

**Boone Historic Preservation Commission
Meeting Minutes
September 12, 2017
3 p.m.**

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

Town Staff in Attendance: Jane Shook-Director of Planning and Inspections, Christy Turner-Senior Planner, John Ward-Town Manager, Thomas Studnicky-Town Hall Intern 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 3:00 p.m.

Discussion ensued on the need for more Historic Preservation Commission members. Member Bond said that she knows someone that may be interested in serving on the Commission. Chairman Plaag noted that the HPC would be interested in anyone who lives in the Town of Boone and has the appropriate background such as a historian or architect.

Chairman Plaag welcomed Mr. Thomas Studnicky, Town Intern to the meeting.

Adoption of Agenda

Member Clawson made a motion, seconded by Member Brantz to accept the agenda as written.

VOTE:

Aye – All
Nay – None

The motion was passed.

Member Brantz noted that the Council meeting has been moved from September 14, 2017 to September 28, 2017. Member Brantz wanted to know if Chairman Plaag would still be able to attend the September 28, 2017 Council meeting and represent the HPC members as discussed at the last HPC meeting. Chairman Plaag said that he will be able to attend the Council meeting on September 28, 2017.

Approval of Meeting Minutes

Member Brantz made a motion, seconded by Member Bond to approve the August 8, 2017 meeting minutes as amended with changing the wording of the Junaluska people to representatives of the JHA under the Boone Cemetery section of the meeting minutes.

VOTE:

Aye – All
Nay – None

The motion passed.

Old Business

Boone Cemetery

Chairman Plaag notified the HPC that the representatives of the JHA are dedicating their memorial marker on October 1, 2017 at 2 p.m. Following the dedication there will be a reception in the Appalachian State University Student Union. Chairman Plaag encouraged all of the HPC members to attend the marker dedication to show a strong support for the JHA.

Chairman Plaag also noted that the wall has been completed along Brown Street. The HPC members were pleased with the appearance of the completed wall.

Discussion ensued on sending a letter of appreciation to the Town of Boone for their work on the wall. The HPC agreed that they wanted to show their appreciation to the Town of Boone.

Motion:

Member Watkins made a motion, seconded by Member Clawson to allow Chairman Plaag to send an email of appreciation to Mr. John Ward, Town Manager and Mr. Rick Miller, Director of Public Works for the work on the retaining wall.

Vote:

Aye – All
Nay – None

The motion passed.

Chairman Plaag said he would create and send an email of appreciation to the Town of Boone.

Chairman Plaag noted that Members Brantz, Watkins, Bond and he have been working on the survey. Chairman Plaag said they worked on the survey on Sunday, September 10, 2017 and they made a lot of progress on it. He said they are one-third to one-quarter complete of the initial survey work.

It was the consensus of the HPC to work on the survey on Sunday, September 17, 2017. It was noted that the HPC needs more blank forms and there has been a mix up in the charging cords for one of the digital cameras. The HPC discussed the possibility of purchasing another charger. Member Watkins noted he will be out of town on Sunday, September 17, 2017 and will not be able to work on the survey.

Discussion ensued on scheduling a date to work on the survey in October, 2017. It was the consensus of the HPC to meet at the cemetery on Sunday, October 15, 2017 starting at 10:30 am to continue to work on the survey.

Chairman Plaag has put up new stakes in the cemetery marking the rows of headstones for survey purposes.

Mr. John Ward, Town Manager joined the HPC meeting. Mr. Ward showed the HPC photos of the completed wall along Brown Street.

Discussion ensued as to possibly putting parking in the green space beside the cemetery in the future.

Mr. Ward said the completed wall came in under budget. He said the next step is to have the fence installed by a private contractor.

Chairman Plaag talked about a phone call he received regarding the trustees of the Boone Cemetery. He said he would check into this topic.

Phase I Survey Report Update

Chairman Plaag said he will have a draft document by the end of September 2017 for the HPC to review and discuss.

Chairman Plaag talked about the images of the 1960 Boone blizzard. He said he wants to make it clear that the façade is still there at the Past Time Theatre. He also noted that the HPC is learning about other buildings in the Town that need to be reviewed for historical type facades.

Mr. Ward talked about projects on Howard Street. He explained that the Community Appearance Commission was authorized in 2010 to work on the Community Appearance Standards. He said the CAC is working on a Historic Core and Interface Area Map and they are seeking input from Council before moving forward with what they have been asked to do. He told the HPC that at the September 28, 2017 Council meeting there will be some discussion of the CAC's work and the Historic Core and Interface Area. He noted that the HPC is working on the Municipal Service District and Zoning Map Amendment proposed changes. He said that discussion is needed to align the two topics together.

Mr. Ward further explained that there is the School of Government Finance initiative which is focused on Howard Street. He said the SOG needs answers to some questions to be able to move forward with the development recruitment. He said they need to know if Howard Street is going to be in the Historic Core or Interface Area. He asked what we are wanting as a community for Howard Street. Chairman Plaag said he would already be at the September 28, 2017 Council meeting to answer questions on Howard Street.

Discussion ensued on having a joint meeting with the HPC and CAC prior to the September 28, 2017 Council meeting to discuss Howard Street. It was noted in October of 2016 that the HPC gave their feedback on what the Historic Core should be. Ms. Jane Shook, Director of Planning Inspections noted that the Council had directed that the Historic Core include the properties from Depot Street to King Street from Howard Street. She said by consensus the CAC continued to work on the two different areas being the Historic Core and Interface Area. Ms. Shook said that Council gives the committees their direction on the possible conflict for property owners. Ms.

Shook referred to the map showing the two different areas. She noted that the blue on the map is the Historic Core and the yellow is the Interface Area. She also noted that the CAC is ready for public input.

Chairman Plaag said on the west side of Depot Street there are contributing buildings which include Haircut 101 and the acupuncture business. He said the building on the corner of Howard Street and Depot Street is not a contributing building.

Chairman Plaag said on the north side of Howard Street are buildings that have factors that contribute to the significance of the Historic Core. He said the HPC would be concerned if these buildings were not included of the regulations that may have stricter control on community appearance.

Ms. Shook said in the CAC's review, they felt that they worked with the HPC because they tried to base their recommendations on the Department of the Interior Standards. She explained that the CAC wanted public input on building materials, building placement and open space for courtyards.

Ms. Shook noted that in 2010, the CAC recognized the Downtown area needed its own standards. Mr. Ward noted that the CAC worked on the design standards for approximately one year. He said they are now ready for public input especially from the property owners on their draft design standards which would include the HPC draft recommendations as well.

Chairman Plaag talked about the older buildings on Howard Street. He said the survey team results showed only one building being worth saving which is the building that is part of the Goodnight Brothers property.

Discussion ensued on including the ECRS property in the Interface Area. Ms. Shook explained that the Council directed this property to be included to avoid making a parcel island outside of the Interface Area. Chairman Plaag noted that there are ways to negotiate what forms the Historic Core.

Discussion ensued on the Council direction for the CAC and HPC. Chairman Plaag said he felt that sometimes the two different Commissions are not sure what each Commission has been charged to work on. He said that he thought that some members of the CAC think that the HPC wants to save everything. He said that is not the HPC's role. He said the HPC's role is to give thoughtful consideration to things that have historic significance and that are worth saving.

Mr. Ward informed the HPC that the PNC bank is now under contract by a private developer. He said the developer is including in the façade plans the information that Mr. Ward gave them in an earlier meeting. He said the first floor of the building will be commercial and the second floor will be ten residential units with possibly one and two bedrooms. They will obtain their parking offsite and the entry into the building will be on the west side of the building. Mr. Ward told the developer of the proposed plan to open up the alley way for foot traffic beside the building and the developer is already working on a lighting plan for it.

Discussion ensued on Appalachian State University providing parking for the students. Member Watkins talked about Appalachian State University students living in the apartments located in the Town. He asked when does the university become responsible for providing parking for the students to help relief the parking situation in the Town. Mr. Ward said in the universities master plan, they have included several parking garages. Mr. Ward said conversation has started between the Town and the University regarding parking. Mr. Ward said the Town cannot require the State of North Carolina to provide parking for the students.

Discussion ensued on adequate parking. Mr. Ward talked about the options for parking. He said there is offsite parking on State Farm Road and the possibility of a parking lot beside Town Hall.

Chairman Plaag talked about the laws that prevent limiting residential space. He said the community has been asking for a long time for affordable living space for those that work in the Town and for dedicated senior living space. Mr. Ward explained that the cost of land and the cost of development make it difficult to provide this type of space in the Town. Mr. Ward said that subsidizing will help make it more affordable. Member Clawson said if we continue to zone out the neighborhoods this is what you end up with which is a disaster.

Mr. Ward said for the finance plan initiative his first charge is parking and some type of non-student rental in the Downtown area.

Mr. Ward talked about the Northern Peaks Trail Master Plan released by Mr. Eric Woolridge by Designation by Design. Mr. Ward explained that the potential site for the Northern Peaks Trailhead and visitor's center type facility is at the old historic Rivers House. Chairman Plaag asked if a museum will be added to the facility. Mr. Ward said a museum has not been discussed for this facility. Mr. Ward said the trail would come up Depot Street and go by the Jones House. Mr. Ward said one of the renderings shows along the side of the building of the Black Cat Restaurant a metal wall hanging of the Northern Peaks. Mr. Ward noted that about 60 percent of the property of the trail is already in the conservation area or in town ownership and the trail goes from Boone to West Jefferson.

Chairman Plaag asked if the HPC wanted him to attend the September 28, 2017 Council meeting for the discussion on the Historic Core.

Motion:

Member Clawson made a motion, seconded by Vice-Chairman Pearman for Chairman Plaag to attend the September 28, 2017 at 5:30 p.m. Council meeting for the discussion on the Historic Core.

Vote:

Aye – All

Nay – None

The motion passed.

Linney House and Law Office Designation Update

Discussion ensued on having a public hearing on Tuesday, October 10, 2017 at 3 p.m. Ms. Shook explained that this topic will be on the Council meeting agenda for October 19, 2017.

Discussion ensued on Chairman Plaag attending the October 19, 2017 at 5:30 p.m. Council meeting. It was the consensus of the HPC for Chairman Plaag to attend this meeting to represent the HPC on the Linney House and Law Office Designation.

Historic Marker Program

It was the consensus of the HPC for Chairman Plaag to attend the September 27, 2017 Council meeting to give an update on this program.

New Business

Discussion of Bolick House

Chairman Plaag explained that the property that the Bolick House is located on is owned by the Town. He said this property technically falls into the HPC's jurisdiction to consider in terms of historic properties.

Discussion ensued on the concerns of the HPC and the community regarding the controlled burn of the Bolick House. Chairman Plaag said his concern is that someone may ask why didn't the HPC save the Bolick House and how can we work together in the future with either town owned properties or other properties to avoid playing favorites or having a different set of expectations for Town property versus someone else's property.

Mr. Ward talked about the minutes containing the discussions that were made regarding the Bolick House, sales agreement, purchase agreement, site plan and fire department permit. He said after an asbestos survey was conducted the asbestos was removed from the house.

Mr. Ward talked about an item on the Council agenda being skipped that did not inform the Council members at their meeting that the Bolick house was scheduled for a controlled fire training burn on the following Saturday.

Discussion ensued on the inaccuracy of the newspaper article and Facebook entries. It was noted that only one structure on the property was burned.

Mr. Ward explained that the brick and mortar would have had to be removed, if the house had been moved on state highways.

Chairman Plaag suggested in future situations, when a house is over 50 years old to allow the HPC to be notified so they can consider the historic significance of it.

Member Clawson said that she supports getting the input of the people before spending tax payer dollars. She said she was not informed that the house would be burned. She said that she hopes that the Cherry and Apple trees on the property can be saved because she had several emails and questions about the damage that was done to the Cherry trees.

It was noted that the barns and the silo are not included in the site plan. Mr. Ward said there would need to be a structural assessment made for the barns and the silo because they have cinder blocks on the bottom and wood on the top of them. Mr. Ward said a decision needs to be made about saving them because of the significant cost involved.

Mr. Ward said it is his understanding that the Council will have ongoing discussions on the level of development on the upper ground.

Mr. Ward talked about the bottom level of the property and the parts that are undevelopable. He said there were possibilities of the Audubon Society creating a bird sanctuary, disc golf course or partner with the County for ball fields.

Chairman Plaag recommended asking for the HPC's input on reviewing the historic value of the three buildings on the property. Mr. Ward said, if the buildings cannot be saved, they could possibly be used for an outdoor venue.

Discussion ensued on the Bolick property being in the Extra-Territorial Jurisdiction at the time the Town purchased it. It was noted that said property is now located within the Town's jurisdiction.

Discussion ensued on improving communication to the HPC on possible historically significant properties. Chairman Plaag said that the HPC is not necessarily notified, when a property is annexed into the Town. Ms. Shook said she could notify the HPC, when annexations occur. She also pointed out that at the time of the purchase of the Bolick property the ETJ was still in the Town's jurisdiction.

It was noted that in the future, when dealing with the press, try to communicate any information on any topic in writing.

Mr. Ward asked the HPC if they were asked to consider the structure next to the Rivers House. It was noted that the Council authorized this house to be burned in 2015.

Mr. Ward explained the process of getting a burn permit for a structure. He said there has to be an assessment of a structure and some things have to be removed to make it safe enough to burn.

Ms. Shook talked about the exterior modifications to the two landmarks as it relates to major and minor changes. Chairman Plaag said he would email Ms. Shook a list of major and minor changes. Mr. Ward said he had some information on this topic that he would send to Chairman Plaag for the HPC to review.

Other Matters by Commission Members or Staff

Discussion ensued on the fee structure and cost recovery. It was noted that when working with a COA an extra step is added to the cost recovery process. It was decided that this topic would be discussed at the next meeting.

Chairman Plaag said he would send Ms. Shook the draft process on cost recovery for her review.

Set agenda for next meeting

- Boone Cemetery
- Phase I Survey Report Update
- Linney House and Law Office Designation Update
- Historic Marker Programs

Adjournment

Member Bond made a motion, seconded by Member Watkins to adjourn the meeting at 4:55 p.m.

VOTE: Aye – All
 Nay – None

The motion passed.

Eric Plaag, Chairman

Marlene Crosby, Board Secretary