

# EATONVILLE-UNC HISTORIC PRESERVATION PROSPECTUS

Marilyn Davis-Sconions, Town Council

Angela Thomas, Town Council

Maye St. Julien, Chair, Historic Preservation Board

Eddis Dexter

Michael French

Eatonville and has its own unique history and authentic legacy as an incorporated self-government and independent enterprise. For more than one hundred and twenty five years Eatonville's citizens have contributed to streams of African American custom, ritual and tradition. More importantly, Eatonville allowed all who lived within her boundaries to claim their civil rights: right to vote, right to hold public office, right to buy, hold and own land; right to move and assemble in public places; and the right to choose one's profession.

In the case of Eatonville, recent research has revealed authentic documentation to explain the source and significance of the town's plan and physical landscape. The original platted lots were intentionally sized (44' x 100') to be affordable and large enough to hold a small dwelling and some subsistence agriculture. The first principal of the Robert Hungerford Normal and Industrial School, Russell C. Calhoun and his wife, Mary, attended Tuskegee Institute in Alabama, and patterned Hungerford courses and content after their alma mater. The Calhouns used their own vegetable garden as a demonstration model for residents.

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## Request for Assistance

The Town of Eatonville requests assistance with the following initiatives:

### 1. Town Founders and Community Genealogy

Eatonville was chartered in 1887, using the signatures of twenty seven registered Black male voters. The town has the names of all of these incorporators. Many of these pioneers remained in the town and played major roles in its evolution and very difficult struggle for survival. Some descendants of the original incorporators still reside in Eatonville. Oral history, church records, veterans records, and detailed census research will play an important role in this phase of the project. The town needs in depth genealogical research on all of the incorporators in order to reconstruct its human and physical history and prepare programs and exhibits for education and cultural tourism. The results of this research will be also used to provide content for the town website and interpretation of physical resources that may be considered for historic landmark designation.

### 2. Cemetery research, documentation and interpretation

Numerous early residents and descendants of the town incorporators are buried in the Eatonville cemeteries. The second step in the genealogy process will be to cross reference the cemetery roster and genealogy of those buried in the cemetery with the list of town incorporators. One of the town residents has compiled a roster of graves in one of the Eatonville cemeteries. The data needs to be digitized for permanent recording and ready access. The results of this research will be also used to provide content for the town website and interpretation of physical resources that may be considered for historic landmark designation.

### 3. Historic preservation ordinance

The Town of Eatonville has a historic preservation ordinance in place. The results of the founders and cemetery research will need to be cataloged and transferred to digital formats so it can be accessed to evaluate the significance of buildings and sites to be considered for historic landmark designation, preservation and maintenance. The data base will also be used as reference for new projects proposed in the town.

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### 4. National Register of Historic Places

The original platted and chartered Eatonville town site was composed of one hundred and twelve acres. The original town plat is extant within the current town limits of Eatonville, but eighty nine acres are not included in any local, state or NR historic district. The original platted blocks and road right-of-ways are extant, and still in use. Most of the lots in the original town plat were designated for residential use. Ninety percent of the original pattern of commercial and residential designated land uses remains in tact within the 1887 boundary. There is one National Register (NR) listed resource in the Town of Eatonville, the Eatonville Historic District (NRHP listed, 1998). The current NR district is composed of twenty three acres, and includes forty eight contributing buildings, twenty non-contributing buildings, and no contributing or non-contributing sites. Including the original 1887 town plat area in a NR district would document and interpret the important agricultural legacy and one of the few Black vernacular cultural landscapes in Florida. This would also expand the knowledge and understanding of the variety of resources that are fundamental parts of Eatonville's, and America's heritage.

### 5. Historic records, documents and artifacts curation and archival preservation

A few years ago Eatonville received a grant from the Florida Department of State to preserve the town's heritage. Documents were gathered and presented to the community but digital recording was not produced and permanent storage was not arranged. In addition, original town records and documents need to be digitized, restored and permanently housed.

### 6. Youth engagement

Several Eatonville organizations and churches that have ongoing youth programs are interested in participating in the historic preservation activities described above. Eatonville and area youth would participate in a series of training, learning activities and cultural tourism programs that significantly expand and explain the relationships between place (land, landscape, structures, sustainable environment), the civic virtues that formed the base of 19th and early twentieth century Black communities across America will be planned and produced.

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Timetable(s)

The Town would like to produce a series of exhibits that could be displayed for its 2015 Juneteenth (June 19) and Founder's Day (August) activities.

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