

**Boone Historic Preservation Commission
Meeting Minutes
June 13, 2017**

Historic Preservation Commission Members in Attendance: Eric Plaag-Chairman, Teresa Pearman-Vice Chairperson, Bettie Bond, Nicholas Williams, Loretta Clawson, Rennie Brantz, and Chuck Watkins

Town Staff in Attendance: Jane Shook-Director of Planning & Inspections, Christy Turner-Senior Planner, John Ward-Town Manager, Tyler Cook-Town Manager Intern, Pilar Fotta-Director of Cultural Resources and Marlene Crosby-Board Secretary

Call to Order

Chairman Plaag called to order the meeting of the Boone Historic Preservation Commission, held in the Planning & Inspections - Upstairs Conference Room located at 680 West King Street, at 3:03 p.m.

Chairman Plaag welcomed guest, Dr. David Spiceland from Appalachian State University to the meeting. Dr. Spiceland noted that he would like to help the Town from an historical standpoint.

Mr. John Ward, Town Manager introduced Mr. Tyler Cook an Appalachian State University student who is the intern at Town Hall this summer. Mr. Cook noted that he is working on a two-year study for the electrical usage of the Town.

Adoption of Agenda

Chairman Plaag wanted to incorporate the topic of historical markers under the Local Landmark Plaques agenda item. Ms. Pilar Fotta, Director of Cultural Resources wanted to add two topics at the beginning of the agenda. Commission Member Williams made a motion, seconded by Commission Member Brantz to accept the agenda as amended.

VOTE: Aye – All
 Nay – None

The motion passed.

Approval of Meeting Minutes

Commission Member Clawson made a motion, seconded by Commission Member Brantz to accept the May 9, 2017 meeting minutes as written.

VOTE: Aye – All
 Nay – None

The motion passed.

Ms. Pilar Fotta, Director of Cultural Resources stated that she has been working with a graphics art designer on a rough draft of the Boone Historic Walking Tour brochure. She hopes to present an update of the draft brochure to the Historic Preservation Commission by next month.

Ms. Fotta said she recently saw a post office in New York City that looks like a larger version of the Boone Downtown Post Office. She will have the photos blown up and present them at a future meeting.

Chairperson Plaag noted that the Watauga County Library has been working on a mini Historic walking tour for Downtown Boone. He said he and Member Bond gave tours based off the script prepared by the library. The route of the tour covered Water Street, River Street and Depot Streets.

Old Business

Boone Cemetery

Mr. John Ward, Town Manager said he and Mr. Cook met with the members of the Junaluska Heritage Foundation and they shared the results of the ground penetrating radar survey. Mr. Ward said it was a positive meeting and they were glad about the Town spending money on something that is near and dear to their hearts.

Chairman Plaag said on Monday, June 19, 2017 at 1 p.m., he and Mr. Ward would meet with members of the JHA to discuss the placement of the Junaluska monument. Mr. Ward added that Mr. Eric Gustaveson and Mr. Mike Austin from the funeral home have met at the cemetery to discuss the safety of the placement of the monument as it relates to getting the equipment in that is needed to place the monument. Mr. Ward stated that he has invited Mr. Gustaveson to attend the Monday, June 19, 2017 meeting. Mr. Ward talked about the placement of the monument. He said it would need to go in before the retaining wall or the fence is put in.

Chairman Plaag asked Mr. Ward about the date to dedicate the Junaluska monument. Mr. Ward noted that they are now looking at a date in October. Mr. Ward said the Town can install it now and dedicate it at a later date.

Chairman Plaag asked about an August date for the placement of the union markers. He said with the permission of the Commission, he would like to stay in touch with Roberta Yates on their intended timeline for placement of the monument. It was noted that the monument is ready for placement and it is being stored at the funeral home with the names inscribed on it. There was agreement that the installment of the union markers should wait until after the Junaluska marker is dedicated.

Mr. Ward said that the tree work has been completed. He said he is working with Mr. Dayton Cole, Council for the university who is helping get the easement needed to connect to the university wall. Mr. Ward said he has the engineered plans for the wall and we are using in-house labor to build the wall. He said the cost of the fencing is about \$60,000 and it is made of a type of aluminum.

Mr. Ward said hopefully in July they will start grinding down the stumps. He said in July or August, he will follow-up with the fence and wall.

Mr. Ward talked about the placement of a sign that indicates it is Boone Cemetery. He suggested placing the sign on the front of the gate. He said he would get the input of the Commission members on the wording of the sign at a future meeting.

Mr. Ward pointed out that the new Town Hall sign that includes the Town seal has been placed on the front of the Town Hall building.

Cemetery Survey Update

Chairman Plaag asked for an update on the survey. Commission Member Bond said that she had not worked on it because of all of the rain we have been getting. Commission Member Watkins suggested doing work on it in the next 30 days. Chairman Plaag agreed with the suggested 30-day time period to work on the survey.

Chairman Plaag reminded everyone that the backpacks are located at Town Hall and each backpack has to be signed-out with Ms. Nicole Worley at Town Hall. He also reminded everyone, if they make photos with the cameras to leave the photos on the camera and to recharge the camera battery. He said the forms are located in the conference room at Town Hall.

Phase I Survey Update

Chairperson Plaag noted he is still working to complete the survey draft by the end of the summer.

Design Guidelines

Chairperson Plaag said he has met with Ms. Shook and she asked if there were design guidelines for local landmarks. He said that he has contacted SHPO to see if they have any examples of design guidelines specifically for individual properties that are local landmarks. He is waiting on SHPO to get back to him on this topic.

Chairman Plaag stated that in June of 2014 the Commission tabled some draft design guidelines that were proposed for several zoning districts. He said it should be easy enough to modify it for the Downtown district.

Quasi-Judicial Process

Mr. Ward talked about the moving forward with the hearing process when it is outside of what the Staff can approve on items that are budget dependent. He said the Council would need to agree to budget the additional costs for Staff and attorney time and hosting additional meetings.

Chairman Plaag noted that the HPC has made a landmark designation for the Downtown Boone Post Office. He noted that if the Town would want to modify the post office, there would need to be a hearing process to do so. Mr. Ward confirmed that in this case the Town owns the post office. He pointed out that it is when we are not on our own Town property making changes that the costs are incurred.

Chairman Plaag said they had already talked about whether a fee should be charged, when a designation is applied for. He said it was the consensus of the HPC that a fee not be charged. He said it might be worth considering that the fee be applied at the beginning of the COA process. Mr. Ward agreed and said that the property owners should know that if they want to make alterations to their properties, there might be a processing fee.

Mr. Ward asked Chairman Plaag if he has a timeframe of when he will hear back from the State on the historic district. Chairman Plaag said he is still writing that report that he hopes to complete by the end of August. Chairman Plaag further explained the report hearing process.

Mr. Ward informed the HPC members that the PNC Bank on W. King Street has been placed on the real estate market. He said he is suggesting that a historic façade renovation be done to the PNC bank building.

Chairman Plaag said that Mr. Ward may want to point out to the potential buyer of the PNC building that because of its age and being built in 1925, it automatically qualifies for the ten-percent federal tax credit for renovation. Chairman Plaag said if the potential buyer were to do a full restoration of the façade, they might be eligible for a 40 or 45 percent state and federal tax credit combined and a façade grant.

Mr. Ward, Ms. Fotta and Mr. Cook left the meeting at 3:49 p.m.

Linney House and Law Office Designation Update

Chairman Plaag said with the Commission's direction, he made the changes to the Linney House and Law Office Designation report. He said that he sent it to Staff on June 5, 2017 and is it on the Council's June consent agenda. It was the consensus of the Commission members that this report was well written. Chairman Plaag noted that he would email the draft report out to the HPC members.

Chairman Plaag talked about the changes to the front part of the Linney House. He noted that he did not know what the original house looked like but it appears that part of the house has been altered.

Discussion ensued on the approved report being sent to the State by Staff. Ms. Christy Turner, Senior Planner said that she would send the report to the State and the State has 30 days to respond to the report once they receive it.

Chairman Plaag informed the Commission members that he had heard from Mr. Frank Coffey who confirmed that he had received a copy of the report and Chairman Plaag feels he is onboard with it. Mr. Coffey also noted that he will be returning to Boone in June. Chairman Plaag said he has a handwritten note from Mr. Coffey saying he supports both the landmark designation and national register. It was decided that this note would be kept in the file.

Discussion ensued on coordinating the dedication of the landmark designation of the Linney House. The HPC members agreed to move forward with this topic.

Boone Flood Marker Update

Chairman Plaag talked about a letter dated May 18, 2017 from the North Carolina Department of Natural and Cultural Resources Office of Archives and History, Division of Historical Resources/Research Branch. He reviewed the contents of this letter with the HPC members (copy on file).

Chairman Plaag talked about the historical markers. He said he looked online for types of markers. He said from Erie Landmark the price of an aluminum marker is \$2,600.00 and the bronze marker is \$3,200.00. He further researched for better pricing from Sewah Studios and he found the aluminum markers for a range of \$1,620.00 to \$2,100.00 which includes the pole. He said the low end of the price range markers has 1 ½" letters and the high end of the price range has 5" letters.

Chairman Plaag suggested at the next meeting that the Commission review the shapes and sizes of markers online that could include the Town of Boone seal. He also noted that he preferred to lengthen the inscription on the markers.

Chairman Plaag talked about asking Mr. Ward, if the Commission could use some of the Historical marker program budget dollars to fund at least some of the markers.

It was suggested that the 1940 Flood marker be located at Jimmy Smith Park.

Discussion ensued on the location of local landmark or historical markers. It was noted that they are not allowed in the right of way and they cannot look like the state version of markers.

Discussion ensued on what the State denied regarding the marker proposal concerning the 1940 Flood. Chairman Plaag said the State felt it was a subject of local significance and the State agreed that the flood was an ideal topic for a local marker.

Commission Member Watkins noted that he would like to see a marker showing where the rail serviced ended as a result of the 1940 flood.

Discussion ensued on the Commission beginning to look into a local marker program. Chairman Plaag said he would like to talk about this at the next meeting and to review some options for the markers and start to put together an outline for a draft proposal for them. It was the consensus of the Commission to ask Mr. Ward and Council if necessary, if the HPC can use some of the Historical Marker Program money for the markers.

Local Landmark Plaques

Commission Member Watkins handed out (copy on file) information on historic plaques from the Historic Charleston. He said he tried to provide a review of a variety of plaques that different organizations are making for their historic districts which include the survey numbers of the buildings.

Discussion ensued on whether the property owners would want a plaque on their building and who would pay for the plaques. Commission Member Watkins said the plaque would enhance

the real estate value of a property, therefore, the owner would want to bear the expense of it. He suggested using a style like the Carolopolis Award for new construction or the Key West style is the way to go because when the house is sold it could increase the value by \$5,000.00. He mentioned that the plaque material is ceramic with glazing on it. It was noted that the wooden plaques would need to be replaced every five years or so.

Chairman Plaag noted that the Commission might want to recognize a building with a plaque that may not ever reach the local landmark status such as the Appalachian Theatre.

Commission Member Brantz asked if the plaques could be blended into the walking tour. Chairman Plaag said he thought it could be blended into the walking tour.

Discussion ensued on having to pay for the National Register plaques. Ms. Turner said that these plaques do have to be paid for.

Discussion ensued on how to move forward with the location and style of plaques. Chairman Plaag said he felt there should be a distinction between the local landmark properties and other properties that are more broadly construed as historic but not necessarily of local landmark/district distinction.

He also talked about offering the plaques to everyone in the proposed Downtown Historic District, when it gets established. Commission Member Bond suggested extending the plaques into Historic neighborhoods.

Chairperson Plaag asked the Commission members to think about ways to make a distinction on the two types of designations and to reconcile the plaque on the post office building and the plaque that should be put on Mr. Coffey's house and the Jones House.

Other Matters by Commission Members or Staff

There were no other comments by Commission Members or Staff.

Set agenda for next meeting

- Boone Cemetery
- Phase I Survey Report Update
- Linney House and Law Office Designation Update
- Local Landmark Plaques/Historic Markers

Adjournment

Commission Member Bond made a motion, seconded by Commission Member Clawson to adjourn the meeting at 4:30 p.m.

VOTE: Aye – All
 Nay – None

The motion passed.

Eric Plaag, Chairperson

Marlene Crosby, Board Secretary