should table this item. **Councilman Mack rescinds his move; Councilwoman Randolph rescinds her second. Mayor Gardner MOTIONS to TABLE; moved** by Vice Mayor Washington, **second** by Councilman Mack. **AYE: ALL, MOTION PASSES.**

REPORTS:

Chief Administrative Officer - Marlin Daniels – Mr. Daniels began by discussing the importance of collecting business tax from events. In addition, he would like the Town to look into obtaining their own solid waste truck. For the next Council meeting, he will be bringing up a policy requiring a Town employee to be present for events. For mid-term evaluations, all directors will be conducting reviews of their employees. He also emphasized implementation of timelines for events (90 to 120 days prior). Mr. Daniels has been in discussion with the Town Planner in regard to updating the code. The audit is also in progress and will be finished by the end of March or first week of April. This means that the budget work will begin sooner.

Town Attorney - Cliff Shepard – The next five years of development on the Hungerford property will be very important to the Town's survival. Attorney Shepard emphasized how property tax reform will impact the property and the Town. He urges the council to not forget to focus on the property's development.

MAYOR'S REPORT - Mayor Angie Gardner – Keep Mrs. King and Alice Grant's family in your prayers.

TOWN COUNCIL REPORT/DISCUSSION ITEMS -

Vice Mayor Theo Washington – The Vice Mayor repeats "I am Somebody" in remembrance of the passing of Reverend Jesse Jackson. He commented on Mrs. King's eulogy for her son at his funeral this past weekend, stating that she did a wonderful job. He ends his report by urging everyone to be safe and not take things for granted. The Vice Mayor also spoke about the life of Alice Grant, her community work, and the impact she made on his son.

Councilwoman Wanda Randolph – The Councilwoman began by sending prayers to Mrs. King, her son, and the Jackson family. She continues by stating that it is very important to cut unnecessary spending. The Councilwoman asked about the status of a recent developer consultant contract. Attorney Shepard responded by stating that he reviewed the contract and sent a memo. He suggested that the Mayor or Mr. Daniels meet with the developer regarding the language of the contract because he has concerns. Mr. Daniels – With the Council’s permission, I would love to get on the phone with the consultant (Lawrence) and Attorney Shepard. Mayor Gardner concurs. Councilman Mack stated that he would like to see the email exchange between the developer and administration. Councilwoman Randolph continues her report by asking what the upcoming meeting with Dr. Phillips is about? Mr. Daniels – Their planner will be meeting with ours. No decisions will be made. They are just conducting studies. Councilwoman Randolph – Why can we not wait for the consultant before continuing meetings? Mr. Daniels – This is just gathering data and there is a 180-day deadline.

Councilwoman LaDwyana Jordan – The Councilwoman sends her prayers to Mrs. King and Reverend Jesse Jackson’s family. She thanks everyone for coming out and wishes them a great night.

Councilman Tarus Mack – Councilman Mack starts by thanking everyone for coming out to tonight’s meeting. He sends his condolences to Alice Grant and Scoot Banks. He also comments on Mrs. King’s eulogy at her son’s funeral. Councilman Mack also speaks on the impact of Reverend Jesse Jackson. He is looking forward to Drovile this upcoming weekend. The Councilman speaks on the importance of impact fees and moving it forward. He also addresses debris in the community and places accountability onto Public Works. Mr. Daniels stated that Orange County has been contacted in regard to the trash at Zaxby’s. Councilman Mack continues by asking for the status of the reimbursements for water rates. In addition, he supports the possibility of the Town doing their own solid waste management service. The Councilman asks if there are any open positions or Board positions? If so, he would like the Clerk to make an announcement every Council meeting. He also stresses the importance of the Hungerford property and stated that the Town is in a critical time. In regard to the upcoming election, the Councilman stated that after March 7th the Council could look very different. He ends his report by asking the attorney if there are any pending lawsuits? Attorney Shepard responded no.

ADJOURNMENT Mayor Gardner Motions for Adjournment of Meeting; **moved** by Councilman Mack; **second** by Councilwoman Randolph; **AYE: ALL, MOTION PASSES. Meeting Adjourned at 9:16pm.**

HANDOUTS: Tourism Master Plan Feasibility Study, HUB Sub-recipient Executive Summary, HUD Compliance Matrix

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Respectfully Submitted by:

Veronica King

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Veronica L King, Town Clerk

APPROVED

Signed by:

Angie Gardner

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Angie Gardner, Mayor