

**Boone Historic Preservation Commission
Meeting Minutes
November 14, 2017**

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

Town Staff in Attendance: Jane Shook-Director of Planning & Inspections, Christy Turner-Senior Planner, John Ward-Town Manager, Brittney Clark-Downtown Development Coordinator 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.

Adoption of Agenda

Chairperson Plaag added the Boone Cemetery, Phase I Survey Report and the Community Appearance Commission, Historic Preservation Commission and Town Council workshop items to the agenda.

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

VOTE: Aye – All
 Nay – None

The motion passed.

Approval of Meeting Minutes

Member Brantz made a motion, seconded by Vice-Chairperson Pearman to accept the October 10, 2017 meeting minutes as amended with a change to page two in the first paragraph change the words Landmark Designation to Register Nomination, on page three first paragraph change Arnold to R.L., on page three second paragraph change Benjamin Councill Jr. to Benjamin Councill Sr. and remove and Jordan Councill, Jr. in addition to the request for Ms. Christy Turner, Senior Planner to review and correct grammatical errors.

VOTE: Aye – 6 (Brantz, Clawson, Dixon, Pearman, Plaag, Watkins)
 Nay – None
 Abstention – 1 (Bond)

The motion passed.

Old Business

Boone Cemetery

Chairperson Plaag asked Mr. John Ward, Town Manager for an update on the Boone Cemetery. Mr. Ward said that the wall, fence, tree work and the JHA monument installation are all completed. Mr. Ward showed photographs of this completed work. Mr. Ward noted that in the spring the Union headstones can be erected.

Mr. Ward said he will work on the signage for the cemetery and he will bring that information to the HPC at a later date for their input.

Mr. Ward suggested adding a row of marble or granite in the center that divides the black and white section of the cemetery and add appropriate wording to it.

Discussion ensued on the new wall in the Boone Cemetery. Chairperson Plaag asked when the new wall was built, was it tied into the corner section. Mr. Ward said it was located closer to the student union side of the Boone Cemetery. Mr. Ward said this helped make the easement seem more seamless.

Mr. Ward told the HPC members that the Austin and Barnes Funeral Home has informed him that Mr. Frank Coffey's ashes will not be spread in the Boone Cemetery. He said a monument for Mr. Frank Coffey is being placed in the Linney plot. It was noted that this headstone issue was not considered, when the rules for the Boone Cemetery were being created. Mr. Ward asked if anyone had an issue with an existing family plot allowing a different headstone to be placed in it.

Chairperson Plaag said cremation is a relatively new and modern thing. He talked about using the plot to memorialize Mr. Coffey and if another family member needed to added, they could be stacked in the same plot.

Chairperson Plaag said that he has spoken to Mr. Frank Coffey's son and he is interested in doing the upkeep on the Linney House.

It was the consensus of the HPC members for Mr. Ward to move forward with the Linney plot.

Chairperson Plaag talked about the survey work scheduled on Sunday, November 19, 2017. He noted that the weather will be in the upper 30's and windy for this day. Chairperson Plaag suggested that this survey work be postponed and revisit this topic at the December, 2017 meeting. It was noted that the survey work is about three-quarters completed.

Phase I Survey Report

Chairperson Plaag said that he has emailed out two batches of survey report information to the HPC members for their review.

The HPC members approved of the Phase I Survey information contained in the report.

Chairperson Plaag discussed the survey files of previously surveyed properties that contain information on general architectural features of a building along with a generalized history of the building. He said when they initially started the write ups, they took the approach of existing survey properties to not re-create the wheel but instead to correct the things that need to be corrected and not include the full architectural description. He said he realized if the survey reports are being done for public review, the public has no access to the pre-existing survey files. He said this is not a difficult thing to correct. He said he thought it would make sense to give the full architectural description as it is now and at a previous point in time. It was the consensus of the HPC members to include this information in the survey report. He said he is looking for verifiable documentation of when specifically, a building was completed and who was in the building when it was completed. He said there are existing survey names on the buildings in the survey report that are not historical names. He said it was important to have the name of the person who the historical building was built for.

Chairperson Plaag said he hopes to complete the executive summary of the survey findings and the recommendations of the survey report. He said he would send the HPC members a list of the properties that are in the final version that the HPC members have not seen yet. He said he hopes to be able to send the final version to the HPC members in December of 2017. Member Watkins asked Chairperson Plaag, if he would mind to put bullet points beside the recommendations.

Member Dixon asked Chairperson Plaag, if he could add photographs to the survey report. Chairperson Plaag said he has not included photographs because they take up too much space and it makes it difficult to email them. Chairperson Plaag said for the final version, he may have to use an open source link where a Dropbox subscription is not needed. He said he would include a historic image of the building, when possible.

Chairperson Plaag talked about using aerial images that are not owned by digital Watauga. He said the aerial images are owned by Sarah Lynn Spencer. Chairperson Plaag asked Mr. Ward if he could ask Ms. Spencer for the use of these images and a fee may be associated with them. Mr. Ward said, if she asks for a fee, the fee can be made an agenda item for discussion. Chairperson Plaag said he thought it makes the survey reports more valuable, when you include a historical image and date for when each one was built. Chairperson Plaag said when possible he documented the most significant long-lasting tenants and a comprehensive architectural history of the buildings in the survey files.

Discussion ensued on publishing the survey report information. Chairperson Plaag talked about self-publishing, using a publisher, public access through the Town website and DVD's. It was noted that using the Town website would be a good way to make the information available for public access.

Chairperson Plaag said that he is working on completing the draft Phase I Survey Report by December 2017.

CAC/HPC/TC Workshop Discussion

Discussion on the November 21, 2017 Community Appearance Commission, Historic Preservation Commission and Town Council workshop. Chairperson Plaag said that he is not able to attend this workshop. Mr. Ward suggested that HPC Chairperson Eric Plaag and CAC Chairperson Brian Williams work together on the proposed Downtown Design Guidelines and then meet with their Commissions to discuss this topic. Vice-Chairperson Pearman and Members Bond and Clawson said they preferred to have the discussion in a joint-workshop. Member Dixon asked if the meeting could be rescheduled after the first of the year. Mr. Ward said he is working with two groups on a contract and he would like to have the workshop sooner than later.

Chairperson Plaag suggested to the HPC members to move the joint-workshop date from November 21, 2017 to the scheduled CAC meeting time of December 12, 2017 at 5:30 p.m. and to move the scheduled HPC meeting on December 12, 2017 from 3 p.m. to 5:30 pm to have the joint-workshop to discuss the proposed Downtown Guidelines. It was noted that the December 12, 2017 workshop would be held in the Council Chambers located at 1500 Blowing Rock Road. It was the consensus of the HPC members to make this meeting change.

Linney House and Frank Coffey National Register

Discussion ensued on the Linney House and Frank Coffey National Register Nomination. Chairperson Plaag said this topic has been approved. He thanked the HPC members for their

support on this topic. He noted that Mr. Coffey recently passed away. He said he will continue to write a National Register Nomination but will allow the family time to deal with the circumstances of Mr. Coffey's death.

Discussion ensued on the condition of the Linney House. Chairperson Plaag indicated that he was inside the house about a year and one-half ago. He said overall the house is sound, the floors are uneven but no holes are in the floor. He said the house has been repeatedly modified. He said from a safety standpoint, there is a concern for the steps on the house. Member Watkins asked about the foundation of the house. Chairperson Plaag said there are foundation piers visible on the southeast and east side of the house.

It was noted that the well that is located on the Linney House property is the original well for the Watauga County Courthouse.

1889 Watauga County Jail

Discussion ensued on the 1889 Watauga County Jailhouse. Chairperson Plaag noted that the jailhouse is the next one on his list to write a local Landmark Designation. Chairperson Plaag talked about the owner of this building being one of the new Council Member Sam Furguele. Chairperson Plaag asked Mr. Ward for guidance on how to approach this topic with the tax deferral element. Mr. Ward said he did not see an issue with it especially because it is being done on a voluntary basis. Mr. Ward added that the recipient will have to choose to vote or not to vote on it.

Chairperson Plaag noted that early next year, he would like to write a Local Landmark Designation for the Jones House.

Discussion of Greer-Henson Barn

Discussion ensued on the Greer Henson Barn. Member Bond said she attended a group meeting at the Watauga Medical Center and the members of the group are working on introducing art and color to the hospital rather than the use of the institutional white and green colors.

Member Bond asked the members in the group what the hospital has decided about the barn and the house on the property. Member Bond said one of the hospital administrators said the barn will be torn down and the wood would be used for fencing. Member Bond told the hospital administrator that at one time the Historic Preservation Commission talked about relocating the barn to the Horn in the West and using it as a shelter for the Farmers Market or retrofitting it to be a community kitchen and storage area. The hospital administrator said the hospital might give it to the Historic Preservation Commission, if they would move it.

Discussion ensued on disassembling the barn and moving it to another location. Chairperson Plaag said there are plans on re-building Dan'l Boone Park as a whole. Chairperson Plaag asked Mr. Ward his thoughts on re-using the barn wood at the Dan'l Boone Park. Mr. Ward said the Farmers Market has a \$5,000 grant and they have been working with the University on re-designing a structure. Mr. Ward said he is not certain if the design and the wood that is there would match up. Mr. Ward said this proposes a change to the master plan and some type of implementation would need to be discussed.

Mr. Ward said that Council has authorized funds for a connection between the Middlefork and the Boone Greenway. He noted that there has to be a park component as part of the hospital re-development. He said the hospital plans include a series of structures on the property and the

hospital told Mr. Ward that they are planning on using the wood themselves to provide community space like shelters and picnic areas.

Mr. Ward said the Town Staff is staying in communication with the hospital as they continue to work on their master plan. He said when the hospital decides to take down the barn, they will need a demolition permit and that is when the Town will be notified that they will be disassembling the barn.

Chairperson Plaag asked if designated recreation space is allowed in the special flood hazard area. Mr. Ward said it is the structure type and not the designation that is considered. Mr. Ward explained that there cannot be an impact on flooding when building a structure in a special flood hazard area. Chairperson Plaag confirmed that moving the barn down the hill is not an option due to the location being in a special flood hazard area.

Mr. Ward explained that it has been approved to connect the Boone Greenway to the Wellness Center. He said in making this connection there are more costs involved with the engineering than the costs of building the greenway. He said on the greenway that there has to be enough gravel and asphalt put in to meet the no rise to net elevation requirement.

Mr. Jane Shook, Director of Planning and Inspections confirmed that the hospital is working on their master plan with Clemson University and they are interested in using the barn wood in something for the hospital.

Member Watkins said in the past the Farmers Market considered using the barn for the market. He suggested that the hospital include the barn into their architectural part of their master plan. Mr. Ward said that when this was previously discussed the total acreage that would have to be bought to be able to build onto developable acreage would double their cost.

Mr. Ward talked about people trying to inhabit the barn and the safety risks that come from it.

Member Bond talked about having a year-round Farmers Market at Dan'l Boone Park with a community kitchen. Mr. Ward said there would need to be expanded parking for this type of proposed change to the park. Mr. Ward said when the Public Works Department is able to relocate to the new Town municipal center; there could be a re-design of the Dan'l Boone Park to incorporate this proposed change. Mr. Ward said there is already a detailed plan for a structure at Dan'l Boone Park. He said that the Farmers Market and SAHA would have to come into an agreement for this proposed change. He said then the restoration of the amphitheater could move forward as well.

Chairperson Plaag noted that two properties have been designated which are the Boone Post Office and the Linney House and Law Office. He said within the next year the HPC will propose the 1889 Watauga County Jail and the Jones House for designation. He said there is a district recommendation that is coming up in the near future.

Creation of Webpage for Landmark and District Designations

Discussion ensued on adding the landmark designations and the histories of properties to the Town website. Chairperson Plaag explained that a history page could be added to the Town website and the information can be uploaded to that page. It was noted that by providing this information on the Town website that it would help encourage the public to support the work of the HPC. Ms. Shook suggested adding the history page under the Planning and Inspections Department section of the Town website. Mr. Ward said that he and Ms. Shook would work on

adding the history page to the Town website and include links to digital Watauga. It was noted that this would reduce the number of requests received per month for this type of information.

Other Matters by Commission Members or Staff

Chairperson Plaag talked about the Marketplace case that was on the October 2017 Public Hearing and Planning Commission agenda and these meetings were cancelled due to flooding in the Town of Boone. He said this case was on the November 2017 Public Hearing and Planning Commission agendas but the applicant withdrew this case. He said they withdrew the case because the applicant has decided to pursue a boutique hotel at the same location because the applicant believes the hotel will be a better overall project for Downtown Boone.

Chairperson Plaag asked Mr. Ward if he had any information on the proposed boutique hotel. Mr. Ward said that he has not seen proposed plans for the hotel. Mr. Ward said the applicant decided to make this change of use from student housing to another use was somewhat based on public comments made at a UNC-School of Government meeting in what Downtown businesses would like to see in Downtown areas to help encourage more people to visit it.

Mr. Ward further explained that for a proposed hotel to work out in the Downtown area, it would have to have onsite parking. He said the hotel applicant's thought is to include a first-floor restaurant and the remainder for the hotel. He said the onsite parking would be able to be used for hourly parking as well as hotel parking.

Mr. Ward added that the proposed hotel plan is totally dependent on the original approval with the student housing component. He noted that the original student housing project had a financial issue attached to it.

Chairperson Plaag asked Ms. Shook about the expiration of the PD approval for the Marketplace project. Ms. Shook said the project was approved in June of 2016 with a two-year vesting which makes an expiration date of June of 2018.

Mr. Ward said he believes it is safe to say that the student housing project will not happen at this location. He explained that Planned Development projects have to be mixed use or three acres or more. He said that if a property does not fit these requirements it would go back to the B-1 zoning district and a hotel is allowed in this zoning district. He added that if there are proposed changes with the proposed hotel not in the code, the applicant would not go to Council but to the Board of Adjustment for variances similar to how The Standard at Boone project was approved.

Chairperson Plaag asked for an update on the Riverswalk project. Mr. Ward said they are still working on this project and they are currently working with North Carolina Department of Transportation on the topography issue on Poplar Grove Road.

Chairperson Plaag asked about the CD approval expiration date for the Riverswalk project. Ms. Shook said they have a zoning approval that started in August and it is good for one year.

Chairperson Plaag noted that the next two HPC meetings are scheduled for December 14, 2017 at 3:00 p.m. and January 9, 2017 at 3:00 p.m.

Chairperson Plaag asked for a motion and vote for the HPC to meet jointly with the CAC on their scheduled meeting date of December 12, 2017 at 5:30 p.m.

Motion and Vote:

Vice-Chairperson Pearman made a motion, seconded by Member Brantz for the HPC to reschedule their December 12, 2017 3:00 p.m. meeting to 5:30 p.m. to meet jointly with the CAC to discuss the Downtown Design Guidelines.

Vote: Aye – All
Nay – None

The motion passed.

Set agenda for next meeting

- Phase I Survey Report Possible Changes and Recommendations
- Planning for the Dedication of the Union Solder Markers
- Discussion of the Downtown Design Guidelines Workshop
- Boone Cemetery Survey Update

Adjournment

Member Clawson made a motion, seconded by Member Brantz to adjourn the meeting at 4:33 p.m.

Vote: Aye – All
Nay – None

The motion passed.

Eric Plaag, Chairperson

Marlene Crosby, Board Secretary