

**TOWN OF BOONE
HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES
MARCH 10, 2020
3:00 PM**

Historic Preservation Commission Members in Attendance:

Chairperson Eric Plaag, Vice-Chairperson Phoebe Pollitt, Teresa Pearman, Bettie Bond, Chuck Watkins, Rennie Brantz and Loretta Clawson

Town Staff in Attendance: Christy Turner-Senior Planner and Marlene Crosby-Board Secretary

Others Present: John Ward, Boone Town Manager

Call to Order

Chairperson Eric Plaag called the meeting of the Boone Historic Preservation Commission, held in the Planning & Inspections upstairs conference room located at 680 West King Street, to order at 3:03 p.m.

Adoption of Agenda

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

Vote:

Aye – All

Nay – None

The motion passed.

Approval of Minutes

Member Brantz made a motion, seconded by Member Clawson to approve the January 7, 2020 minutes as amended.

Member Watkins joined the meeting at approximately 3:08 p.m.

Vote:

Aye – 6 (Bond, Brantz, Clawson, Pollitt, Plaag, Watkins)

Nay - None

Abstention – 1 (Pearman)

The motion passed.

Vice-Chairperson Pollitt made a motion, seconded by Member Pearman to approve the January 14, 2020 minutes as amended.

Vote:

Aye – All
Nay – None
The motion passed.

Member Clawson made a motion, seconded by Vice-Chairperson Pollitt to approve the February 11, 2020 minutes as written.

Vote:

Aye – 6 (Bond, Brantz, Clawson, Pearman, Pollitt, Watkins)
Nay – None
Abstention – 1 (Plaag)
The motion passed.

Mr. John Ward, Boone Town Manager joined the meeting at approximately 3:15 p.m.

Request for Funding for Digital Watauga Project

Chairperson Plaag requested to recuse himself from the discussion of this topic because of his involvement with the Digital Watauga Project. He asked that Vice-Chairperson Pollitt take over the meeting at that time. Chairperson Plaag noted that HPC Members Bond and Watkins are on the Digital Watauga Project committee.

Chairperson Plaag gave a presentation by reading aloud a two-page handout (permanently on file). The handout was dated March 10, 2020 and entitled, “Request for Funding from Town of Boone.” He pointed out that the approvals for funding were approved at the end of each fiscal year 2018 and 2019 noted in the handout.

Member Brantz asked Chairperson Plaag, if he knew how many have used or visited the Digital Watauga website outside of Watauga County. Chairperson Plaag said that Google analytic statistics capture some of this data. Member Brantz said he felt that Digital Watauga has broadened the image of Boone across the country. Chairperson Plaag said he could estimate based on past statistics, it has been running about 60/40 percent with 60 percent in Watauga County and 40 percent outside of Watauga County.

Motion and Vote:

Member Clawson made a motion, seconded by Member Brantz to recommend to Council to honor the request for funding for the Digital Watauga Project for \$5,000.00 that is already in the Town of Boone historic preservation fund that can be allocated to the Digital Watauga Project.

Vote:

Aye – 6 (Bond, Brantz, Clawson, Pearman, Pollitt, Watkins)
Nay- None
Abstention – 1 (Plaag)
The motion passed.

Chairperson Plaag explained that Digital Watauga has recently partnered with the Blowing Rock Historical Society who has tried for years to do their own digital project. He said that the BRHS has been struggling with their project and Digital Watauga is helping them.

Chairperson Plaag took over as the Chairperson of the meeting again. The HPC was in agreement with this action taken by Chairperson Plaag.

Mr. Ward asked Chairperson Plaag, if there was a timing issue on the Digital Watauga Project funding request. Chairperson Plaag responded by saying, they are asking for it to be in the fiscal year that they are requesting it. Mr. Ward asked Chairperson Plaag, if it is alright, if the request for funding went on the April 2020 Council agenda. Chairperson Plaag said yes because from a budgeting standpoint, they have been treating it as a June funding item.

Junaluska Marker Application

Chairperson Plaag began discussion on the final draft of the Junaluska Marker Application included in the meeting packet. Chairperson Plaag pointed out that he had revised the final draft to include proposed edits from the last HPC meeting minutes and discussions with Dr. Kristen Baldwin-Deathridge, member of the Junaluska Heritage Association.

Discussion ensued on footnote eight. On page four of the draft document, Chairperson Plaag said that he added in footnote eight the following information, "This deed was apparently lost and re-corded in 1900 under J.B. Councill and others to the Trustees of the (Colored) Methodist Church, January 1, 1900, Deed Book W. Page 380."

Discussion ensued on the physical neighborhood which existed since at least the 1960's. Chairperson Plaag pointed out on page six in the last sentence of the second paragraph the words, "not a physical neighborhood, since at least the 1960's," Chairperson Plaag said that Dr. Sue Keefe had thought the timeframe was the 1970's. He said he thought the early 1960's was too early. He said through 1963, these terms do not appear together. He said if we can agree on the 1970's, it would be fine. He said that he saw in the HPC meeting minutes that the HPC had discussed and agreed upon the 1960's and to remove the word "early." He further explained that he can go along with the 1960's.

Discussion ensued on a significant change in the Proposed Marker Text. Chairperson Plaag said that he had discussed with Dr. Kristen Baldwin-Deathridge regarding a proposed change to "African Street, which is now Church Street." He said that he suggested that, "this area was the geographic heart of the Junaluska Community of which Church Street remains today. He pointed out that the HPC had changed it to say "and, remains so today." He agreed with this proposed change.

Discussion ensued on page three of the February 11, 2020 HPC minutes in the second paragraph. Chairperson Plaag said that he thought this discussion referred to the issue of the date of the church which occurs around the Brannock sales and purchases. He said that he and

Dr. Kristen Baldwin-Deathridge had come to an agreement on what she had indicated on “permanent source evidence awaits discovery although there is no reason to doubt the community’s knowledge, it is possible that the deed registration was delayed while waiting final payment from the conference in “Kansas.” Chairperson Plaag said that he agreed with this proposed change.

Discussion ensued on footnote 17. Chairperson Plaag noted that he and Dr. Kristen Baldwin-Deathridge had made some changes for clarification to end of said footnote. He said he agreed with this proposed change.

Chairperson Plaag explained that he had emailed Dr. Kristen Baldwin-Deathridge that the final draft document is ready for the HPC to review and vote on at their March 10, 2020 meeting and that she was welcome to attend this meeting, if she wanted to. He also said that he explained to her about the changes to commas and a couple of other proposed minor changes to footnotes for clarification purposes. He said that Dr. Kristen Baldwin-Deathridge’s response was, “it was her understanding after the last HPC meeting that the Junaluska Heritage Association would have time to review the final draft document in time, before the next HPC meeting.” She further noted that she was not able to attend said HPC meeting. She said that since the JHA had not had time to review and comment on the final draft document, she felt the discussion of the final draft document should occur at the next HPC meeting because she wanted the JHA members that have been involved with the draft to review it.

Member Bond commented on her thoughts regarding the involvement of the JHA members, when they attended the February 11, 2020 HPC meeting. Chairperson Plaag noted that if the HPC waits for the JHA to review the draft document it will delay the installment of the proposed marker. He also noted that he did not make any major changes to the final draft document. He said he is concerned about the movement, action, and business of the HPC being dependent on an outside agency approving or not approving of the HPC’s recommendations. He noted that the JHA has given their feedback in previous meetings.

Ms. Christy Turner, Senior Planner noted that the JHA usually have their Junaluska birthday celebration in June of each year.

Discussion ensued on the timeframe of the making of the proposed marker. Chairperson Plaag said he thinks it takes about six weeks for the marker to be made. He said it would be pushing it to get the proposed marker ready by their June celebration because the HPC’s recommendation still has to go before Council. Member Bond noted that even if the proposed marker is not ready, the HPC members could still attend the June celebration and let them know that the proposed marker is on its way. Chairperson Plaag explained that the options are that the proposed marker be ready sometime in June or late summer. Member Watkins noted that it is the JHA that is asking for the delay. Chairperson Plaag suggested that Ms. Turner prepare a Council agenda action item request for April even though the HPC meeting will occur after the deadline for the April Council meeting. He noted that he does not anticipate any objection to this suggestion. He said the Council could hear it and approve it a week after the

HPC votes on it in April 2020 and this will keep it on basically the same timeline. He said this way the JHA will have been given one month to give feedback on the final draft document. The HPC was in agreement on this suggestion by Chairperson Plaag.

Discussion ensued on the site for the proposed Junaluska Marker. Mr. Ward asked if the site for the proposed marker had been determined. Chairperson Plaag explained that the HPC has identified two possible sites and the HPC is leaving it up to Council to decide on the site. Chairperson Plaag said that one site determined by the HPC is the bulb out on the end of the Queen Street parking strip which is across from the Watauga County Library. Chairperson Plaag said the other site is on corner of the Watauga County Library lot which would require approval from Watauga County to use this site. Chairperson Plaag said there has been previous discussion on both of these sites with strongly held views on each site. He said his feeling is that no one will see it on the Watauga County Library corner because no one walks over there. Member Bond feels that no one will walk by the bulb out on the end of the Queen Street parking strip because they will be driving by in their vehicle. Mr. Ward noted that the Town has a landscape strip in between the parking lot where the solar area is located and the Lost Province Brewery. Mr. Ward said that people walk through this landscaped area on their way to the brewery. Mr. Ward said that recently he has been talking to the Food Council about putting in some edible landscaping with some solar educational displays along this same area of Depot Street. Member Bond said that it might be better to put the proposed Junaluska marker in the newly developed landscaped area on Depot Street because, if the Watauga County Library is expanded the whole area will be torn up for construction.

Mr. Ward asked about the cost of the proposed marker. Chairperson Plaag said he believes the cost is around \$2,500 with the pole.

Chairperson Plaag talked about making an April Council action item request for the Junaluska Marker application, even though the actual HPC vote will not occur until after making this Council agenda request. He said this will keep the topic on a timeline that June may be possible for the Junaluska birthday celebration. Mr. Ward said if needed for the timing of it, this action item could be placed on the March Council agenda based on the Mayor's approval.

Discussion ensued on the vote of the proposed Junaluska Marker Application approval. Chairperson Plaag explained that the HPC will postpone their vote on said topic until their April 2020 meeting, the HPC will ask Ms. Turner to submit an April Council action item request for the Council's April meetings, and that the HPC authorize Chairperson Plaag to email to Dr. Kristen Baldwin-Deathridge and Ms. Roberta Jackson and ask them to review the final draft document sometime in the next week and let Chairperson Plaag know, if there are any concerns.

Motion and Vote:

Chairperson Plaag made a motion, seconded by Member Bond for the Historic Preservation Commission to postpone their vote on the proposed final draft of the Junaluska Marker Application until their April meeting, and to submit an April Council action item request for the

Council to approve and for the HPC to authorize Chairperson Plaag to email Dr. Kristen Baldwin-Deathridge and Ms. Roberta Jackson, members of the Junaluska Heritage Association and ask them to review the final draft document and let the Historic Preservation Commission know of any concerns they may have on the final draft.

Vote:

Aye – All

Nay – None

The motion passed.

Turner House

Chairperson Plaag began discussion on the Turner House. He explained that there was a joint meeting of the Watauga County Commissioners and the Boone Town Council on February 24, 2020. He noted that this was the first meeting of this type in approximately seven years. He said that he had attended a Commissioners meeting last December and had expressed some concerns at that time. He said he felt that the Commissioners were unhappy that some of the concerns had not been settled from the concerns that he voiced at that meeting. He said that he was encouraged by Council Member Samuel Furguele to refresh everyone's memory of the significance of the Turner House property. He said this opened the door for questions from the Commissioners regarding the significance of the Turner House.

Chairperson Plaag explained the outcome of the joint meeting discussion. He said that the Town has agreed to explore ways to give some protection to Watauga County on the Turner House demolition permit, so they do not feel like they have to act immediately on demolishing the house before their current permit expires. He said in exchange, Watauga County has agreed to work with the Town on a variety of things ranging from a feasibility study to having an engineer check into the Queen Street lot to see if a multi-level deck can be built there, to exploring funding strategies between the Town of Boone and Watauga County. He said he felt like at the end of the joint meeting, there were some who wanted to work together.

Member Bond talked about her support for exploring ways for future parking and potential funding for parking.

Mr. Ward explained that by Friday after the joint meeting, he had two groups on-site at the Queen Street parking lot which is one of the potential joint-parking lots for the Town of Boone and Watauga County. He said these two groups are working on the exploration and potential layout and cost of adding parking spaces at the Queen Street parking lot. He said the layout includes squaring off the lot in the back. He said there is a need for an engineer to make sure the soil will support a multi-level parking structure at the Queen Street parking lot.

Mr. Ward talked about that the Watauga County Library back parking lot; he said his concern for this lot is that it is too small. Mr. Ward said there are 100 parking spaces at the Queen Street parking lot. Mr. Ward said without making a major impact on the entire area, you can put about 300 parking spaces in the Queen Street parking lot.

Mr. Ward said that he may have identified a way to move forward with the restoration of the Rivers House. He noted that he will need to check out the legality of it before moving forward. He said if his idea works out on the Rivers House, there would not be enough funding to work on two sites. He said that the funds have not been secured yet. He asked the HPC to think about ways to help with the Turner House. Chairperson Plaag noted that about six months ago, he had emailed out a list of suggestions that the HPC had made regarding the Turner House. Mr. Ward said his concern is trying to make the Rivers House and the Turner House, and the additional parking all work financially.

Mr. Ward talked about Appalachian State University designing a 650-space parking deck on the other side of Howard Street. He said at night this parking deck will benefit the Town by providing parking for the Downtown area, as well as the Appalachian Theatre. He said with the additional parking spaces from the University parking deck, the Watauga County Library parking lot and the proposed Queen Street parking deck, may be the most that has been done to improve parking in the last thirty years. Member Watkins said it would be nice, if the University would hire a nationally recognized parking deck architect to work on the parking needs.

Mr. Ward left the meeting at approximately 4:29 p.m.

Chairperson Plaag requested that the Turner House be added to the next HPC agenda just in case there is an update on it.

District Designation Report

Chairperson Plaag confirmed that the Community Appearance Commission has not completed their work on the draft Design Guidelines. Ms. Turner said the CAC is still working on the draft Design Guidelines and they are hoping to finish them this month. She said the Planning Staff is waiting to see, if there are any proposed changes from the CAC members.

Chairperson Plaag explained that he had called Ms. Annie McDonald to check the status of the State's review of the survey report. He said that Ms. McDonald has secured approval for her to do the review of the survey report with the understanding that the State will accept her recommendation. Ms. McDonald's courtesy review is so we do not have to wait on the Raleigh office to do its own review. He said that Ms. McDonald asked him for an update on where the HPC is on working on the District. He said he told her that the HPC has completed their work on their draft Historic Design Guidelines. He said that he told Ms. McDonald that he is having to time the District Designation Report with the CAC completing their draft Design Guidelines. He said he further explained to Ms. McDonald about the two sets of Design Guidelines being worked on separately. Ms. McDonald explained that she felt that we were walking into a scenario that we will not be able to back out of once it is in place. He said that Ms. McDonald said it might be helpful for her to come to Boone and talk with the HPC and explain what the District is supposed to be accomplishing and why it may not be a good idea to have a Downtown Core that is a different overlay separate from the Historic District because it will cause confusion over the standards. He said that he has confirmed that Ms. McDonald can

attend the April HPC meeting and she wanted the HPC to invite the CAC Chairperson Brian Williams, Mr. John Ward, Town Manager, Ms. Allison Meade, Town Attorney and Ms. Jane Shook, Director of Planning and Inspections to the meeting.

Ms. Turner offered to check on a larger meeting space for the April HPC meeting. The HPC was in consensus for Ms. Turner to look for a larger meeting space and to invite the other suggested affiliated people with the Town to the meeting.

Chairperson Plaag said that Ms. McDonald wants to bring Ms. Kristi Brantley, the new Local Commissions Coordinator to attend the said meeting.

Discussion ensued on CLG. Ms. Turner stated that the CLG application that was submitted to the State was denied because that the Town of Boone does not have the local landmarks designations. Ms. McDonald told Chairperson Plaag that there should be no reason that the Town of Boone does not have their CLG status. He said that Ms. McDonald also wanted to talk about the process for the CLG Status. He said that the Town now has completed the survey and they have two local landmark designations and a historical marker program.

Member Bond suggested having the HPC April 14, 2020 meeting at 2:00 p.m. at the Jones House. Chairperson Plaag said he would confirm with Ms. McDonald the time of the meeting on April 14, 2020. Member Bond suggested having a special HPC meeting to discuss the other agenda items on April 7, 2020 at 3 p.m. Chairperson Plaag said he would inform the JHA that they are invited to the HPC meeting on April 7, 2020 at 3 p.m.

Burrell Monument

Chairperson Plaag pointed out the information included in the meeting packet and asked the HPC to review it by the April 7, 2020 HPC meeting. He asked the HPC to be prepared to review and discuss the possibility of having a Burrell Monument in the Town of Boone. He noted that this topic would be discussed by the HPC in more detail at the next meeting.

Bryan-Hayes Cemetery

Chairperson Plaag began discussion on the research for the owner of the cemetery. He said that he had learned that we should be referring to the cemetery as the Hayes-Bryan-Greene cemetery. He said that he traced the deeds and he found a transaction in 1969 that included four tracts of land being sub-divided and sold by Ms. Mamie and Mr. Nile Smith to various people. He said they referred to it as the Hayes-Bryan-Greene cemetery. He said that Ms. Mamie Smith acquired the land before it was sub-divided in 1946 from Mr. R.F. Greene and Ms. Pearl H. Greene. He said that he has not yet located a recorded deed for Mr. R.F. Greene for this land. He said there are references to land sales in other Mr. R.F. Greene deeds that refer to those other parcels being part of the Greene addition to Boone. He said these parcels are located further down the hill and it refers to the auctioning of Judge Greene's estate in October of 1938. He noted that there was an ad for the auction in the Watauga Democrat.

Chairperson Plaag said that he had looked for a plat that encompasses the area where the cemetery is located and there is none. He said there is a plat for the Greene addition to Boone but it does not include the land we are talking about. He said that he suspects what happened is that Mr. R. F. Greene may have inherited the land but he is not sure how it happened. He said that Judge L.L. Greene died in 1898 and his widow owned the land until the 1920's. He said after she passed away there was an auction to sell their land.

Chairperson Plaag talked about Mr. L.M. Hodges purchasing the Greene house in the 1920's from Judge L.L. Greene's widow. He said when Mr. Hodges was getting late in life, he donated the house to Appalachian State University. Member Bond explained that the University rejected the donation.

Chairperson Plaag said he could try to search to see who sold Mr. L.M. Hodges the Greene House to see if it was the estate that sold Mr. Hodges the house. He said that he has looked for other plats that might show the area where the cemetery is located and there are not any that were recorded. He said he found a plat that is dated 1969, he has found the surveyor who did the work on it and he will try to ask for prior owner information from said surveyor. He said he believes that whoever the descendants of Mr. R. F. Greene and Ms. Pearl H. Greene are, we could try to get a quick-claim deed from them. He said another possible way to gain ownership information is to try to contact members of the Bryan or Hayes families. Ms. Turner said that she knows the daughter of the Hayes family and she will try to call her to gain ownership information. The HPC were in agreement for Ms. Turner to make this phone call.

Chairperson Plaag said that he plans to try to see Ms. Diane Deal, in the Watauga County Clerk's Office and try to locate a land deed for Judge Greene. He indicated to the HPC that he needs more time to try to locate the necessary people to gain ownership information. He did say that this is not a high priority for him at this time in light of the other topics he is working on for the HPC. He said if there is someone else that wants to work on this subject, they may do so. Vice-Chairperson Pollitt said that she would work on it.

Other Matters by Board Members of Staff

Member Bond noted that on March 19, 2020 at 5:30 p.m. the Watauga County Historical Society will meet at the Watauga County Library to hear Mr. Michael Hardy talk about his book on Benjamin Cleveland, a Revolutionary War Hero. She noted that Mr. Hardy had just won an award for his work in the State of North Carolina.

Chairperson Plaag informed the HPC that the "Best of Digital Watauga" exhibition is currently being presented at the Jones House. He explained that the exhibition is an assemblage of some of their favorite images of some of the past shows they have done.

Chairperson Plaag explained that as an option, Digital Watauga is contemplating making a series of postcards based on some of their images that they own. He also said they are exploring the possibility of the "Boone Revisited" book that would feature additional images.

Ms. Turner talked about the Earth First Friday event being scheduled for April 3, 2020 at 5:30 p.m. She explained that multiple agencies will be in attendance. Chairperson Plaag told Ms. Turner to go ahead and use the HPC display because there have been no dramatic changes to it. Member Bond said that she would try to man the display. Member Clawson asked if there would be music at the said event. Ms. Turner did not know the answer to this question.

Adjournment

With no other topics to discuss, Member Brantz made a motion, seconded by Member Pearman to adjourn the meeting at 5:05 p.m.

Vote:

Aye – All

Nay – None

The motion passed.

Eric Plaag, Chairperson

Marlene Crosby, Board Secretary

Digital Watauga Project
March 10, 2020
Request for Funding from Town of Boone
Presented to Boone Historic Preservation Commission

As many of you know, for the past two years (FY2018 and FY2019), the Town of Boone, following the recommendation of the HPC, has provided the Digital Watauga Project (the main initiative of the Watauga County Historical Society) with \$5,000 in funding each year. In exchange for this funding, the Digital Watauga Project has provided critical research assistance to the Town of Boone on various properties, as well as designated the Town of Boone as a “digital partner,” meaning that fees for access to image reproductions from Digital Watauga’s collections are automatically waived for images owned by the project and often waived for images still owned by our outside donors. Town entities benefitting from this relationship have included the Town Manager’s office, the DBDA, the Historic Preservation Commission, the Cultural Resources Department, and the Planning and Inspections Department, along with numerous business owners and tenants seeking guidance from the Town on historically appropriate approaches to renovation of their properties.

In the past year, Digital Watauga has also curated three shows at the Jones House Cultural and Community Center: our show entitled *Lost Watauga* (March 2019), our exhibition on the history of the Appalachian Theatre (October 2019), and our present exhibition, entitled *The Best of Digital Watauga*. We are currently in the early stages of planning for a show entitled *The Workers of Boone* for March 2021, which will feature dozens of photos from a series of nearly 500 images shot by Palmer Blair from 1951 to 1953 featuring various Boone employees at work in their places of business. These images frequently offer rare glimpses of the interior spaces of 1950s Boone as well as unusual views of the exteriors of Boone businesses that were rarely photographed on other occasions.

In the coming year, Digital Watauga will also partner with the Cultural Resources Department in providing dozens of historic images for the print and online versions of its forthcoming Downtown Walking Tour, which is now in its final planning stages. Images from the Digital Watauga Project will also continue to play a central role in the publications and public information sessions associated with the proposed Downtown Historic District, including the final versions of the survey report, the district designation report, and the district design guidelines, as well as other promotional materials related to this forthcoming designation.

While private, individual, non-commercial use of Digital Watauga’s online content is free for everyone, doing this kind of image retrieval research in many of our collections, including those that are not yet online, all on behalf of the Town and downtown business owners, is incredibly time-consuming and strains our resources. Over the past three years, we estimate that we have averaged approximately 75 hours per year answering requests of this type from members of the Downtown Boone business community and Town government. This does not

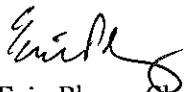
Digital Watauga Request for Funding--2

include any of the time spent on the downtown survey and historic district work. Every hour spent tracking down images of a given building in Downtown Boone and answering these requests means an hour NOT spent fulfilling our mission priorities—identifying new collections, cataloging and scanning new materials, helping donors preserve their collections, and providing those new digital collections to the public online. We were also delighted to host the first set of materials from the Jones House Collection at Digital Watauga this past year; as part of this process, we archivally rehoused those materials as a courtesy for the Town at no cost to the Town.

We deeply appreciate the Town's financial assistance over the past two years and ask again for the Town's help in offsetting our labor and materials costs for providing all of these services that are of benefit to the Town, its various offices, and the Boone community as a whole. We are once again seeking Town funding in the amount of \$5,000 for FY2020, provided out of the remaining budget of the Historic Preservation Commission, under the same terms previously agreed upon. In exchange, Digital Watauga will provide up to 75 hours of image research work on behalf of Town offices. Image use fees normally charged by the Digital Watauga Project for high-resolution images from collections owned by the Digital Watauga Project and the Watauga County Historical Society will be waived, although such fees may still be applicable for images in the collections that are not owned outright by Digital Watauga or the WCHS.

I thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Eric Plaag, Chairperson
Digital Watauga Project
Watauga County Historical Society